



MEMBERSHIP COURSE

WORKBOOK



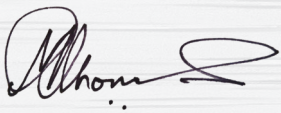
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WELCOME

Dear friend,
On behalf of the leaders of Pulse Church, welcome to our membership course. It is my hope that over the next three sessions, I will be able to introduce you to our church – What we believe, How we love, and How we lead. After participating in this course, I hope that you will have a better understanding of what doctrines we affirm, have a better knowledge of what it means to be a member of a local church, as well as be more informed about how the leaders of Pulse church desire to lead you. After going through these sessions with us, my prayer is that you decide to join us as we seek to know, speak, and live out the gospel here in South Africa.



Matt Thomas

WHY SHOULD WE JOIN A CHURCH?

The post-modern culture in which we live has impacted the church in many different ways. One of the negative ways it has influenced the church is regarding the areas of commitment and community. Although many Christians recognize the good that the church is doing, they have a phobia for commitment and prefer to “keep their options open.” It is safer this way just in case a better opportunity presents itself elsewhere.

Additionally, many Christians have bought into the idea that being an independent “lone-ranger” is synonymous with strength. This comes from the western cultural construct of individualism. Growing up in this environment further adds to this notion. To be dependent on others is a sign of weakness and slows one down in the race of life. Naturally, those who have bought into this notion think that the independent life is better than being entangled in the “messiness” of others.

Furthermore, many Christians think that the idea of church membership is outdated, irrelevant, and even unfriendly. Aren’t all Christians members of the church by virtue of their faith in Jesus? So, why does the church create additional church membership for believers? Is this not legalistic and even elitist? Who is the church to say that some are in and some are out?

These are relevant issues to tackle and questions to ask. We hope to provide biblical answers to them in this course. There are many reasons we will give as to why we believe local church membership is biblical but consider this primary one upfront: *Membership is the church’s corporate endorsement of a person’s salvation. It is more than a record of a statement it is a reflection of a living commitment to God and is a testimony to one’s membership in the universal church.* We are not saying that people who have not joined a church are not Christians; we are simply saying that membership gives their claim credibility.

You see joining a local church is an outward reflection of an inward love for God and for His people. Biblical love is servant-hearted, sacrificial, and characterized by commitment. The greatest example of God’s love was found in Jesus Christ, who embodied all these things (Mk. 10:45). If Christ willingly died for the church (Eph. 5:25), should we not also love it? Should we not at least join a church and link arms with other like-minded Christians?

THE IDENTITY OF PULSE CHURCH

1. WHAT IS OUR VISION?

Changing the heart of the nation.

2. WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

Changing hearts with the good news.

3. WHAT ARE OUR VALUES?

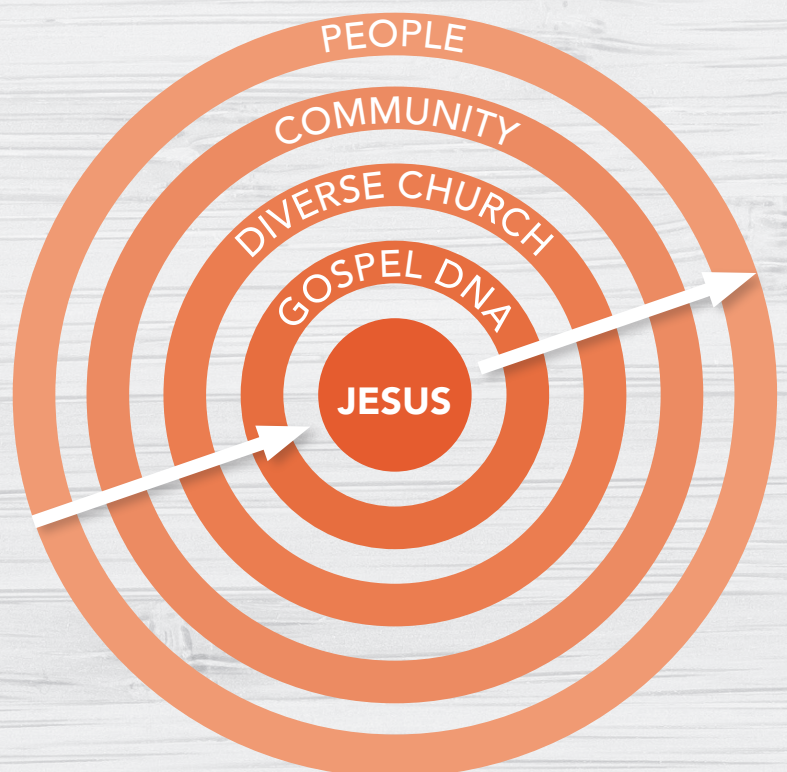
- a. *Jesus* as the point of the Bible.
- b. A *gospel DNA* as what shapes us.
- c. A *diverse church* as evidence of God's reconciling power.
- d. *Community* as the place to experience God's best for us.
- e. *People* as dignified reflections of God.

