

# WELCOME TO DISCOVERING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

We're glad you've chosen to find out more about \_\_\_\_\_ Baptist Church! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members from many different church backgrounds, this class is designed to clearly explain who and what we are.

**Discovering Church Membership** is divided in three major sections and subdivided into approximately 10 one hour sessions and is taught by our Pastor.

## THE BASIS FOR THIS CLASS:

*"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day were added unto them...."- Acts 2:41*

*"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering...And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works...Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more..." - Heb. 10:23-25*

**Key thought:**The church is God's **support** group for His children. A Child of God without a church **family** is an orphan. It is not God's will that any of His children be orphans in this world. A Christian without a church family is also a **contradiction**. It is like a football player without a team or a soldier without a platoon. The church is God's ordained institution for organized worship and service and a Christian cannot be obedient to God and remain outside of His churches.

1. The Church is a SUPPORT group for your growth.
2. God's expects you to be MEMBER of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is a CONTRADICTION.

What is the difference between a "Christian" and a "church member"?

1. A Christian is a person who claims to be saved.
2. A Church member is a person who acts like he is saved.

3. Many precepts in Scripture cannot be obeyed apart from church membership (Heb. 10:25; I Cor. 12:25-26).

## THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS:

...that I will commit myself to CHRIST and to VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH.

## WHAT MAKES US A TEAM?

### FOUR THINGS UNITE US

- \ Our Salvation - One Way
- \ Our Statement - One Faith
- \ Our Strategy - One Goal
- \ Our Structure - One Body

## SEMINAR OUTLINE

### SESSION ONE: OUR SALVATION

- \ Part 1: What it means to be a Christian
- \ Parts 2-4: The Symbols of Salvation: Baptism & The Lord's Supper

### SESSION TWO: OUR STATEMENT & STRATEGY

- \ Our Purpose Statement
- \ Our Faith Statement
- \ Our Lifestyle Statement
- \ Circles of Commitment/4 covenants

### SESSION THREE: OUR STRUCTURE

- \ How our Church is Structured
- \ Our affiliation and History
- \ What it means to be a member
- \ Our Program for growth

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing “WHY?” They exist year after year without no idea of why they live or what is God’s purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is “*What is the meaning of my life?*”

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways:

- .....Some look for happiness by acquiring possessions.
- .....Some look for happiness by experiencing pleasure.
- .....Some look for happiness by gaining prestige and power.

But real happiness comes from understanding my

PURPOSE IN LIFE.

### I. Why Am I Here?

*“And God said, Let us make man in our image. After our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” - Gen. 1:26*

*“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” - Mt. 22:37-39*

*“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” - Eccl. 12:13*

1. We were created to have a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with God and to RULE over all of the rest of God’s creation! This makes us special.

2. The whole duty of man is to LOVE God and to keep His COMMANDMENTS.

3. When we know and love God, and live in harmony with his purpose for our lives it produces tremendous benefits.

#### Clear Conscience

Rom. 8:1

#### Purpose

Rom. 8:28

#### Power & Strength

Philip. 4:13

#### Life & Peace

Rom. 8:6

#### Confidence

Rom. 8:31

#### Fulfillment

Philip. 4:9

#### Help with weakness

Rom. 8:26

#### Security

Rom. 8:39

#### Freedom

John 8:32,36

This is the kind of lifestyle that God intended for us to have. Why then aren’t most people happy?

## II. What’s the Problem?

Man has the natural desire to be HIS OWN BOSS and to ignore God’s principles for living. Have you ever heard of these sayings:

*“Look out for #1” or “Do your own thing”*

*“If it feels good, do it, regardless of what anyone says”*

*“It’s my life and I’ll do what I please!”*

The Bible calls this attitude - SIN.

*“if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” - I Jn. 1:8*

*“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way....” - Isa. 53:6*

## What are the consequences of sin?

### Sin affects your attitude toward God

*"For the carnal mind is at enmity with God and is not subject to the LAW of God and neither indeed can be." - Rom. 8:7*

### Sin separates you from God

*"But your iniquities have **separated** between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear you." - Isa. 59:2*

### Sin causes problems between you and other People

The attitude of "boss" and "I'll do as I please" causes relational problems between people. Divorce, murder, envy, jealousy are results. War between people and nations are the results. Jails full of self-centered, self-seeking people are a result.

### Sin Violates God's Law

*"For sin is the **transgression of the Law**" - I Jn. 4:6*

Sin is breaking God's LAW

### Violating God's Law has a penalty

*"For the wages of sin is death" - Rom. 6:23*

DEATH is the consequence of sin

### WHEN PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS, THEY OFTEN TRY MANY DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING BEFORE TURNING TO GOD.

*"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man: but the end thereof are the WAYS of death" - Prov. 16:25 - DEAD ENDS*

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:

**"My mother was a Christian so....."**

(your mother was married, does that mean you are?)

**"I'll work real hard and earn it."**

(God does not grade on a curve He demands absolute Perfection - Mt. 5:20; 44).

**"I'll be religious and go to church."**

(Sitting in church does not make you a Christian any more than sitting in a chicken house makes you a chicken)

**"It doesn't matter what you believe, just be sincere"**

(You can be sincerely wrong! Consider Jim Jones)

**...all religions lead to the same place"**

(There are million of phone numbers in the world, but all of them do not reach home - there is only one number no matter how sincere you may be in dialing all the others)

## III. What's the Solution?

Jesus said, **"I AM THE WAY, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh to the Father but BY ME."** - Jn. 14:6

*"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." - Acts 4:12*

These verses teach that Jesus is the ONLY WAY to God and neither is there salvation in any other.

