

# VALLEY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship,  
to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

*Acts 2:42*



## WELCOME TO VCF


It fills our hearts with joy that you consider Valley Christian Fellowship your home church and would like to become a part of our family. The purpose of this document is to formally induct new members into the church body. Within this booklet you will find our *mission and culture*, our *method and vision*, and our *doctrine*.

Before you continue, we ask you to connect with either a VCF staff member, elder, or your Home Group leader so you may go through this document together.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>WHAT IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?</b> .....                  | 3  |
| MEMBERSHIP PROCESS.....                                  | 4  |
| OPPORTUNITIES MEMBERSHIP AFFORDS.....                    | 5  |
| <b>UNDERSTANDING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP</b> .....             | 5  |
| “BIG C” CHURCH.....                                      | 5  |
| “LITTLE C” CHURCH.....                                   | 7  |
| GOD’S DESIGN FOR THE CHURCH.....                         | 7  |
| <b>VCF MISSION</b> .....                                 | 9  |
| CULTURE OF THE SCRIPTURES.....                           | 10 |
| CULTURE OF HOSPITALITY.....                              | 11 |
| CULTURE OF PRAYER.....                                   | 15 |
| CULTURE OF GENEROSITY.....                               | 16 |
| <b>METHOD</b> .....                                      | 17 |
| EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING AND TEACHING FROM THE PULPIT..... | 18 |
| SINGING OUR PRAISES TO GOD / THE LYRICS WE SING.....     | 18 |
| HOME GROUPS.....   | 18 |
| BIBLE STUDIES.....                                       | 18 |
| PARADIGM / LIFE GROUPS.....                              | 19 |
| OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN TO LEARN THE BIBLE..... | 19 |
| INTENTIONAL EVANGELISM.....                              | 19 |
| <b>VCF VISION</b> .....                                  | 19 |
| <b>VCF CHURCH STRUCTURE</b> .....                        | 20 |
| <b>VCF STATEMENT OF FAITH: OUR DOCTRINE</b> .....        | 20 |

## INTERACTIVE PROMPTS

Within the booklet, we have placed an action icon  that gives you a prompt to take action — read, write or discuss — while going through the booklet.

## WHAT IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

To begin, let's examine what membership is not. Membership in the church is not the same as membership in a club or organization. Although the church is an organized group of people, it is more properly understood to be an organism; a body made up of living people (made alive in Christ) and who, as an organism, make Christ known by their love for one another (**John 13:34-35**).

It's important to make clear that neither membership or even the church itself makes sense without that which is at the center of it all: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without Jesus' atoning sacrifice for our sins there is no forgiveness and without the resurrection, there is no eternal life. Jesus proved (by his death and resurrection) that he defeated sin and death once and for all and that all who believe in the truth of the gospel are given salvation and eternal life.


---

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

*John 13:34-35*

---

.....

 On the blank pages provided at the end of the document, write out and share your testimony — how you came to know Christ as Savior — with a member of the pastoral staff, an Elder, or your Home Group leader.

 Read *1 Corinthians 12:12-27*

.....

## MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

Please remember this process is simply an opportunity, an invitation, and not at all a prerequisite for attending and participating in Valley Christian Fellowship's church life. Our goal is to inform those desiring a more thorough understanding of the concept of church membership. Subsequent to that endeavor, we want to offer the opportunity to connect deeply to this community by formally signaling a willingness to offer oneself to the care and authority of local church leadership. This process helps Elders identify who has elected to come under their care in such a manner as to permit formal encouragement, exhortation, and yes, Godly discipline if unrepentant sin were to be revealed. May God help us all to yield to His authority and to the headship of Christ, member or not.

Our goal with this material and process has aimed to adhere to the most basic and important aspects of Christian doctrine — items we would die for — and to describe how we think our community's mission plays out to reach our vision.