4. WHAT ARE OUR PILLARS?

- a. *Missional discipleship* – Discipleship centered on God's mission.
- b. *Leadership development* – Discovering, developing, and deploying leaders.
- c. *Cultural engagement* – Creatively engaging culture with a redemptive lens.

5. WHAT IS OUR DNA?

- a. *Knowing the gospel* – Being fluent in knowing what god has done and what that means.
- b. *Living the gospel* – Applying the gospel to our relationships.
- c. *Speaking the gospel* – Proclaiming the gospel through various avenues.



A. WHAT WE BELIEVE

.....

In this opening session we will answer two questions: (1) What do we believe? (2) What is the Gospel? We will answer each question and then open the floor to any questions that you may have.

1. WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

While our belief about the church is included in our statement of faith, we have not included it in this lesson as we have decided to reserve it for our next lesson because it will be better suited to our discussion on church membership. For our full statement of faith please visit our website pulsechurch.co.za.

a. The Bible

We believe that God has revealed Himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments. We believe that the Bible was written by people as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21). The result was that every word was inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16) and therefore the original manuscripts contained no errors. We believe that the Bible is God's Word and speaks with final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

b. God

We believe there is one God (Deut. 6:4, Isa. 45:5-7, Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:4), who exists eternally as three persons – The Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Each person of the Godhead is equal in essence and nature, but distinct in their roles. So, we affirm the doctrine of the Trinity (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6). God is sovereign over all things, yet this in no way makes Him the author of sin, nor does it reduce the moral responsibility of His creatures. So, we affirm that His divine determination and man's determination are compatible truths.

God the Father

God the Father is the first person of the Trinity. His Fatherhood denotes His relationship to the Son, firstly within the Trinity (Jn. 17) and secondly with mankind – He is the Creator of all people (1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:14) and the perfect Father of all believers (Matt. 5:16; 6:9).

God the Son

We believe that the Son of God is the second person of the Trinity who has existed from all eternity (Jn. 1:1-3). He is of the same essence of God the Father and is co-eternal and co-equal with Him (Jn. 8:58; 10:27-30; 20:28; Rom. 9:5, Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:1-3; 8-9; 1 Jn. 5:20). Christ's submission to His Father on earth did not make Him any less God or worthy of worship

(1 Cor. 11:3). Theologians sometimes refer to this trinitarian concept as “ontological equality but economic subordination,” which means that Jesus equal but subordinate in role to the Father.

When He came to earth in the likeness of human flesh (Rom. 8:4) as a Jewish descendent of David (Rom. 1:3; 9:5), He was born of the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:25), and He willingly relinquished some of His divine attributes in order to live as a man, experience temptation, and die on a cross (Phil. 2:5-8). However, He never sinned (Heb. 4:15). Therefore, we affirm that He is fully God and fully Man.