## IV. Why is Jesus the Only Way?

1. We all have two problems; (a) Meeting God's Standard for heaven and (b) paying God's penalty for violating that Standard:

### God's Standard for Entering Heaven:

"...Except your righteousness **EXCEED** the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall **IN NO CASE ENTER IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**...Be ye therefore **PERFECT** even as your Father in heaven is **PERFECT**." - Mt. 5:20, 48

"There is none righteous, **NO, NOT ONE...ALL** have sinned and **come short**" of God's Standard (Rom. 3:10,23).

### God's Penalty for Coming Short of that Standard:

"...For it is appointed unto man once **to die** and then the judgement..." - Heb. 9:27

"...and they were **JUDGED** every man according to their works. And **DEATH** and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is **the SECOND DEATH**." - Rev. 20:14

Your best must **EXCEED** the best that men can do and must **EQUAL** the best that the Father in heaven can do. Your Penalty for failure is **ETERNAL PUNISHMENT**. Perfection and Eternal Punishment are the obstacles you must overcome to enter heaven.

**1. Jesus is the ONLY WAY because He alone lived a PERFECT life:**

"in all points tempted like as we are, **YET WITHOUT SIN**" - Heb. 4:15 and "who did no sin" - 1 Pet. 2:22 and "For he hath made him to be sin **FOR** us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God **IN Him**" - 2 Cor. 5:21

**2. Jesus is the ONLY WAY because it takes a GOD MAN to satisfy the Penalty of the Law in behalf of sinners.**

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." - Jn. 1:14

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld the glory of the only begotten of the Father." - John 1:14

He would have to be God in order to (1) suffer an eternal penalty in a short span of time; (2) provide a substitutionary **VALUE** that could equal the value of all the sinners in the universe. Only God is **ETERNAL** and only God could provide such **VALUE** and with **PERFECTION**.

He would also have to be a man in order to be a proper representative or substitute for mankind (Heb. 2:14-17; 10:5-7).

## V. What God Must Do to Save Me?

**1. HE MUST GIVE YOU A NEW HEART THAT WANTS TO OBEY HIM.**

"A new **heart** also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you...and I will put my Spirit in you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements and do them" - Ezek. 36:26,27

**a. Because Your present mindset is AGAINST God**

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God and **neither indeed can be**" - Rom. 8:7

**b. Because your present heart receives not God's Word**

"But the natural man **receiveth not** the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, **neither can he know them**, because they are spiritual discerned." - 2 Cor. 2:14

**2. HE EMPOWERS THE GOSPEL TO CREATE A NEW HEART WITHIN YOU**

“knowing, brethren beloved yhour election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also **in power**, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance...” - I Thes. 1:4-5

## VI. What are the Consequences of a New Heart?

1. CONFESS AND REPENT OF YOUR SINS AND ADMIT THAT GOD’S WILL HAS NOT BEEN FIRST IN YOUR LIFE.

“If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” - I Jn. 1:0

“Let the wicked **forsake** HIS WAY, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” - Isa. 55:7

2. BELIEVE THAT JESUS PROVIDED ALL THE RIGHTEOUSNESS YOU WILL EVER NEED BY HIS LIFE AND PAID FOR ALL YOUR SINS BY HIS DEATH AND AROSE FROM THE GRAVE AND LIVES.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt **believe** in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved.” - Rom. 10:9

“For by grace ye have been saved through **faith** and that not of yourselves, for it is a gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.” - Eph. 2:8-9

3. THE EVIDENCE OF SALVATION IS FAITH IN CHRIST

“.....as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.” - Acts 13:48

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.” - I Jn. 2:4

“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not what I say?” - Lk. 6:47

## THE SYMBOLS OF THE GOSPEL

### Why People are Divided over the Ordinances

No other topics have caused so much persecution of saints and division than the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Why?

1. **Sentimental Traditionalism:** Some people simply do not care what God says about it. Their mother and father or family have done it this way and to challenge it is IN THEIR MINDS to challenge the salvation of family members. They cling to a false tradition in order to defend the honor of their family while dishonoring the God they claim to obey. **There is a danger in this type of attitude:**

“Why do ye also transgress the doctrine of God by your tradition...Ye hypocrites well did Isaiah prophesy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” - Mt. 15:3,7-9

When a person intentionally chooses to honor a tradition over God’s Word, the Bible says there is something wrong with that person’s HEART and their worship is in VAIN.

2. **Sacramental Salvationism:** Many are convinced that saving grace is imparted in these ordinances. Hence, the earlier you partake the earlier you are saved - this error invented infant baptism.

“The like **FIGURE** whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**” - I Pet. 3:21

**There is danger in this type of teaching,** Those who teach this are preaching another way of salvation:

*“But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” - Gal. 1:8*

Baptism is a SYMBOL of salvation. Baptism saves us, and removes our sins figuratively but not literally.