Process:

1. Inquire and desire to learn more about membership.
2. Read through and discuss the membership information contained here to ensure all your inquiries are met.
  - a. This can be discussed within your home group, bible study, or one on one with an Elder.
  - b. Classes will also be offered a couple times per year to provide opportunity for inquiry and understanding.
3. Share your testimony with your home group leader, a staff member, or an Elder.
4. If ready, formally declare your membership by signing the statement contained at the end of this document.

## OPPORTUNITIES MEMBERSHIP AFFORDS

Membership to VCF is primarily about declaring your commitment to this local body, and to your willingness to come under the authority of Christ (the head of the Church) through the shepherding of the local leadership (Elders, who are under Christ's headship).

However, it also affords members the chance to:

- Participate in the formal parts of church life such as budgeting
- Nominate and participate in leadership as an Elder
- Serve in children's and youth ministry as a leader
- Serve on the various Sunday morning teams (safety team, hospitality, usher)
- Shepherd a Home Group

## UNDERSTANDING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

### "BIG C" CHURCH

The prerequisite to being a part of this living body is salvation through Christ alone. We all begin life apart from God, separated from Him at birth by our sin. Salvation happens when we believe the gospel of Jesus; that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (**Romans 3:23**) and that, because God is perfectly just, the penalty for sin is death (**Romans 6:23**) but God so loved the world that He gave his One and only Son Jesus (**John 3:16**) so that, by His death he might become the substitute for us (**1 John 2:2**) and pay the penalty for sin by His death and that by His resurrection He might also raise us to spiritual, eternal life (**Romans 6:4**) and be reconciled to God (**2 Corinthians 5:14-21**). By agreeing with God about our sin and believing by faith that Jesus is our Savior, we too can live a new life in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). We then become a part of the worldwide body of Christ and join the Church that has existed since Jesus established the Church in the first century.

Since we are all members of the "Big C" Church, but we cannot all meet with everyone in the whole world from the first century until today — not yet at least (**Revelation 7:9-10**), the Scriptures give us a

---

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

*Romans 6:23*

---

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

*2 Corinthians 5:17*

---

layout of how the Church is supposed to function as a smaller, local body of believers who spend time together in worship (we will discuss worship later). Church membership primarily describes how members of the universal body of Christ function: in a practical way, within a local body of believers, in a specific place, in a specific time, with a specific people.

The Church, as established by Jesus, has two primary objectives: *discipleship* and *evangelism*. We find these two objectives being commissioned to the "Big C" Church just before Jesus' ascension. This is known as The Great Commission:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

*Matthew 28:18-20*

Membership all begins, as we have said, with salvation. Baptism is the outward expression of the inward reality that someone has gone from spiritual death to spiritual life. But how can someone become a disciple unless they have heard the gospel first (**Romans 10:13-15**)? This gets at the very heart of church membership: togetherness for the sake of the Gospel going forth.

This happens through the ongoing process of discipleship and evangelism:



---

*"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'"*

*Revelation 7:9-10*

---

*"...for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"*

*Romans 10:13-15*

---

## "LITTLE C" CHURCH

So now we come to the question: how do we participate and practice The Great Commission and The Great Commandment in a practical, tangible way? This is where membership in the "little c" church comes in. And this is also why you are here reading!

Billions of people have become a member of Jesus' family ("Big C" Church) over the two thousand years since he left us with His Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:5**). As the Church continued to grow in number it became clear that, even though they had all become believers through the same salvation in Christ, they did not all have the same gifts, abilities, or even agree upon the way their time together should function. As the gospel spread, "little c" local churches all over the Mediterranean region were planted. Each church had different people, a different history, background and a different culture than the previous church. When groups of people have such broad diversity, disunity is inevitable without a common bond.