We believe that Christ was raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures which confirmed His deity and the acceptance of His atoning work on the cross (1 Cor. 1:3-5). His bodily resurrection is the foundation and first-fruits of the future bodily resurrection for all believers (1 Cor. 15:20-23; 1 Thess. 4:14-17).

We believe that after His resurrection He was seated at the right hand of God the Father far above every human and spiritual authority in the universe (Eph. 1:20-21), given as the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18), and appointed as both the judge and Lord of all people (Acts 17:31; Rom. 1:2-4).

God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He is co-equal with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:17) yet submits to the Son just as the Son submits to the Father (Jn. 16:13-15). He is a living person since He is intelligent, (1 Cor. 2:10-13), has emotions (Eph. 4:30), and a will (1 Cor. 12:11).

We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is vital to spiritual growth of all believers for He sanctifies (1 Thess. 4:8), empowers (Acts 1:8), fills (Eph. 5:18), illuminates (1 Cor. 2:11-14), and supernaturally gifts (1 Cor. 12:7) them to be able to serve the body of Christ and to live in obedience to God (Rom. 8:11).

c. Man

We believe that all men and women have been created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) and have been endowed with dignity and worth by Him (Ps. 8:5). However, because of Adam and Eve’s disobedience the image of God in mankind was distorted, and therefore they incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death becoming subject to the wrath of God (Jn. 3:36; Eph. 2:3).

We believe in the concept of “corporate solidarity.” This means that Adam as the first man and his actions represented all of mankind. Since Adam is the representative of all human beings, his sin was at the same time the sin of us all (Rom. 5:12). Adam’s disobedience brought sin, death, and condemnation to all mankind (Rom. 5:15-19). When Adam lost his authority and identity as a child of God, so did all his descendants.

As a result of the Fall (Gen. 3:1-19) all people sin because they are born sinners – They are children of the devil (Jn 8:44; 1 Jn. 3:8), blind to spiritual truth (2 Cor. 4:3-4), enslaved to the power of sin (Jn. 8:34; Rom. 6:6), dead in their sins (Eph. 2:1), in moral and spiritual darkness (Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5), and unable to come to God no more than a dead person like Lazarus could bring himself back to life (Jn. 11:43-44).

d. Spiritual Gifts

We believe that God supernaturally gives each of His children at least one spiritual gift, which is essentially serving gifts (1 Pet. 4:10-11). We define a spiritual gift as “a God-given ability for service and the equipping of the church.” They are given graciously and sovereignly by the trinity (1 Cor. 12:11; Rom. 12:3, 6; Eph. 4:7-8); are given at the moment of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13); and are given for the purpose of serving others in love (1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:12; 1 Cor. 13).

We also believe that God has given gifted men and women to the church for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:7-12). It is essential that every believer discovers, develops, and uses their spiritual gift for the purpose of edifying the rest of the body and for accomplishing the work of the Lord until He returns (Rom. 12:4-8).

Regarding the operation of the spiritual gifts today, we are happy to hold an “open but cautious” position on the matter. On the one hand, we are open to the miraculous spiritual gifts as we believe that they are essential to a healthy growing gospel-centered church. We are not persuaded by cessationist arguments which maintain that Scripture teaches that the gifts have ceased. So, we believe that all the gifts are still in operation today.

However, since we believe that God has ceased to provide inspired revelation, we do not believe that apostles and prophets function with the same authority today as those in the early church. Modern apostles and prophets’ function more as missionaries and spokesmen of God’s written Word.

Yet, on the other hand, we are cautious because we recognize that many churches have abused these gifts and have sadly been divided by them. So, while we are open to the miraculous spiritual gifts, we strive to create a culture of order and unity in our Sunday services because we believe that our God is a God of peace and order (1 Cor. 14:33, 40).

e. The Future

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will personally return in His resurrection body (1 Thess. 4:13-18, Tit. 2:11-13) for the purpose of giving those who have already died in Christ their resurrected bodies and for gathering from the earth all those who make up His Church. At that time, they will all receive their physical resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15:51-53).