## I. THREE REASONS YOU SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

### 1. TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE SET BY CHRIST.

*“And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John **in** Jordan.” - Mk. 1:9*

### 2. BECAUSE GOD’S WORD COMMANDS

*“...men and brethren, **what shall we do?** Then Peter said unto them, **repent and be baptized every one of you....**” - Acts 2:37-38*

*“And Jesus said...Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded....” - Mt. 28:18,19*

*“**As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**” - Gal. 3:27*

*“...as many as received the word were baptized” - Acts 2:41*

### 3. BECAUSE GOD ONLY ADDS BAPTIZED BELIEVERS TO HIS CHURCHES

*“as many as received his word were baptized....were added unto them.....**The Lord added to the church....**” - Acts 2:41, 47*

**(NOTE:** The Lord “added to the church” in the way described - through the instrumentality of human administrators. Paul had to instruct the Corinthians that various human administrators were all working under God the Holy Spirit and therefore are ONE with Him in the work of building churches. He is the one responsible for bringing them all together in one church body -

*“...everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas....I thank God I baptized none of you but.....Who then is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers....I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth but God...Now he that planteth and he that watereth **ARE ONE**...for we are laborers **TOGETHER WITH GOD**...ye are God’s building... Know ye not that **YE** (plural) are **the temple** (singular) of God, and that **the Holy Spirit dwelleth in you.**” - I Cor. 1:12,14; 3:5,6,7,8,9,16*

*“For by one Spirit **we were all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have made us to drink into one Spirit...**Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.**” - I Cor. 12:13,27*

*“Ye also, as lively stones are built up a **SPIRITUAL house**, a holy priesthood, to offer up **SPIRITUAL sacrifices**, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ.” - I Pet. 2:5*

Under the Holy Spirit’s LEADERSHIP, believers are added to the church body through baptism. The church is a temple of the Holy Spirit and those added are made partakers of His presence which is manifested in the offering up spiritual sacrifices unto God.

## II. SIX REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

### 1. BECAUSE JESUS WAS BAPTIZED THAT WAY.

"...Jesus...was baptized of John IN Jordan" - Mk. 1:9

### 2. BECAUSE EVERY BAPTISM IN THE BIBLE WAS BY IMMERSION.

(example) "...and they went both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water..." - Acts 8:38-39

### 3. BECAUSE THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED "BAPTIZE" DEMANDS IMMERSION IN WATER.

All major Greek dictionaries admit this and all major founders of denominations admit this:

**Martin Luther** - "Baptism is an external sign. The sign consists in this, that one plunges a man into water....but ones does not leave him therein, but lifts him out again...Thus must both parts be in the sign; the immersing and the raising out."

**John Calvin** - "The word 'baptize' signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.

**John Wesley** - "Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion to the custom of the first church."

**Menno Simons** - "After we have searched ever so diligently, we shall find no other baptism besides dipping that is acceptable to God and maintained in His word" and "Therefore beware, for the symbolism of baptism is to BURY...and to RISE with Christ"

### 4. BECAUSE ONLY IMMERSION REPRESENTS WHAT GOD INTENDED BAPTISM TO SYMBOLIZE and the only value of a symbol is how well it correctly represents the truth it is designed to show.

"Therefore we are **BURIED** with him by baptism....that **LIKE** Christ was **RAISED** up...." - Rom. 6:4

"**BURIED** with him in baptism wherein also ye are **RISEN** with him..." - Col. 2:12

"...I declare unto you the gospel...how Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was **BURIED** and **ROSE AGAIN** the third day according to the scriptures...." - I Cor 15:1,3-4

### 5. BECAUSE POURING AND SPRINKLING ARE NOT OPTIONS BUT ARE DISOBEDIENCE BECAUSE THE GREEK HAS WORDS FOR "pour" and "sprinkle" but they are never used of this ordinance.

**6. BECAUSE THERE IS DANGER IN DISTORTING GOD'S TYPES.** The gospel is perverted (Gal. 1:6-9). Moses could not enter the promise land for distorting a gospel symbol (I Cor. 10:4; Ex. 17:4-6; Numb. 20:10-12). Corinthians got SICK and some even DIED (I Cor. 11:)

## III. WHO CAN ADMINISTER BAPTISM?

Would it do an alien any good to go to a U.S. Citizen in order to become a **VALID** U.S. citizen? Would it do any good for a person to go to a licensed driver to get a **VALID** driver's license? No! The proper authority must be sought out. Who or what is the proper authority to administer baptism? **The Lord qualified and appointed the proper authority in the Great Commission.**

“**Go** and teach all nations **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; **teaching** them to observe all things **whatsoever I have commanded you**, and, lo, I am with you **always** even unto the end of the world.” - Mt. 28:19-20

### A. Who are NOT authorized to administer Baptism:

1. ANYONE or any church who preaches ANOTHER gospel:

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached... let him be accursed.” - Gal. 1:8

2. ANYONE or any church that administers ANOTHER baptism than “what I have commanded”

“**Go...baptizing** them.....and lo, I with you **always**, **even unto the end of the world.** amen” - Mt. 28:19,20

“...there is **ONE** baptism....” - Eph. 4:4

3. ANYONE or any church that teaches ANOTHER faith and order than what “I have commanded”

“Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, **to draw away disciples after them.**” - Acts 20:30

“...**mark them** which cause divisions....contrary to **the doctrine** which ye have learned and **AVOID** them.” - Rom. 16:17

### **B. Who is given authority to baptize?**

**1. The Great Commission characteristics demand that Jesus is talking to the Church He had built.**

- a. “Teaching them to observe” demands the existence of a church as obedience to this is impossible without such
- b. The practice of church discipline - Mt. 18:15-17
- c. Observance of the Lord’s Supper- Mt. 26:25-30; I Cr. 11:18

- d. Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves - Heb. 10:25
- e. Sharing the joys and sorrows of church members? I Cor. 12:25-27

**2. “Whatsoever I have commanded” infers that Jesus observed these things in a church context.**

“Wherefore of these men which have **companied with us** all the time that the Lord Jesus **went in and out** among us. Beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day he was taken up....” - Acts 1:21-22

