

BETHEL BIBLE FELLOWSHIP
Doctrinal Statement

I. ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES FOR FELLOWSHIP

These are the doctrines that we believe define Biblical Christianity, and provide a basis for true Christian fellowship.

The Bible:

We believe that every word of the Old and New Testaments is inspired by God and is without error. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the complete, written revelation of God, and that they are the final authority for what we believe and for how we should live. (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21)

God:

We believe in one God who from everlasting past to everlasting future exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having the same nature, attributes, and glory, and are worthy of the same worship, trust, and obedience. God is unlimited in love, power, wisdom, truth, mercy, holiness and presence. God is perfect and unchanging. God is the creator of all things that can be seen and those that are unseen. He is absolutely separate and above creation as Creator, and yet is everywhere present in the world as the upholder of all things. He is self-existent and self-revealing. (Gen 1:1; Deut 6:4, 33:27; Isa 45:21; Jer 10:10-12; Ps 18:30, 104:1-35, 136:6, 147:5; Mat 28:18-20; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-14, 4:24, 5:23, 5:26, 14:9; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 13:4)

The Father:

God the Father orders and directs all things according to His own purpose, pleasure and grace. He decrees all things that come to pass for His own glory. He graciously involves Himself in the affairs of men, hears and answers prayer, and saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. God desires an intimate relationship with man, and demonstrates His supreme love for us by redeeming us at the cost of His Son. (Matt 6:9; John 5:19-24; Rom 5:1-10; Eph 1:3-6)

The Son:

We believe that the Son, Jesus Christ, is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, and is truly God and truly man. He became man without any change to His divine person by the miracle of the virgin birth. He is the eternal Word and our great God and Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, though tempted as we are. He died for the sins of all people, was buried, and bodily arose from the dead. He died as a sacrifice, a substitute, so that all who believe in Him may be forgiven of and released from the penalty of their sins. Jesus rose and is now at the right hand of the Father, where He serves as our Great High Priest until He comes to rapture His Bride, the Church. He will then return to reign on earth. (Ps 2; Matt 1:23; Rom 9:5; 1 Cor 15:1-8; 2 Cor 5:21; John 1:1-14, 3:16; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:10-29, 13:8)

The Holy Spirit:

We believe that the Holy Spirit lives in each believer, who is sealed in Him. The Holy Spirit is an agent in creation, revelation and redemption. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment, and who applies the salvation secured by Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit regenerates, baptizes, indwells, intercedes, sanctifies, guides and teaches. The Holy Spirit empowers each believer to live a lifestyle pleasing to God, and equips each believer with distinct gifts to accomplish the ministry He has planned. (Gen 1:2; Ps 104:30; John 14:26, 16:8,13; Rom 8:26; 1 Cor 3:16, 12:4-14; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 1:7; Tit 3:5; Heb 13:20-21)

Man:

We believe that man is a unique and valuable being created in the image of God, male and female. Mankind was created to reflect God's image, to glorify God and to relate to God. Mankind, at a point in history, rebelled against the rule and law of God. As a result, mankind died physically and spiritually, and all men have become enemies of God, and are depraved and lost. All men are now born sinners but are still responsible to know the true God of the Bible, to be loyal to Him, and to obey His laws. We believe that every human being, without exception, who reaches an age of moral responsibility, becomes a transgressor in thought, word, and deed and deserves the righteous wrath of God against such sinners, and thus needs a Savior. All men are eternal, and their eternal destiny will be determined by what they personally do with Jesus. (Gen 1:26-27, 2:7, 3:3-4; Dan 12:1-2; Rom 1:18-32, 3:10-23; Eph 2:1-3)

Salvation:

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice. We believe that all who personally receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and are eternally secure. We believe that they are justified freely by the blood of Christ by faith, and that by faith, a Christian must walk in dependence upon the Holy Spirit in order to please God the Father. We believe that salvation is a gift and that it cannot be earned, but that all who are saved will seek to please the Father by living a holy life. (John 3:3; Tit 3:5; 1 Cor 6:19-20; Rom 4:5, 12:1-8; Eph 4:7-15)

The Church:

Upon accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, a believer becomes part of His body, which is the church. There is one church universal, composed of all those throughout the world who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. When followers of Christ assemble to serve Him, the body of Christ is expressed locally. Such an assembly may become a local church if they meet regularly in accordance with the ordinances and structure set forth by God in the Bible. A local church provides believers with a venue for obeying the Biblical commands to gather for worship, prayer, teaching of the Bible, fellowship and outreach to the world. The church's members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the

ultimate purposes of glorifying God by loving Him, living graciously, and loving people. (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-46; Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 14:26; Eph 4:16, 5:23; 1 Tim 3; Tit 1; Heb 3:13, 10:25)

II. ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES FOR SERVICE

In addition to the previous set of doctrines, these are doctrines that we consider to be very important, and provide a basis for serving together in the ministry at Bethel Bible Fellowship.

Eternal Security:

We believe that all born-again persons are given new life by the Holy Spirit and permanently sealed in Him and that they are eternally secure in Christ. We also believe that failure to persevere in either faith or obedience may indicate that the Holy Spirit never sealed the life of that individual. (John 10:27-28; Eph 1:13,15; 2 Cor 13:5; 2 Pet 1:5-11)

Gifts of the Spirit:

We believe that the Holy Spirit equips every believer with one or more spiritual gifts for the edification of the Church. We believe that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit should have free, orderly expression in the local church and for reaching the lost. While we do not believe that the activity of any of the spiritual gifts has ceased, we acknowledge that the operation of the sign gifts of tongues, prophesy, healing and miracles greatly diminished with the passing of the original Apostles. We believe that the function of Apostle or Prophet is currently in operation in a general sense, but not in the same sense as in the New Testament times. We believe that these gifts are active in our day under the timing and placement of the Holy Spirit, but are not under any human control. (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12, 13, 14; 2 Cor 12:12; Eph 4:11; Heb 2:4)

Church Government and Ordinances:

We believe that a local church is to be led by a plurality of elders and deacons. The elders are to oversee the spiritual condition of the flock, while the deacons are ministers of mercy to the physical needs. We believe that every believer is a priest unto God and has the responsibility to follow Christ and use his or her gifts within the ministry of the church. We believe that believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the local church. However, they are not to be regarded as a means of salvation. We believe that the church has the responsibility to apply discipline, if necessary, to restore wayward members to fellowship. (Matt 23:19-20; 1 Cor 11:20-34; 1 Tim 3; Tit 1; 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6)

Male and Female Roles:

We believe that both men and women share equally in the wonderful blessings of grace, and have complementary roles. We believe that men have the primary responsibility to lead, both in the home and in the church. This by no means

implies inferiority of women, but designation of purpose. We believe that the work of elders and deacons is to be carried out by qualified men, and that women are free to teach and exercise leadership in any context that does not detract from the responsibility men have to lead. (1 Cor 11:3, 14:34; Gal 3:28; Eph 5:21-33; 1 Tim 2, 3; Tit 2:5)

Mission:

We believe the church exists to glorify God by loving Him, living graciously, and loving people. We believe that the church, as a living organism, is obligated to proclaim the gospel of Christ and to disciple those that come to Him in the ways of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 12:29-34; 1 Pet 3:15-16)