The apostle Paul urged one thing above all for the early church: unity in the body. Unity in the body can only happen if everyone who is a part of a "little c" church recognizes and submits themselves to a few things:

1. The Great Commandment
2. The Great Commission
3. The Vision, Mission and Leadership within a local body

## GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE CHURCH

The New Testament gives us an outline of what it looked like for the early church to fulfill these three things listed above. First, God had appointed some to be apostles, preachers, some to be teachers, prophets, evangelists and (**Ephesians 4:4-13**). Because of this, the people began to recognize who these leaders were. It started with the apostles who were directly appointed by Jesus.

---

*"For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

Acts 1:5

---

---

*"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."*

Ephesians 4:4-6

---



Read Ephesians 2:19-22

.....

The members of the early church recognized the authority of the apostles and followed them as they followed Jesus. They learned how to love God and love others, obeying all that Jesus commanded by listening to the apostles' teaching (as heard from Jesus' teaching), and emulating their actions (as seen in Jesus' actions). Jesus didn't just tell us how to live, he showed us how to live.

## **He who made us became us to show us how to be us. – Casey Groves**

The apostles continued what Jesus began through discipleship and evangelism. The Church grew and churches were planted. People were added to their number daily and church membership grew. The book of Acts tells us that every church member was committed to four things:

1. Teaching
2. Fellowship / Breaking of Bread
3. Prayer
4. Generosity



Read Acts 2:41-47

*Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They [devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching] and to [fellowship, to the breaking of bread] and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to [give to anyone who had need]. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

These four things describe the *culture* of the early church. This is what they did every day and they did all four things *together*. Togetherness is one of the key aspects of membership in a local church. As God has called us to unity in the body, there is nothing that unites more than an overall culture of togetherness for the sake of the gospel. Notice that the believers had everything in common.

How did they accomplish this? The first thing we see is *devotion*. They were committed. They were members of a local body of believers that were committed to the authority of those in leadership and committed to each other out of a deep love for God and one another. The fruit from this kind of discipleship was robust, joyful body life and proactive evangelism — the supernatural outcome. As a result, many people came to know Jesus Christ and the Church exploded in number. Valley Christian Fellowship desires to be like this. It's our vision, the outcome of our devotion and effort. We want to foster an overall culture of togetherness by practicing the four cultures of the early church.

## VCF MISSION

The mission statement at VCF is threefold:

**To know Christ, to make Him known and to do what He did.**

A church's mission statement is a succinct way to describe the activity of a local body of believers. Since the church acts as the hands and feet of Jesus (**1 Corinthians 12:12-27, specifically 27**), we are called to embody the Great Commandment and Great Commission *in a local body*.

Our mission statement describes that intention: to know Christ (first by salvation then discipleship within the body), to make Him known (by living out the love we have for God and one other by engaging the practices that Jesus did (scriptural study, breaking bread, prayer,

---

*"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."*

*1 Corinthians 12:27*

---

giving, service, etc.) that we may be empowered to submit and enact the Father's will (**John 13:35**).

To fulfill our mission as a church, we engage in four particular cultures:

1. Culture of The Scriptures: The Apostles Teachings
2. Culture of Hospitality: Fellowship & Breaking Bread
3. Culture of Prayer
4. Culture of Generosity: Giving

## CULTURE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Like the early church, we believe that the ultimate authority comes from God Himself as spoken through His Son and the Scriptures (**Hebrews 1:1-2, Hebrews 4:12**). The Word of God is our source of total truth and complete revelation. And we don't just believe the Word of God, we want to act upon it; do it (**Matthew 7:21-26**).

*Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.*  
*Luke 11:28*

Having a good grasp on what the scriptures teach was important to the early church because false teaching was everywhere. This is still the case today. Paying the most careful attention (**Hebrews 2:1**) and studying the scriptures with the utmost care was important to the early church (**Acts 17:11**). It was essential because they believed that the words of the apostles and the scriptures carried the authority to speak directly into the lives of believers. It was confirmed that the Holy Spirit had inspired and authored the letters of the apostles that we now call the New Testament (**2 Peter 1:12-21**).