**3. The Church that Jesus Built is being authorized through its first ordained ministry**

**a. The Apostles were the first officers of the church**

“Then **the eleven** disciples went away into Galilee, unto a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.” - Mt. 28:16

“And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and **of them** he chose twelve, whom also he named **apostles.**” - Lk. 6:12

“And God hath set some in the church first, apostles.” - I Cor. 12:29

**b. The Lord characteristically speaks to the Church through its ordained officers**

“Unto the angel of the church at Ephesus write.....he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith **to the churches**” - Rev. 2:1,7

**4. The Church is designated as the final authority on earth for spiritual matters:**

“And if he neglect to hear them, **tell it unto the church...**and if he **hear not the church.....** whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” - Mt. 18:17-18

**5. The Church is the designated way through which Christ is to be glorified on earth**

*"To Him be glory IN THE CHURCH by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" - Eph. 3:21*

### **C. Baptism is the uniform of Christ and His Churches**

*"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have **put on** Christ."*  
- Gal. 3:27

*"Then they that gladly (1) **received his word** were (2) **baptized**: and...were (3) **added unto them**....And **they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers....and **the Lord added to the church**...." - Acts 2:41,42*

*"baptizing them....teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." - Mt. 28:19,20*

**THEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION:** In baptism you identify with the theological position of the administrator. For example, if you submit to a Catholic Priest for baptism then it is assumed by all who watch that you are becoming a Catholic. If by a Methodist, then you are becoming a Methodist, etc. In the Great Commission the proper administrator of baptism is one who goes with the right gospel and then is able to "teach them all things whatsoever I have commanded." The proper administrator is of like faith and order with Jesus Christ and the first church at Jerusalem.

**Closing Illustration:** When Michael Jordon quit the Chicago White Sox and rejoined the Chicago Bulls he had to **put on** the Bull's uniform. Why? Because the White Sox **baseball** uniform did not properly represent the Bull's **basketball team**. His uniform must properly represent his team. **The proper uniform that represents Christ and His churches must have four non-negotiable characteristics or its the wrong uniform.**

**1. It is the uniform worn by BELIEVERS ONLY**

**2. It is the uniform that SYMBOLIZES the Gospel only**

**3. It is the uniform that IDENTIFIES you with the Gospel**

**through IMMERSION ONLY**

**4. It is the uniform that only a church of like faith and order with Christ is AUTHORIZED to issue**

## **IV. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?**

### **1. EVERY PERSON WHO HAS BELIEVED IN CHRIST.**

*"...they that gladly **received his word** were baptized..." - Acts 2:41*

*"Then Simon himself **believed**...and...was baptized" - Acts 8:13*

*"...See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou **believest** with all thine heart, thou mayest..." - Acts 8:36,37*

### **2. INFANTS and UNBELIEVERS should not be baptized**

- a. There is no New Testament Example of any infant being baptized
- b. All "household" baptisms are said to consist of those who "believed"
- c. Old Testament circumcision of infants at 8 days of age are ceremonial pictures of those "born again" spiritual babes under the New Covenant.
- d. There is an age of accountability - Rom. 7:9
- e. Dying infants are covered by the representation of the second Adam - Rom. 5:13-14  
- Just as they suffered death due to representation by first Adam, they are given life due to representation of second Adam.
- F. Old Testament types of infants being saved from hell are found in the sparing of Korah's children and the salvation of David's illegitimate child

## V. WHEN SHOULD YOU BE BAPTIZED?

### AS SOON AS YOU ARE SAVED

*“Then they that gladly **received** his word were baptized...the same day....” - Acts 2:41*

*“What doth hinder me to be baptized?....If thou **believest**..... thou mayest...” - Acts 8:36,37*

There is no reason to delay. As soon as possible after your salvation you should be baptized. No true believer in the New Testament delayed their baptism.

## THE LORD’S SUPPER

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible gospel symbols (called “ordinances”) as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are: Baptism and The Lord’s Supper.

### I. WHAT IS THE LORD’S SUPPER (I Cor. 11:23-26)

#### 1. IT WAS INSTITUTED DURING THE PASSOVER MEAL.

*“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the **passover**....My time is at hand; **I will keep the passover** at thy house with my disciples.” - Mt. 26:17,18*

#### 2. IT WAS INSTITUTED AT THE “CUP OF BLESSING” WHEN THE BENEDICTION WAS SAID AT END OF THE MEAL AT THE THIRD CUP.

*“After they have mixed for him the third cup, he says the Benediction over his meal.” - The Mishnah, p. 151*

*“**The cup of blessing** which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ....” - I Cor. 10:16*

#### 3. IT IS A SIMPLE SUPPER

*“The Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed, **took bread**” (v. 23)*

The Lord did not complicate the Supper or make it into an elaborate ceremonial ordeal.

#### 4. IT IS A MEMORIAL SUPPER

“this do in **remembrance** of me” (v. 24)

#### 5. IT IS A SYMBOLIC SUPPER

“ye do **shew** the Lord’s death till he come” (v. 26)

It **SHEWS** the Lord’s death until He comes again.

## II. WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LORD’S SUPPER (I Cor. 11:19-31)

### 1. IT IS FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN UNITY WITH EACH OTHER

“I hear that there be **divisions** among you....this is **not** the Lord’s Supper” - vv. 18-20)

“Now this I say, that everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.” - I Cor. 1:12

The kind of division that violates the Lord’s Supper is the type that divides Christians into separate **DENOMINATIONS**. Christians separated into denominational **DIVISIONS** cannot scripturally partake of the Supper together.

