

# C. What We Believe

One of the mistaken concepts many have is all Christians and churches should be identical. They assume “unity” is equivalent to “sameness.” But the Apostle Paul points out differences do and will exist between churches and individuals in Christ:

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

We are called to unity in faith and doctrine, and there should be no tolerance for false, heretical doctrine. But on issues of style and practice, there should be tolerance. These are the areas of personal preference that should be respected. We refer to these as “distinctives.” They represent diversity within the greater Christian unity. The following is a short list of our distinctives.

1. We believe . . . in the Expository Teaching of the whole Word of God (Acts 20:20, 27; Nehemiah 8:8; Psalm 138:2). Therefore our worship services are structured around verse-by-verse teaching of the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.
2. We believe . . . the Book of Acts represents “normal” Christianity. Therefore we seek to pattern our lives and ministry after that modeled by the early church, as revealed in the book of Acts.

## **Our Missions & Means:**

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

## **Our Lifestyle:**

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship (*koinonia*), to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (Acts 2:42)

## **Our Growth:**

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

3. We believe . . . in Pastoral Leadership as the true biblical pattern for church government. Therefore the Elder Board, under the leadership of the Senior Pastor, is primarily responsible for direction and decision making.

4. We believe . . . that the Worship of God should be . . . Spiritual: We remain flexible and yielded to the leading of the Holy Spirit to direct our worship. Inspirational: We give a great place to music in our worship. Intelligent: Our services are designed with great emphasis on teaching the Word of God that He might instruct us how He should be worshipped. Fruitful: We look for His love in our lives as the supreme manifestation that we have truly been worshipping Him.
5. We believe . . . in Balance regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Therefore we consider ourselves to be neither charismatic nor non-charismatic. We believe all the gifts of the Spirit are available and operational within the church but should only be publicly exercised under the guidelines found in 1 Corinthians 12-14 and by permission of the pastoral leadership.
6. We believe . . . our ministry should be Simple & Sincere. Therefore we seek to imitate the testimony of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians:

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have behaved in the world, and more abundantly toward you. (2 Corinthians 1:12)

Therefore our services are conducted in a relaxed, comfortable and normal style. Human efforts to coerce or manipulate a response is contrary to the gentle and personal nature of the true ministry of the Holy Spirit.

7. We believe . . . we are only one member of the Body of Christ. Therefore we can rightly be classified as nondenominational. "Denominationalism" is an attempt to draw a line of exclusivity around Christ. No such line can honestly be drawn. We have our distinctive (as the hand is distinct from the foot), and we have our role that may differ from other parts of the body, but we are still only a part.
8. We believe . . . in both the sovereignty of God and mankind's free will/choice! Therefore we resist the extreme positions of hyper-Calvinism and/or hyper-Armenianism. We feel both try to force a conclusion which disregards a biblical balance. The believer in Christ is both secure in his faith and responsible to live a life of faith.
9. We believe . . . in the Imminent Return of Jesus Christ. Therefore doctrinally, we are Pre-Trib/Pre-Millennial in our interpretation of Last Days prophecy. Consistent with this position, we believe there is no sign or condition which must be fulfilled before Christ's imminent, visible, bodily return.
10. We believe . . . that Healthy Sheep Beget Healthy Sheep. In keeping with this purpose, we seek to win the lost, disciple the saved and encourage the faithful. We believe if we take care of our "depth," God will take care of our "breadth." The purpose of the church is not numerical growth but spiritual growth. The only strategy we have for our ministry is to "feed the flock of God" (John 21:12; Acts 20; 28; 1 Peter 5:2).