One of the best ways to foster a deep love for God's word and the desire to obey it is by practicing it in community. Notice that the early church didn't go off into their own rooms and study the Scriptures but rather they studied together. And the early church didn't just study together, they studied every day *together*. Practically, it may not work

---

*"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

*John 13:35*

---

---

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."*

*Matthew 7:21*

---

*"Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."*

*Acts 17:11*

---

for us to be together every day as they were but our goal at VCF is to foster a culture that encourages a deep love for God's word by our devotion to it.

### CULTURE OF HOSPITALITY: FELLOWSHIP / BREAKING BREAD

The prerequisite to authentic fellowship with other believers is salvation. Fellowship is the supernatural response to being transformed by Christ (**1 John 1:5-7**). The early church loved being together because each one had an incredible, miraculous thing in common: they were made alive in Christ! They were devoted to one another with a deep love for Jesus and for others who had been transformed by Him. We get the word Fellowship from the Greek word *Koinonia* which means "to share or to have in common".

*All the believers were together and had everything in common.  
Acts 2:44*

Sharing our lives with one another as believers is also one of the main ingredients to growing in our knowledge and love for God. As our love for God increases, it flows over into a deep love for other believers.

*Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.  
1 Thessalonians 2:8*

There is no such thing as a lone-wolf believer. It's impossible to grow in your knowledge and love for God completely alone because the commands of Jesus are intended to be lived out in communion with other believers. There are nearly 60 "one another" commands in the New Testament; to love one another (**John 13:34**) be devoted to and

---

*"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."*

1 John 1:5-7

---

*"Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves."*

Romans 12:10

---

*"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."*

1 Thessalonians 5:11

honor one another (**Romans 12:10**), live in harmony with one another, (**Romans 12:16**), build one another up (**1 Thess. 5:11**), among many “others” commands. VCF practices these things in our (see below) home groups, bible studies, youth and children’s ministries as well as on Sunday mornings before and after service. We also have special events throughout the year to encourage togetherness. Togetherness for the sake of edification, discipleship and being equipped to take the gospel out into the world is the main purpose of fellowship. But the best byproduct of good fellowship is great joy!

Notice in **Act 2:42-47** that the early church was together all the time and the result was “glad and sincere hearts.” We desire to live out this kind of fellowship so that our joy may be complete in Christ together! And truly, nothing says togetherness like eating a meal together, which brings us to the next outcome of our mission to know Christ, make Him known, and do what He did: building a *culture of breaking bread*.

There are two aspects to a culture of breaking bread. One is the *physical* and more obvious attribute — eating a meal with others! When we look at the life of Jesus and His ministry we see a man who loved to bring the message of truth around a table. The New Testament records 27 times that Jesus was eating, attending a meal or celebrating during a feast all while on mission. Eating a meal with others is an important part of what it means to bring the gospel to bear because of the *spiritual* significance of breaking bread with others.

Hidden within Jesus’ love of eating with others is the spiritual meaning behind breaking bread. After the exodus of God’s people from the slavery of Egypt and after the Israelites had wandered in the desert for 40 years Moses reminded the people of God’s provision for their physical survival in the desert and the spiritual significance of bread:

---

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”*

*Acts 2:42-47*

---

*He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*

*Deuteronomy 8:3*

God was revealing to His people that they needed him for so much more than physical provision. They didn't just need to survive until death. They needed to live and live eternally. The central point is that in partaking of physical bread we will have physical life but by partaking in spiritual bread (the Word of God) we will have spiritual life.

This becomes exciting when we understand what the Scriptures reveal about Jesus. Born in Bethlehem, (meaning house of bread) Jesus comes down from Heaven like the provision of manna to a wandering people. And suddenly, what mankind needs the most is provided in the person and work of Jesus Christ:

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*John 1:14*

*If man does not live on bread alone, but on every Word that comes from the mouth of God, what we have in Jesus is The Word given to us as "The Bread of Life."*

*John 6:30-58*



Take some time to read and consider John 6:30-58

.....

