



VISION & VALUES





TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. VISION

Welcome	05
Vision	07

II. VALUES

Gospel	09
Grace	11
Spirit	13
Word	15
Baptism	17
Church	19
Presence	21
Family	23
Teams	25
Mission	27
Witness	29
Compassion	31

III. COMMITMENTS

Agree	33
Invest	35

IV. REFERENCES

Connections	37
Learn	39



Welcome

People have always made decisions based on trust. If we need some work done on our homes, we ask our friends to recommend someone to us. When we look for a new phone, car or flight we read the reviews, compare the prices and we do our homework.

In some ways choosing a church to belong to is can be like this. In other ways it is quite different but it is still an important decision.

It is similar because it is wise to do your homework before making an important choice. It is wise to ask questions, to read the information and to be as informed as possible.

It is different because we don't consume people, or God for that matter, as if they were the same as phones and flights. A church is not a building or a meeting, it is a people. It is friendships and relationships. A church is a group of people coming together with shared purpose, beliefs and practices all under the shared belief that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life.

This booklet aims to help you find your place in Christ's church and to explain what it means to belong to Grace Church Stockholm. At the end of the booklet there is a page with references to relevant passages in the Bible so you can study these issues further.



Vision

Imagine a church where people deeply love and care for one another in words and deed. They're open-hearted to their friends and open-handed to those in need. They're generous with their talents and committed to the common good.

In this church sins are confessed not hidden; burdens shared not shifted. Honesty and love mark their relationships, which are often shared along with the food.

When they come together there is enthusiasm in their singing, passion in their prayers and power in their preaching. Their devotion to Jesus is evident in their desire to learn, to grow and to put into practice the things Jesus taught. It is evident in their desire to invite others to the table.

We're not expected to be perfect or to always get it right but we believe God does extraordinary things through ordinary people like us.

At Grace Church we want to reach the city of Stockholm with the love of Jesus. We want to do this by making disciples and multiplying Christian communities, one for every station stop in the city. These groups will partner together for the good of the church, the city and the glory of God.

Jesus is the light of the world. We've been called to shine bright.



Gospel

You'll hear the word a lot, but what do we mean by it? What is the gospel? The word simply means good news. Something has happened and the gospel is the announcement. So what happened? The short answer is Jesus happened. We believe that through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ God has not only done all that is necessary to forgive people of their sins, but as King he offers hope of a renewed world.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes."

ROMANS 1:16

So the gospel is the message of the church. It is what we believe in order to be called a Christian and it's the message that we tell others.

But the gospel is also more than that. It is the source for our new life and lifestyle. As we work the implications out in our lives we see the work of Jesus changes our approach to money, marriage, family, work and pretty much everything. The Christian life is learning how to be fluent in the gospel, letting it speak in all its power and goodness. We want to be gospel-shaped and Christ-like.



Grace

Our salvation is a work of God's grace. That means it was given to us as a gift. We didn't earn it like wages for our good deeds and we didn't deserve it because of our nationality, income or impressive resume. No, it was his unmerited, undeserved love and favour lavished upon us.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast."

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

Our desire is to be a church confident in the giver and in the gift. A little phrase that sums it up is: Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

We want everyone to understand the full benefits of being united to Christ. This means we are a new creation and have a new identity. We are no longer condemned and orphaned but instead dearly loved adopted children of God. It isn't through the application of laws and rules that we find acceptance. It is knowing your identity and living confidently in that knowledge.

That means we are committed to living by grace; treating others the way God has treated us and depending upon God's grace in our own lives.



A2U
53
USA
32

Spirit

In the days before engines, there were two ways a ship could cross an ocean. One was by rowing, which required back-breaking effort. The other was by harnessing the wind and that was both faster and far less tiring.

In the same way there are two main ways to follow Jesus. One is through your own effort and the other is by having an outside power fill your sails. The word for spirit is translated from breath or wind. So when Jesus talks of being baptised in the Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5) he means filling our lungs with his breath and air; filling our sails with his power.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth."

ACTS 1:8

Paul speaks of individuals being temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) and the church being a house in which God lives by his Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). Laying a foundation in the churches where spiritual gifts were used and the Spirit's fruits were seen was high on the apostles' agenda. It's high on ours as well.

God gave us his Son and then he gave us his Spirit, so we could know his love, be changed by his grace and have power to witness for him. You can try in your own strength but we think a life in the Spirit is the only way to live.