We believe that the Bible teaches that there will be two kinds of resurrection – The resurrection unto life and the resurrection unto judgement (Jn. 5:28-29). Since the Bible also describes the resurrection unto life as the “first resurrection” (Rev. 20:5-6), we can equally use the labels – First

and Second resurrection. The Second resurrection is a resurrection of all unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-15). On the other hand, the First resurrection is a resurrection of all believers (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

We believe that Christ will return to earth in glory to occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31, Lk. 1:31-33) and establish His Messianic Kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Rev. 20:1-8). During this time the saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth.

We believe that after the end of the millennial Kingdom, the elements of this earth and the whole of the corrupted creation will be dissolved (2 Pet. 3:10) and replaced with a new heaven and earth without any corruption and unrighteousness (Eph. 5:5, Rev. 20:15, 21:1-2), a heavenly city will come down from heaven to the new earth (Rev. 21:2).

2. WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

a. The Gospel

The contents of the gospel message are that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day. All these historical events happened according to the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-5). The gospel is the only message that is powerful to save sinners (Rom. 1:16-17).

At Pulse Church, we like to summarize the Gospel message by saying "Jesus instead of Us." This means that Jesus was condemned instead of us, so that we could be free from condemnation. Jesus was pronounced guilty of sin instead of us, so that we could be pronounced not guilty. Jesus was punished for our sin instead of us, so that we could be set free. Jesus paid our debt to God instead of us, so that our debt could be cancelled. Jesus suffered God's just righteous wrath instead of us, so that we don't have to. At the cross Jesus was separated from the Father instead of us, so that we could be reconciled back to God. Jesus died instead of us, so that we could have eternal life. That is why the Gospel message is Good News. Jesus instead of us, he got what we deserve so that we could get what we don't deserve.

b. Salvation

Since all people are born spiritually separated from God and totally depraved and corrupted by sin, they are powerless to make themselves right with God. He alone must regenerate or make sinners spiritually alive (Jn. 3:3-8; Eph. 2:4-9; Tit. 3:5). Those who appropriate God's gift of salvation through repentance and faith in Christ's finished work of the cross are saved. So, we believe that salvation is wholly of God, offered as a gift by His grace, on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ, not on the basis of any human will or work (Jn. 1:12, Rom. 9:11-18; Eph. 2:8-10).

The three persons of the triune Godhead are all involved in the salvation of sinners. God the Father chose some sinners for salvation before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3-6); the Son of God accomplished their redemption on the cross (Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:14); and the Holy Spirit applies the finished work of Jesus by regenerating them through the gospel (Jn. 3:3-8; Tit. 3:5;

1 Pet. 1:23-25) enabling them to come to saving faith (Jn. 16:8-11). Christ's death was voluntary (Jn. 10:17-18), substitutionary (Rom. 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:24), and propitiatory (Rom. 3:25-26; 1 Jn. 2:2).

We believe that all believers, by virtue of their union with Christ, fulfil the requirement of the law and are declared as righteous in God's sight at the moment they place their faith in Jesus Christ alone (Rom. 5:1; 8:1-4). They are no longer defined by their sin but by their new identity in Christ as "saints" (1 Cor. 1:2). Through the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit, they are children of God and able to please God by faith (Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 2:20).

We believe that salvation is best understood as an "already-not-yet" reality. All believers have already been justified before God and as a result are free from the power of sin (Rom. 6:6, 14). However, they are still being saved (1 Cor. 1:18) as they are daily being changed into the image of Christ by the Word (Jn. 17:17) and the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18). Sanctification is the necessary outcome of justification (Rom. 6:7; 14-23) and the will of God (1 Thess. 4:3). Only after death will believers be glorified (Rom. 8:30).

B. HOW WE LOVE

In this session we will answer two questions pertaining to the subject of how we love each other: (1) What is the church? (2) What does church membership entail? We will answer each question and then open the floor to any questions that you may have.