*I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

*John 6:48-51*

This is an amazing and profound truth that gives “breaking bread” a whole new meaning. When we eat with fellow believers it is an opportunity to remind and be reminded of God’s incredible provision for salvation in Jesus. Partaking in communion is done for the express purpose of remembering this provision. Jesus tells us to do this “as often as we eat of the bread and drink of the cup” until He returns (**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**).

At VCF we recognize the value of the table; The Lord’s Table in communion, the table of fellowship around which we gather with fellow believers and the table around which we gather with unbelievers to share Jesus as the Bread of Life. Something happens around a table that Jesus not only realized but ensured was a part of his regular ministry. Pastor and Theologian Ian Simkins puts it well:

**“There are innumerable uses for these tables, but one thing unites them: they are all places of gathering. So few of us have learned how to host disarming conversations across cultural, political, and social differences at the table. We tend to put much more faith in posts than potlucks.”**

Apologist Michael Ramsden used to say “The best method of evangelism is talking to other people.” And we at VCF say that the best way to talk to other people is over a meal.

---

*“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”*

*1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

---

---

*“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”*

*Acts 4:31*

---

## CULTURE OF PRAYER

Of all the spiritual practices we participate in as believers, prayer is crucial (right next to the careful study of and obedience to the Scriptures). Jesus himself prayed frequently and made it a fundamental part of his journey. The early church understood its importance; they were devoted to it and practiced prayer together often (**Acts 1:14, Acts 2:42, Acts 4:31, Acts 6:4**).

**“The purpose of prayer is emphatically not to bend God’s will to ours, but rather to align our will to his.” – John Stott**

We believe that prayer is a spiritual discipline that must be practiced regularly in order for it to become a habit. It is also much more than just a discipline, it is a manner with which to live and move through the world. Prayer reminds us that we are totally dependent upon God for the power to obey him, to love like Him and to bring the gospel to bear in our spheres of influence.

There is no better way to practice prayer than to simply begin praying, but prayer begins by knowing the One to whom we pray. When we saturate ourselves in the Scriptures we begin to see and understand the language of God. Scripture memorization is one of the ways a church develops its prayer habits. Knowing the way that God thinks, speaks, and the way that Jesus lived out His life as the “Word made flesh” (**John 1:14**) gives us a greater capacity to grow in our prayer life.

Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6.

*This, then, is how you should pray:  
‘Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,*

---

*The Word became flesh  
and made his dwelling  
among us. We have seen  
his glory, the glory of the  
one and only Son, who  
came from the Father, full  
of grace and truth.*

*John 1:14*

---

*on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.'*

This is not a mantra but rather a template. There are five things that we focus on when we pray.

1. God's holiness
2. God's will above ours
3. God's provision for our needs
4. God's grace and mercy (as we pursue grace and mercy for others)
5. God's power to overcome temptation and to trust Him with a whole heart

Prayer is central to VCF body life. We desire to submit ourselves to God's holiness, His will, His provision, His grace and mercy and His power to grow in our knowledge and love for Him — forsaking the things of the world.

## **CULTURE OF GENEROSITY**

One of the outcomes of the early church's devotion to careful study of the Scriptures, devotion to prayer and practicing a culture of hospitality with one another was abundant generosity. When we hear the word generosity, we usually think of money. And while giving away our money is one of the primary ways we show generosity, there are multiple ways to be generous.

*They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.  
Acts 2:45*

The early church prioritized spending time together so much that, in order to make sure everyone could participate in fellowship (especially those in need), they gave their money and possessions to those who could not afford to bring anything to the table. This is evidence that they valued and treasured one another about their own self-interest.

*And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts.*

*Acts 2:46*

Giving our money and possessions is one way to be generous, but another way is to give of our time to one another. Time is a precious commodity. Unlike money, once you give your time to someone you cannot make more of it. When we choose to give our time to others by being present, listening to them, spending time with them and showing our genuine love to them we are practicing a culture of generosity.