“...mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which have learned and **avoid them**.” - Rom. 16:17

### 2. IT IS FOR THOSE WHO CAN BE DISCIPLINED BY THE CHURCH OBSERVING IT - I Cor. 5

“when ye are gathered together (v.4)....to deliver such a one(v.5).....**purge out**...the old leaven (v. 7)...with such a one **no not to eat** (v. 11).....Therefore **put away from among yourselves that wicked person** (v. 13).”

“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” - Mt. 18:17

Individual Christians cannot discipline each other. The supper is to be observed by a body of Christians that have disciplinary authority over individual members of that body. - Such authority does not belong to individual Christians but to the church institution

### 3. IT IS OBSERVED BY THOSE WHO INTERPRET THE BREAD OF THE SUPPER TO ALSO REPRESENT THE METAPHORICAL BODY OF CHRIST - THE KIND THAT CAN BE ASSEMBLED IN ONE PLACE WITH ALL ITS MEMBERS AND CAN BE PURGED BY CHURCH DISCIPLINE:

“...Know ye not that a little leaven leaveth **the whole lump**. Purge out the old leaven that ye may be a **new lump**, as **ye are unleavened**.....Therefore put away **from among yourselves** that wicked person.” - I Cor. 5:6-7,13

“.....**ye come together in the church** (v. 18) ....When ye come **together into one place** (v. 20)....when ye come **together** (v. 33)...ye cometh **together** (v. 34).....”

“**Ye are the body of Christ** and members in particular” - I Cor. 12:27

The Body of Christ that is symbolized by the bread, is the kind that a wicked person can be PURGED out of. It is the kind that the “whole” can be leavened due to the presence of one publicly known sinful member and yet can become a new lump by removing that member. The point is that any public sin or sinner disqualifies the whole body from partaking. If the “whole” lump were all Christians than none could ever partake of the supper as there is no way to purge such a body.

When the church comes together to observe the Supper they are to first examine themselves as a whole body to see if there be any PUBLIC sin or sinners in their midst and then each individual examines themselves for PRIVATE sin before eating of the Supper. The Supper demands that sin be dealt with and removed before eating. The Church is to take care of PUBLIC sins while the individual member is to take care of PRIVATE sins before eating.

### III. WHAT IS THE PRACTICAL PURPOSE OF THE SUPPER?

The issue of the gospel is salvation and the imputed righteousness of Christ but the issue of the church and the Supper is service to Christ and the imparted righteousness of Christ. The Supper is designed to counteract KNOWN sin in the midst of the church.

**2. The Supper acts as a filter by which the Lord continues to wash and cleanse the church through the word and thus maintains the metaphorical BRIDAL relationship between a particular Church and Christ and between the members in particular and Christ.**

*“Therefore as the church is subject to Christ...That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word, **That he might present it to himself a glorious church...**” - Eph. 5:24,26,27*

*“For I am jealous over you with goldy jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin** to Christ.” - 2 Cor. 11:2*

#### 1. It Maintains the PURITY of the Church - I Cor. 5

*“.....when you are gathered together.....Purge out therefore the old leaven...For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us....with such a one, no, not to eat...Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” - I Cor. 5:7,11,13*

*“But let a man examine himself...For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself....For if we would judge ourselves....when ye come together to eat...” - I Cor. 11:20,28,29,31*

Faithfulness and obedience to the Word of God determines the difference between a UNDEFILED church and a DEFILED church and between worthy members and unworthy members as individuals.

*“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not **defiled their garments**; and they shall walk with me in white: **for they are worthy.**” - Rev. 3:4*

*“...THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS.....Come out of her my people and be not partakers of her sins.....” - Rev. 17:5 and 18:4*

*“...for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath **made herself ready...**” - Rev. 19:7*

## IV. HOW DO I PREPARE MYSELF TO OBSERVE THE SUPPER?

*“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” (I Cor. 11:27-28)*

*by*

### 1. Self Examination

- I Cor. 11:27

### 2. Confessing sins

- I Jn. 1:9

### 3. Recommitment

- Rom. 12:1

### 4. Restoring relations

- Mt. 5:23-24

## V. WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE OBSERVE THE LORD’S SUPPER?

*“as often as ye eat.....” - I Cor. 11:26*

Jesus never said when or how often church members should observe the Lord’s Supper. He instituted it in the evening. Since it is designated a “supper” it would seem more appropriate to observe it in the evening.

Because it causes the church to examine its membership for both Public and Private sin, it would seem that it should be observed on a regular basis in order to maintain a pure church and pure lives for the Lord.

Because it is defiled by the presence of sin, it should not be observed when there is public sin or sinners among the membership.

## VI. WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS USED IN THE LORD’S SUPPER?

### 1. The elements used in the Supper were taken directly from the PASSOVER PREPARATION MATERIALS.

*“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the **passover**....My time is at hand; **I will keep the passover** at thy house with my disciples.” - Mt. 26:17,18*

### 2. Both Elements used in the Supper from the Passover were to be SYMBOLS of His body and blood.

*“Take eat; this is my body.....this is my blood....” - Mt. 26:26,28*

Remember that a SYMBOL is worthless unless it correctly represents the intended truths it was designed to show

### 3. UNLEAVENED bread was used in the Passover.

*“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are **unleavened**. For even Christ **our passover** is sacrificed for us.” - I Cor. 5:7*

### 4. Leaven is a symbol of SIN but Christ’s body was offered up as a sinless substitute.

*“Purge out therefore the old leaven....the leaven of malice, and wickedness” - I Cor. 5:7,8*