Word

Words are powerful. Hearing someone say 'I love you' or 'you're fired' will both have an impact on your day. Words can lift you or they can sink you. Words can get you lost or they can point you home.

We believe the Bible is the word of God. In this ancient collection of laws, letters, songs and story is the revelation of how God has spoken and worked to carry out his plan to confront evil, reconcile humanity, heal creation and bring blessing to the world. Rightly handled (and that's important) we believe it to be true and trustworthy. So when it comes to matters of what we believe and how we should live, then the Bible is our first and final authority.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

That means we preach from the Bible, and we take the time to study and understand it. We also encourage each individual to love and cherish the word of God in their own lives taking time to read it regularly. We are a word-based people.



Baptism

The gospel is great news but it starts by confronting us with two uncomfortable realities. That we carry the stains of sins done by us and the pain of sin done to us. Both kinds of sin brought death to us. Death in our souls, in our relationships and even to our planet. The gospel says that through faith in Jesus Christ and his dying for us on the cross, God deals with both sin and death. Which brings us to baptism.

Christians get baptised as a sign of that we are turning away from the sins that stained us, demonstrating our trust that Jesus makes us clean.

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

ACTS 2:38

Baptism also declares that through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus we have died to our old life and risen to a new life in Christ.

"...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead."

COLOSSIANS 2:12

Jesus said (Matthew 28:19) that disciples should be baptized. At Grace Church our practice is to baptise those that have made their own decision to turn from their sins and follow Jesus.



Church

What do you think and feel when you think of the church? It may be all sorts of different things but when Jesus thinks of the church he thinks, 'That's my bride.'

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."

EPHESIANS 5:25-27

If this is how important the church is to Jesus - that he would give his life for the church and want her to be radiant and shining with beauty - then it's reasonable to assume that the church should be important to his followers too. That we, as the bride, should want the same things as the one who loves us deeply and eternally.

The church is not a building or a meeting but the people of God. A people who are called to bring blessing and hope to the world. A people whose lives, worship and service all declare with power that God is about the business of redeeming his creation.



Presence

There are some people we enjoy being around more than others. Some people do us good simply by being there. Sometimes it isn't what they say or do, it's the comfort of knowing that they are there. Those kind of people we love to be around, because they bring life to us.

God's presence brings life to us and he has promised to be with his church through his Holy Spirit. We expect that every time we come together as a church.

"You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

PSALM 16:11

We expect to meet God in the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine. It reminds us of his son's saving sacrifice and salvation.

We expect to hear God speak to us through his preached word. Those words will sometimes challenge, sometimes comfort but always love.

We expect to enjoy God's goodness when we sing songs of praise and worship. And as men and women use their spiritual gifts we expect to be strengthened and encouraged.

We expect God's purposes to be worked out in our lives and in the world as we come to him in prayer. We expect to meet God.



Family

How should a church feel? Should it feel exciting? Should I get tingles down my spine? The Bible offers up a different answer to that question. The Bible suggests that church should feel like a loving family.

"Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all of God's family"