Founder of Gospel Patrons John Rineheart puts it this way regarding generosity: "Those early Christians heard Jesus say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (**Acts 20:35**). They learned that the real connection between money and happiness is not having money and happiness, it's giving and happiness. To the first-century church, radical generosity was normal Christianity. The pinnacle of what they witnessed was the cross. The Son of God denied himself to the point of death, even death on a cross. He gave his body and his blood, not out of duty, but out of love. What the early church knew for sure was that Christianity, at its core, is good news of a generous God.

---

*"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

*Acts 20:35*

---

## OUR METHOD

The four cultures at VCF are fostered by practicing them often. The

early church met in the temple courts and each other's homes daily. While that may not be practical for us today, it remains the pattern that we seek to follow and emulate. Here are some of the ways we do this:

### **EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING & TEACHING FROM THE PULPIT**

The Bible will always be preached or taught from the pulpit. The elders of VCF are devoted to preaching and teaching God's Word in its original context and commit to guide the members of the body in Jesus' way of obedience and living out The Word.

*For more, see Statement of Faith below.*

### **SINGING OUR PRAISES TO GOD / THE LYRICS WE SING**

Sunday morning is a chance for us to worship alongside one another and sing praises to God. We sing praises to God that reflect the truth of His character and attributes, making much of who God is and what He has done in our lives according to the Scriptures.

### **HOME GROUPS**

Home groups are one of the key aspects to living out our 4 cultures. We have many home groups at VCF. Home Groups meet weekly in groups of approximately 8-20 people to read and study Scripture along with the sermon series, eat, pray and worship together, and encourage each other toward spiritual maturity and joy in Christ. Healthy home groups provide space for studying the scriptures, breaking bread, and prayer — all of which are important aspects of robust body life.

### **BIBLE STUDIES**

Bible studies are like home groups but for the express purpose of studying a book of the Bible or a specific topic (parenting, managing money, restoring relationships, recovery from addiction etc.) also guided by Scripture. This is also a chance to come alongside fellow believers in prayer.

## PARADIGM / LIFE GROUPS

Paradigm is our high school youth group. High school and junior high groups meet weekly. Our Youth Pastor and volunteer adult leaders disciple and come alongside young men and women to carefully shepherd their understanding of The Word of God.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN TO LEARN THE BIBLE

Awana is an example of a Bible study program for children. Along with games, snacks and breakout discussions, the main event is memorization of Scripture. We believe that writing the Word of God on your heart within a loving community is one of the best ways to cultivate a love for God and for others in children. Our Sunday morning Sunday school works much in the same way with relationship building and teaching of God's Word.

## INTENTIONAL EVANGELISM: PRACTICING HOSPITALITY

We also encourage our members to engage in meaningful meals or meet ups over coffee with people who may not know Jesus as savior. Jesus was always purposeful in his time with people. One of the best ways to build relationships with unbelievers is to simply invite them to eat with you.

---

*"Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.'"*

*Matthew 4:19*

---

## VCF VISION

Ultimately, we hope to bring the gospel to bear and become "fishers of men" (**Matthew 4:19**) by the grace of God. We believe that by regularly engaging in practices and rhythms that foster these four cultures, the supernatural outcome will be a church body that is both healthy and effective in advancing the Kingdom of God.

**"To know Christ, to make Him known and to do what He did."**

## VCF CHURCH STRUCTURE

### ELDERS

A plurality of godly men who devote themselves part-time or full-time to "shepherding the flock" (leading the church body in pursuit of the [Acts 2:42-47](#) vision and bringing the gospel to bear). The elders are voted upon by the members of the congregation and serve a three to six year term. One of the elders is our Lead Pastor who is responsible for leading the full-time staff.

### FULL-TIME STAFF

Men and women who are called and devote themselves to serve a local congregation full time and therefore are compensated by the body for their ability and understanding of how to usher and build practices and rhythms that foster the cultures found in [Acts 2:42-46](#).