### 5. Fermented Red WINE mixed with three parts water was used in the Passover.

*“Red wine alone was to be used at the Paschal Supper, and always mixed with water....Of this there cannot be the slightest doubt.”* - Alfred Edersheim, **The Temple**, p. 237

- **Jewish Encyclopedia (under the topic “passover”)** - *The rabbi’s also regarded it as a positive duty on the first night to relate the miracles incidental to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt: hence the HAGGADAH and the SEDER. Each Israelite was obliged to drink on this night four cups of wine (“arba’ah kosot”); red wine was excluded later owing to the BLOOD ACCUSATION. While eating the massah and drinking the wine, the position of free men (i.e., reclining on the left side against cushions) was obligatory on all male participants (“hasibah”).* **The Jewish Encyclopedia** (New York, N.Y.: Funk and Wagnils Co., 1916) Vol. XII, p. 552

*“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ...”* - I Cor. 10:16

*“this fruit of the vine....”* - Mt. 26:29

The Mishnah (the oral traditions of the elders referred to by Christ in the gospels) makes it very clear that red fermented wine was the traditional drink used in the Passover in the time of Christ (Mishnah, pesahim, 10:1-9, pp. 150-151)

The “**fruit of the vine**” was the exact terminology used in the Passover benediction over the first cup of wine. The “**cup of blessing**” was a technical designation for the third cup of wine drunk at the passover. Water diluted the strength of the alcohol in order that drunkenness not occur because of four full cups required.

## 6. The Element in the Cup symbolizes the power of the blood of Christ to CLEANSE us from sin.

*“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for the remission of sins.”* - Mt. 26:28

*“Ah sinful nation....From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and purtrifying sores....”* - Isa. 1:4,6

*“But a certain Samaritan....went to him , and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine...”*

Grape Juice cannot symbolize cleansing but the liquid in the cup is the symbolic cause “for remission of sins”. Proverbs 31:4-7 justifies the use of “strong drink” for medicinal purposes. Wine in the cup represents spiritual medicine for the cleansing of sin.

## 7. Wine is used in the Bible as a SYMBOL of salvation

*“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat, yea, come, buy wine....”* - Isa. 55:1

## 8. Wine was used among the churches and only its abuse was condemned.

*“For in eating...one is hungry, and another is drunken.”* - I Cor. 11:21

*“If it good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”* - Rom. 14:21

*“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.”* - Itim. 5:23

*“Be not drunken with wine wherein is excess....”* Eph. 5:18

*“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish; and wine unto those that be heavy of hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more.”* - Prov. 31:6-7

Grape Juice could hardly make anyone drunk nor has it ever been a “stumbling block” and thus considered offensive to anyone. These texts must refer to Wine.

## VII. THE DANGER OF ABUSING THE SUPPER

### 1. There is an express WARNING

*“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s Body.” - I Cor. 11:28-29*

### 2. There are express CONSEQUENCES stated

*“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [dead]”. - I Cor. 11:31*

### 3. There are express SCRIPTURES given that define unworthiness to partake of the Supper

*“FIRST of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you” - I Cor. 11:18*

*“For there must be also HERESIES among you...” - I Cor. 11:19*

*“..one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?” - I Cor. 11:21,22*

*“Purge out therefore the old leaven....Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” - I Cor. 5:7,8*

Where MORAL or DOCTRINAL divisions exist or where HERESIES are being taught or where SCHISM rules, or where sin is publicly known, any of these things show that the member or church fail to discern the symbolism of the Lord’s body and disqualify a member or church from partaking of the Supper.

## Session Two

# The PURPOSE Statements

### *Our Purpose Statement*

To bring people to Christ and then to membership in this church, develop them to Christ like maturity, and equip them for ministry in this church and to send out missionaries to reproduce churches of like faith and practice in order to magnify God’s name.

*“Now I beseech you, brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement.” - I Cor. 1:10*

# OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

## Why We Exist As A Church

The purpose of our church is summarized in a single sentence based on two key scriptures:

**“WE BELIEVE A GREAT COMMITMENT TO THE GREAT COMMANDMENT AND THE GREAT COMMISSION WILL GROW A GREAT CHURCH!”**

**The Great Commandment:** *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” - Mt. 22:37-39*

**The Great Commission:** *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” -Mt. 28:19-20*

## VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH EXISTS

1. To HONOR God through obedience (worship)
2. To DEMONSTRATE God’s Love (ministry)
3. To COMMUNICATE God’s Gospel (evangelism)
4. To EDUCATE God’s People (Indoctrinate)
5. To REPRODUCE God’s Church (Missions)

# I. WE EXIST TO HONOR GOD THROUGH OBEDIENCE - Worship

*“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” - Mt. 4:10*

*“...the Father seeketh such to worship him....they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” - Jn. 4:23,24*

*Worship must be acceptable – see I Pet. 2:5; Heb. 12:28*

*Acceptable worship is defined by a right spirit and according to truth*

### Expressions of Worship

- Singing (Eph. 5:19)
- Commitment (Rom. 12:1-2)
- Praying (Psa. 95:6)
- Hearing the Word (John 17:17)
- Giving (Icor. 16:1-2)
- Baptism (Rom. 6:3-4)
- Lord’s Supper (Icor. 11:23-26)
- Attending services – Heb. 10:25

### Victory Worship Emphasis

*“Magnify Him”  
Psalm 34:3*

*“Build You up”  
I Cor. 14:26*

*“Equip You”  
Eph. 4:13*

# II. WE EXIST TO COMMUNICATE GOD’S GOSPEL

### EVANGELISM: -

*“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” - Eph. 3:10*

*“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” - Rom. 10:13-14*

*“...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” - Acts 1:8*

Witnessing is not an option but a commandment and the responsibility of every Christian. A “witness” is one who has experienced salvation and thus is a “witness” of it.