1. What is the church?

- The church is made up of people whom God has called out of the world to Himself through the gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- The purpose of the church is to glorify God by growing in the Gospel and going with the Gospel.
- There is only one church (universal) – built on the confession of the Lordship of Christ (Matt. 16:18) and expressed in local congregations in the world.
- Jesus is the supreme head of the church, which is His spiritual body here on earth (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
- The church was a mystery hidden in the Old Testament, and only revealed for this first time in the New Testament to the holy apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20).
- The mystery was that Jewish and Gentile believers would co-exist together in the body of Christ as one new man (Eph. 2:15; 3:5-6).

2. What does church membership entail?

We will answer this question under three headings: The definition, the responsibilities, and the requirements of church membership.

a. Definition of Church Membership

“Becoming a Christian means being united to Christ, and union with Christ expresses itself in union with a local body of believers. It seems to us that in the New Testament, to be excluded from the local church was to be excluded from Christ. This is why the issue of membership is so important” (Piper). Below are three basic points to help you to better understand what church membership is.

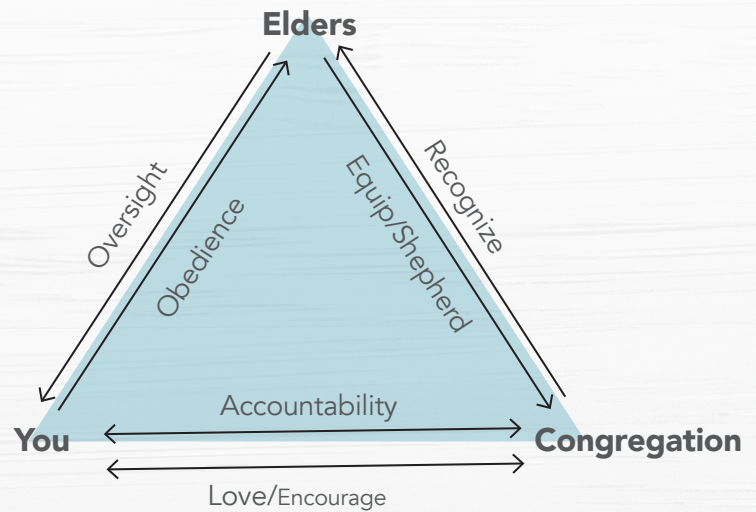
- It is a gift of God.
- It is the plan of God.
- It is about giving, serving, and sacrifice.

b. Responsibilities of Church Members

Christians are the family of God. And as in any family, we each have responsibilities and roles to play. In every family, if only one or two members are serving the family while the rest of the family are merely consumers, then that family is unhealthy and dysfunctional. The same applies to the church.

Based on these "one another" Scriptures, we believe that each member at Pulse Church should take upon themselves and be held accountable to fulfill the following responsibilities towards each other.

- Participate in Sunday Services and a Missional Community regularly.
- Participate in Communion regularly.
- Give to the Life and Ministry of Pulse Church regularly.
- Serve regularly.



"ONE ANOTHER'S" OF THE NEW TESTAMENT	
Responsibility	Scriptures (NIV)
Be devoted to one another	Romans 12:10
Honor one another	Romans 12:10
Live in harmony with one another	Romans 12:16
Do not judge one another	Romans 14:13
Accept one another	Romans 15:7
Instruct one another	Romans 15:14
Serve one another in love	Galatians 5:13
Carry one another's burdens	Galatians 6:2
Be kind and compassionate to one another	Ephesians 4:32
Forgive one another	Ephesians 4:32
Submit to one another	Ephesians 5:21
Do not lie to one another	Colossians 3:9
Teach and admonish one another	Colossians 3:16
Love one another	1 Thessalonians 4:9
Encourage and build one another up	1 Thessalonians 5:11
Be patient with one another	1 Thessalonians 5:14
Spur one another on toward love and good deeds	Hebrews 10:24
Do not grumble against one another	James 5:9
Confess your sins to one another	James 5:16
Pray for one another	James 5:16
Show hospitality to one another	1 Peter 4:9

c. Requirements of Church Membership

We believe that church membership at Pulse church begins with two important things: (1) Getting baptized and (2) Signing our statement of faith and church covenant.

