

What Does it Mean to be a Member of Hope Fellowship?

April 24, 2014

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us — and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

1 John 3: 16

So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another.

Romans 12:5

1. **The Heart of the Matter**

The mission of Hope Fellowship is to be a community of disciples of Jesus Christ. We believe that the path of discipleship is to be walked together and that the gathered life of the disciples is a proclamation of the gospel. Membership is both a statement and a practice. As members we

- commit ourselves to this church community with our energy, our devotion, and our gifts to help provide for the common life
- “lay down our lives” for each other, recognizing that the use of our time and our financial resources is submitted to the discernment of our brothers and sisters
- make ourselves vulnerable by sharing our needs with each other and confessing our sin to each other.

We do these things not because we individually or collectively are trustworthy or that we are extraordinary human beings, but because the Lord Jesus has promised to be present in and work through the gathered believers.

2. **Requirements:**

- a) Baptism (baptism from other churches accepted)
- b) Believer in Jesus Christ
- c) Confession of Jesus as Lord
- d) Sharing of life with Hope Fellowship
- d) Affirmation of callings

3. **Prerequisites** — these are likely to take a year or more:

- a) Worship with HF and live life with us for a while
- b) Complete set of orientation classes (administered by the pastoral team)
- c) Participate in discipleship formation through koinonia group

4. **Acknowledgement**

- a) Prospective member affirms that God has joined him or her to this body.
- b) Pastoral team affirms this calling.
- c) Prospective member meets with membership for conversation.
- d) Membership approves.
- e) New member shares testimony at all-church worship

5. **Callings**

- a) Worship actively and regularly with HF and grow individually in prayer and devotion

- b) Confess sin and grow in discipleship with brothers and sisters —Koinonia groups are a forum for where this takes place for members
- c) Serve willingly and joyfully as able with the church in ministries and other tasks
- d) Tithe to the corporate treasury of the church and share financially with each other as needed
- e) Love, support, forgive, and respect each other
- f) Mutual discernment in major personal and church decisions

7. “Exceptions” or, in another word, Grace

The path of discipleship is entered at the invitation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our response is a “yes” to his calling and the taking of the first steps along the way. We have always used the word “calling” to describe our engagement or commitments rather than requirement. The specific callings in #5 describe the specifics of this response that we, the members of Hope Fellowship, have affirmed. We have always recognized that some people will have limitations in a season or stage of life and not be fully able to live out one or more of these. The commitment of membership is to discern these “exceptions” together rather than individually, unilaterally.

8. Reaffirmation

The pastoral team will from time to time as it deems appropriate call for a recommitment of the membership. In this process all members take time to reconsider the calling of membership and with brothers and sisters to openly and prayerfully examine their commitments. At the close of the process at a members meeting members will reaffirm, or not, their own membership.