### **III. WE EXIST TO DEMONSTRATE GOD’S LOVE**

#### **MINISTRY: -**

*“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” - Jn. 13:35*

The heartbeat of Victory is our MINISTRY. Every member needs to minister according to the grace given. –Rom. 12:3

*“Now there are diversities of gifts...And there are differences of administrations... But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to EVERY MAN to profit withal...Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.” - I Cor. 12:4-5,7,27*

#### **AT VICTORY....**

Every member is a minister  
Every task is important  
Every member is a “10” in significance

### **IV. WE EXIST TO EDUCATE GOD’S PEOPLE**

#### **INDOCTRINATION: -**

*“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.....” - Mt. 28:19*

*“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection (maturity)....” Heb. 6:1*

*“That we be henceforth no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine....” - Eph. 4:14*

### **A. OUR PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH**

#### **In essential Beliefs - We have unity**

*“There is one body, and one Spirit...one hope...One Lord; One faith; One baptism, One God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” - Eph. 4:4-6*

#### **In non-essential beliefs - We have Liberty**

*“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.....So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.....there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean” - Rom. 14:1, 12-14*

#### **In all our beliefs - We show charity**

*“and though I.....understand all mysteries, and all knowledge...and have not charity, I am nothing.” - I Cor. 13:2*

*“Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth” - I Cor. 8:1*

### **B. OUR STATEMENT OF ESSENTIALS - Teaching The Faith ( Revised New Hampshire Confession of Faith)**

## **C. OUR LIFESTYLE STATEMENT - The Church Covenant D. OUR PROGRAM FOR GROWTH**

1. OUR SEMINAR CLASSES - The Hard Sayings
2. OUR FOUR CIRCLES OF COMMITMENT
  - a. The Membership Covenant....is a commitment to CHRIST and to His CHURCH.
  - b. The Maturity Covenant...is a commitment to the HABITS necessary for spiritual growth.
  - c. The Ministry Covenant...is a commitment to discovering and using my God-given gifts and abilities SERVING God and others.
  - d. The Missions Covenant... is a commitment to SHARE the Good News with others.

### **Why Do We Have These Covenants?**

WE BECOME WHAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO

You need to choose your commitments carefully (take the right plane, right train or else you end up where you don't want to be).

## **V. WE EXIST TO REPRODUCE GOD'S CHURCHES**

### **MISSIONS -**

#### **A. Our Marching Orders - Mt. 28:18-20**

#### **B. Our Limitations - Like Faith and Order**

1. Going with the same Gospel
2. Administering the same baptism
3. Teaching the same doctrine and practice

## **C. Our Methods - Acts 13:1-3; 16:1-2**

1. **Directly** - Sending out ordained members of our body
2. **Indirectly** - financial support for missionaries sent out by churches of like faith and order.

## **D. The Five Life Values of the N.T. Church**

1. It provides God's People to live with - **Membership**
2. It provides God's Purpose to live for - **Missions**
3. It provides God's Principles to live by - **Maturity**
4. It provides God's Profession to live out - **Ministry**
5. It provides God's Place to glorify Christ - **Magnify**

## **E. Five deminsions for Church Growth**

1. Churches grow WARMER through fellowship
2. Churches grow DEEPER through discipleship
3. Churches grow STRONGER through Bible Teaching
4. Churches grow BROADER through ministry
5. Churches grow LARGER through evangelism

## **Why Our Church Must Never Stop Growing**

### 1. BECAUSE GOD IS STILL SAVING PEOPLE

*"The Lord...is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." - 2 Pet. 3:9*

### 2. BECAUSE GOD'S REVEALED WILL

*"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." - Lk. 14:23*

*"...ye shall be my witnesses...." Acts 1:8*

### 3. BECAUSE JESUS IS STILL BUILDING HIS CHURCHES

*"I will build My church" - Mt. 16:18*

## **SESSION THREE** **THE** **STRUCTURE**

### **HOW OUR CHURCH IS STRUCTURED**

The structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices or even denominational traditions.

#### **THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH DETERMINES ITS STRUCTURE**

##### **I. THE CHURCH IS AN ADMINISTRATIVE Assembly**

“...Tell it to the church....whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

The Scriptures are the final AUTHORITY in all matters of doctrine and practice

Everything is to be done decently and in order - I Cor. 14:40

##### **II. THE CHURCH IS A FELLOWSHIP**

“They continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship...” - Acts 2:42

A top priority in a fellowship is UNITY and PEACE

“Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” - Eph. 4:3

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace.” - Rom. 14:19

ANY attitudes that cause disunity is sin.

**IMPLICATION:** A GOOD STRUCTURE PROMOTES UNITY AND DOWN PLAYS DIVISION.

*“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace....Let all things be done decently and in order.” - I Cor. 14:33,40*

*“that ye come together not for the better but for the worse...there be **divisions** among you....” - I Cor. 11:17*

“Voting” tends to DIVIDE

At Victory we only vote on:

1. Financial and Building decisions
2. Calling a Pastor
3. Church Discipline
4. Granting Authority for daughter churches
5. Granting & Recieving Members

We NEVER vote on Biblical Commands

### III. THE CHURCH IS A METAPHORICAL BODY

*“For ye are the body of Christ and members in particular” - I Cor. 12:27*

Therefore, we function on the basis of UNITY and GIFTS

### IV. The Church is NOT the KINGDOM of God nor the FAMILY of God.

God’s FAMILY includes all saints in heaven and on earth but the church includes only baptized believers - Eph. 3:15

God’s KINGDOM includes all professing believers on earth at any specific time but the church includes only professed believers who have submitted to baptism. - Mt. 13

God’s kingdom and family are inseparable from the salvation experience but God’s church has to do with service not salvation.