### PART-TIME STAFF

Paid men and women who assist the full-time staff.

### MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Anyone who agrees with the mission and vision of VCF and has committed themselves to serve the body with their time, energy, money and resources according, to the gifts that God has given them.

We have recognized elders, full-time and part-time staff. Under the leadership of the elders, we encourage the members of VCF to give generously for the sake of the body through active participation in the life of the church. We depend fully upon The Scriptures and The Holy Spirit to guide our elders in leading the staff and members of the congregation. Our full-time staff are committed to following the lead of the elders while using their spiritual gifts full-time to serve the body.

# VCF STATEMENT OF FAITH: OUR DOCTRINE

## WE BELIEVE...

### THE SCRIPTURES

The Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, to be the inspired Word of God, The Scriptures are trustworthy and true; without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and the Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life.

*2 Tim 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Timothy 1:15, John 17:17*

### GOD (TRINITY)

In one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each person is fully God and there is one God.

*Genesis 1:1, Isaiah 45:5-6, Deuteronomy 6:4, 1 Peter 1:2*

God is The Father

*1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 4:6, 1 John 3:1*

God is The Son

*Colossians 1:15-17, Hebrews 1:2, John 1:1-3, John 10:30*

God is The Holy Spirit

*1 Corinthians 12:11, John 14:26, John 16:13*

### JESUS CHRIST

That Jesus Christ is true God and true Man having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scripture. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into

heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.

*Luke 1:35, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Hebrews 4:15-16*

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service.

*John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16:12-15, 1 Timothy 1:7*

## MAN

That man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is, therefore, lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

*Genesis 1:26-28, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12, Romans 6:23*

## SALVATION

That the death of Jesus Christ through his shed blood and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and, thus, become children of God.

*1 Peter 1:18-19, Romans 5:6-11, Romans 3:25, 1 John 4:10, Ephesians 2:1-10*

## BAPTISM

That baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as a means of salvation.

*Romans 6:4, Acts 2:38-42, Acts 8:36-39, 1 Corinthians 11:28-32*

## THE CHURCH

That the true Church is comprised of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the Body of Christ of which He is the Head. That only those who are, thus,

members of the Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church. That Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church and that every local church has the right, under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs.

*Ephesians 5:22-32, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Ephesians 2:19-20*

## LAST THINGS

We believe that Jesus will return, bodily and visibly, to receive His people to Himself, to reign, and to judge all mankind. All will be resurrected; the saved are raised to eternal conscious glory in the New Heaven and Earth, and the lost are raised to eternal conscious punishment in hell.

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, John 3:16-17, Isaiah 66:22-24, Matthew 25:46, John 11:25-26, Revelation 21:4-7*

## VALLEY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP MEMBERSHIP STATEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read through the membership materials, provided my testimony to the leadership team (staff and/or an elder), and am pleased to make a commitment to Valley Christian Fellowship as the local body of Christ. It is within this flock where I hope to continue to be shepherded into the way of Jesus Christ by the care and guidance of our ministers and leadership team, as well as by my own participation and intention within this community so that I may know Christ, make Him known, and do what he did.

I affirm my conviction in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that this is an atoning sacrifice for my sins and that as a result I have been reconciled to God and brought into His household and desire to enter into and/or continue discipleship under Christ's authority through a local body.

I understand that I am electing to place myself under the care and authority of our leadership team (**Hebrews 13:17**).

I understand that there may be brothers and sisters in Christ who may not take the same path towards membership as I do, and I am committed to love and welcome them into my life and our community.

\_\_\_\_\_,  
VCF Church Member

\_\_\_\_\_, Casey Groves, Senior Pastor and Elder

\_\_\_\_\_, Rich Antles, Elder

\_\_\_\_\_, Tom Loucks, Elder

\_\_\_\_\_, Bill Malloy, Elder

\_\_\_\_\_, Tyler Thomas, Elder