Getting Baptized

While baptism is not required for salvation, but it is a biblical command and therefore not to be baptized is disobedience to God's Word (Matt. 28:19-20). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the wider universal church (Acts 2:41-42). We believe in believer's baptism (not infant baptism) by immersion under water (Acts 8:35-39). Water baptism reflects the spiritual reality that a believer has been united in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ at moment of their conversion (Rom. 6:3-5).

Signing our Statement of Faith and Church Covenant

A church covenant can be defined in three ways.

- A church covenant is a promise made to God, to a local church, and to one's self.
- A church covenant is a summary of how we agree to live.
- A church covenant is a sign of commitment to God, to His church, and to personal holiness.

To help you to understand our church covenant we have divided it into three parts: The introduction; the promises; and the benediction. At regular times throughout the year, we will publicly remind ourselves of the promises we have made to each other.

The Introduction

1. This covenant is only entered into with those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ alone and have been baptized by full immersion in obedience to God's word.
2. This covenant can only be kept with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Promises

Below is a summary of the promises and a short description further explaining the rationale or biblical basis for the promise.

1. We will work and pray to preserve the Spirit-created unity amongst ourselves.
2. We will walk together in brotherly love.
3. We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.
4. We will not neglect to pray for ourselves and others.
5. We will seek to disciple other believers.
6. We will rejoice at each other's success and bear each other's burdens and sorrows.
7. We will seek to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.

- 8. We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry.
- 9. When we move, we will unite with another like-minded church.

The Benediction

Our church covenant closes with a benediction taken from 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Pulse Church Covenant

Having, as we trust, been brought by Divine Grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

We will work and pray to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church; exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice at each other's happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek, by divine enablement, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Discipleship Pathway

Our desire is that you come to love the local church because Jesus Christ gave His life for it (Eph. 5:25). We also hope that you will seriously consider, not only attending Pulse Church, but joining us as a member. Our desire is to also see each of our members growing towards spiritual maturity. We have developed a discipleship pathway which serves to guide us in how we practically ensure that each of our members are growing in their faith.



Plant

To be planted means *joining* Pulse church as a member. Practically this involves writing out your personal testimony of how you came to know Christ, getting baptized by full immersion and signing our statement of faith and church covenant which indicates your commitment to fulfilling your responsibilities to the leadership and to other members.

Root

To be rooted means *knowing* God's story as revealed in the Bible. Practically this involves joining a Missional Community where you can learn the Word with other like-minded believers.

Grow

To grow means *living* out your faith by worshipping, walking, working, and witnessing together with others for God's glory. Research shows that 70% of our growth comes from doing what we have listened to and interacted with.

Fruit

To bear fruit means *participating* not only in the ministry of Pulse church, but also in its mission, which is to change hearts with the good news. We can do this by personally sharing the gospel or by supporting our missionaries financially.

C. HOW WE LEAD

In this session we will focus on the responsibilities of the leaders towards the members of Pulse church. Finally, we will also discuss the practice of church discipline.

1. What is our philosophy of church leadership?

We will answer this question by looking at following aspects: (1) The qualifications of elders, (2) the responsibilities of elders, (3) the role of woman in leadership.

a. The Qualifications of Elders

We believe in the plurality of elders (also called overseers, bishops, pastors etc.) who are responsible to lead or serve the local church as under shepherds of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 5:1-4; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17). These men must be qualified according to the requirements laid out by the apostle Paul (1 Tim. 3:1-13, Tit. 1:5-9).

b. The Responsibilities of Elders

The elders serve the church by having spiritual oversight over the church which includes some of the following primary responsibilities:

- Teach and preach the word (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:9)
- Visit the sick and pray (Jam. 5:14; Acts 6:4)
- Protect the church from false teachers (Acts 20:17, 28–31)
- Exhort and admonish the saints in sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 3:13–17; Tit. 1:9).
- Equip the members of the church (Eph. 4:11-13).
- Shepherd the flock (1 Pet. 5:1-3).

c. The Role of Women in the Church

We believe that men and women are created equal and stand before God equally. Furthermore, we are complementarian in that we believe God has given men and women distinct and equal roles in leading and serving their families, and therefore this extends to the household of God as well. In functioning in their God given roles, they complement each other, and the family is able to thrive. This is not based on gifting but rather on roles.

2. What is church discipline?

a. Formative and Corrective Discipline

Formative discipline consists of doing things like preaching, teaching, praying etc. These things

help to keep the church healthy because they keep it away from spiritual diseases. On the other hand, corrective discipline is like surgery – It corrects something that has gone wrong in the body so that further injury is prevented.

b. The Purposes of Church Discipline

Based on 1 Corinthians 5:12-13 we could summarize the role of God and role of the church as follows: (1) The church judges believers; (2) God judges unbelievers (cf. 1 Pet. 4:17). There are many purposes for disciplining someone in the church context, but the two primary reasons are (1) For the health of the individual; (2) For the health of the church.

c. Scriptural Basis for Church Discipline

There are many Scriptures that deal with the subject of discipline (e.g. Heb. 12:1-14; Gal. 6:1-3; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 1:20; 5:19-20; Tit. 3:9-11). However, two passages that specifically address church discipline are Matthew 18:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-11. Let's briefly take a look at them together.

Matthew 18:15-20

This passage answers the question, "How do I respond when someone sins against me?" Let's consider the basic steps that Jesus gave us to follow.

- Personal consideration (Gal. 6:1)
- Private conversation (v15)
- Private corroboration (v16)
- Public confrontation (v17a)
- Public censure (v17b)

1 Corinthians 5:1-11

An important phrase in this passage is, "hand this man over to Satan so that the sinful nature may be destroyed" (NIV). What does this mean? Simply put, it meant that this person was to be removed or excommunicated from fellowship (2 Thess. 3:14). At Pulse church we believe that excommunication will require the following practical actions:

- The name of the unrepentant person is officially removed from the membership roll.
- The unrepentant person is prohibited from participating in communion.

These actions do not mean that the unrepentant believer is not allowed to attend Sunday services. They will be welcome because we encourage them to hear the word. The purpose of excommunication will be practiced in hope that this person would turn away from his sin. Again, the purpose of church discipline is not punitive but for the sake of restoration.

APPENDIX A:

PERSONAL TESTIMONY TEMPLATE

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This template has been adapted from Dr. Larry Moyer's article *3 Parts of An Effective Testimony*. Use the three main parts or questions and the sub-questions under each one to guide you in writing out your own personal story of salvation. Please include the three main parts in your written copy.

1. Where were you before you came to Christ?

- What was your life like before you trusted in Jesus Christ?
- What were your thoughts about God?
- Did you think you got to heaven by living a good life and doing the best you could?
- Where you from a religious family that had a reverence for God but no relationship with Him?
- Did your family rarely mention spiritual things?
- What were your thoughts about yourself, the Bible, church, or even Christians?
- Did you feel hopeless?
- Did things you thought would bring happiness leave you feeling empty?

2. How did you come to understand the Gospel and trust Christ?

- What circumstances prompted you to start thinking about spiritual things?
- What did God use to get your attention?
- Was it like a whisper in your ear or a billboard in front of your face?
- Did God use the invitation of a friend to a special church service, a tract, relationship difficulties, or feelings of loneliness?
- What events and people did God use to introduce you to the Saviour?

3. What difference has Christ made now?

- When you contrast where you were before you came to Christ to where you are now, what stands out in your mind?
- How has your perspective changed?
- How has Christ dealt with your sin issue?
- Do you know for certain that if you were to die you would go to heaven?

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