## OUR STRUCTURE

**The People are the MINISTRY  
The Pastor is the ADMINISTRATOR**

### V. THE CHURCH IS A FLOCK

*“Feed the **flock** of God which is among you...” I Pet. 5:2*

THEREFORE IT IS CARED FOR AND LED BY A PASTOR

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leaders:

POIMEN -  
PRESBUTEROS  
EPISCOPOS

*“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the **elders** of the church....Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you **overseers**, to **feed** the church of God...” - Acts 20:17,28*

*“The **elders** which are among you I exhort....**Feed** the flock of God which is among you, taking the **oversight**...” - I Pet. 5:1,2*

## OUR AFFILIATION

### We are an Independent Church

There is no denominational control or hierarchy, as there is in most denominations. Our church is self-governed and determines its own affairs.

## **We are a historical Baptist Church in doctrine and Practice**

Our historical heritage is great. Our church is in a direct line of succession with the ancient churches generally called “anabaptists” by their enemies and by many other names (e.g. Waldenses, Paulicians, Donatists, Novationists, etc.). These churches have an ancestry more ancient than Roman Catholicism and have always claimed to have originated by Christ in His personal ministry. Our faith and order (doctrine and practice) is the oldest among professed Christian denominations.

*“I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist Church as far back as A.D. 100, although without doubt there were Baptists then, as all Christians were then Baptists.” - John Clark Ridpath*

### **We exchange membership with several thousand churches worldwide**

Meade’s Handbook on denominations estimates approximately 2 million members among several thousand churches within the United States. Outside of the United States there are at least 2 million or more.

## **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER**

The difference between “attenders” and “members” can be summed up in the word: COMMITMENT.

At Victory we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for 4 reasons:

### **I. Biblical Reasons:**

1. The Church at Jerusalem seemed to have a membership role or list of names - Acts 1:15

*“And in those days Peter stood upon in the midst of the disciples, and said, (**the number of names** together were about an hundred and twenty).*

2. The Church described as a “body” with particular “members” belonging to that particular body - I Cor. 12:27

### **II. Cultural Reason: It is an antidote to our society**

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything....a job...a marriage....our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers and hoppers.” Commitment builds character.

### **III. Practical Reason: It defines who can be counted on**

Every team has a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our church family.

### **IV. Personal Reason: It produces spiritual growth**

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to any specific church family.

## **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MEMBER?**

At Victory we never ask our membership to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities can be summarized as follows:

### **1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH**

.....By acting in love toward other members

.....By refusing to gossip  
.....By following the leaders

*“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another.” - Rom. 14:19*

*“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, tht it may minister grace unto the hearers.” - Eph. 4:29*

*“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: fo that is unprofitable for you.”*

## **2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MY CHURCH**

.....By praying for its growth  
.....By inviting the unchurched to attend  
.....By warmly welcoming those who visit

*“...unto the church...We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.” - I Thes. 1:1,2*

*“...go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house **may be filled**.” - Lk. 14:23*

*“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” - Rom. 15:7*

## **3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH**

.....By discovering my gifts and talents  
.....By being equipped to serve by my Pastor  
.....By developing a servants heart

*“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” - I Pet. 4:10*

*“And he gave...some to be Pastors and teachers; for (Gr. “toward”) the perfecting (maturing) of the saints for (Gr. “unto”) the work of the*

*ministry for (Gr. “unto”) the edifying of the body of Christ.” - Eph. 4:11,12*

*“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus.” - Philip. 2:4,5*

## **4. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH**

.....By attending faithfully  
.....By living a godly life  
.....By giving regularly

*“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much themore, as ye see the day approaching.” - Heb. 10:25*

*“Only let your convseration be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.” - Philip. 1:27*

*“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...” - I Cor. 16:2*

*“And here men that die receive tithes (Gr. “tenth”), but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.” - Heb. 7:8*

## **How Is Our Church Financed?**

We do not allow our members to hold bake sales, bazaars or bingo, garage sales or ect., in order to finance the Lord's church.

The Church is called the “house of God” (I Tim. 3:15) and His house is to be financed by both “tithes” and “offerings.”

“Tithe” means a “tenth” and God requires that we give a “tenth” of our income.

*“And all the tithe...is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord” - Lev. 27:30*

The “tithe” is dedicated to the support of the ministry:

*“And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.” - Numb. 18:21*

*“Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” - I Cor. 9:13-14*

*“...for ye pay tithe.....these ye ought to have done...” - Mt. 23:23*

The “offering” is above and beyond the “tithe” and is a free will offering of the heart.

*“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.” - Ex. 25:2*

Offerings were taken for the purpose to maintain and beautify God’s House and for the poor and needy:

*“....and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.” - 2 Cor. 8:4*

*“For it hath please them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.” - Rom. 15:26*

When we give both “tithes” and “offerings we are giving worship to the Lord but when we withhold we are robbing God and robbing ourselves of blessings:

*“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings...Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” - Mal. 3:8,10*

*“And here men that die receive tithes, but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.” - Heb. 7:8*

## MY COMMITMENT

I freely and whole heartedly commit myself to these membership commitments trusting in God’s grace to enable me to be faithful.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_