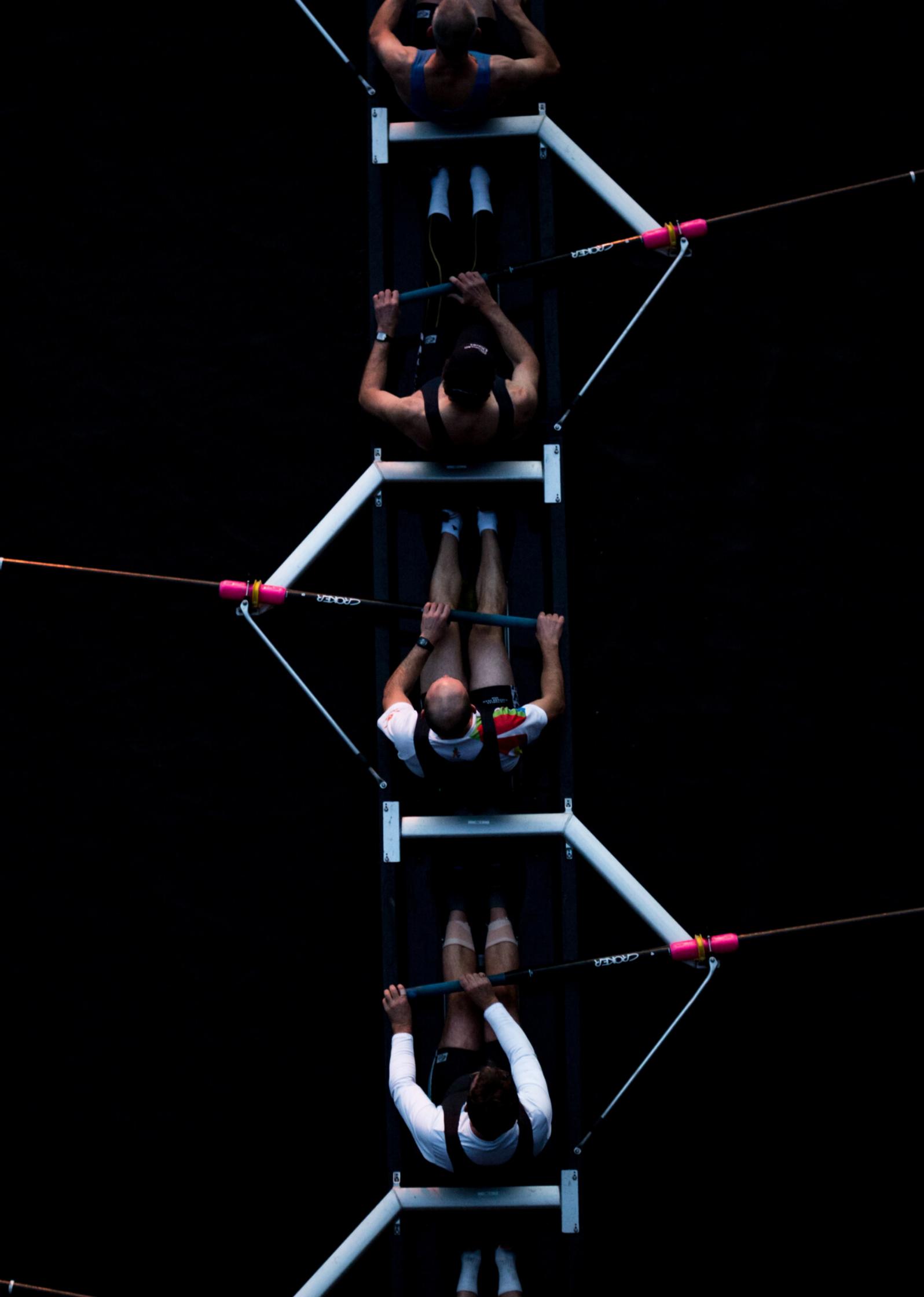
1 THESSALONIANS 4:9-10

Not everyone has had a good experience of family life and not every church will feel like this. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try to be what God says we are: his family.

In God's house, people from every nation and race are equally loved whatever their age or background, whether they're single, married or divorced, whatever their sex or colour.

In a family everyone has a place at the table. Children are welcomed, valued and contribute to the life and mission of the church as each generation learns from the others.

Homes become important places where friendships deepen; celebrations and sorrows are shared and needs are met. We care for each other because our heavenly Father cares us. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are family.



Teams

"Is there room for me?" or "I'm not sure I have anything to offer" can be understandable thoughts, but if a church is to reach its potential, it needs all the help it can get.

If we borrow from the language of sports, or from the workplace, then church is about teams not individuals. We work together; we win and lose together. We aspire to be a place where the gifts, skills and abilities of men and women are recognised and encouraged.

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

ROMANS 12:6-8

As a church we seek to build teams of leaders working together. These servant-hearted leaders, both men and women, the Bible calls deacons.

The New Testament also shows a pattern of churches led by a team of men, called elders. Their role is not to preserve power but to guard the church from harm and help it fulfil its purpose.

We also work with outside teams who can help us as church grow wisely and grow well (see page 37 for more on this).



Mission

The church of Jesus Christ has a task given to it by Jesus. It is a task that started with a handful of disciples outside of Jerusalem and 2000 years later is still spreading all over the world.

"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 28:19-20

The gospel of Jesus Christ is still changing lives. It is still drawing people to a message of hope and a kingdom of love. Each generation has its own unique challenges but in every culture and time God is still calling men and women to be his disciples.

We aren't called to spectate but to get fully involved in this shared mission to extend the kingdom of God globally. This means we're committed to starting new churches with these values (or DNA). That means sharing the gospel, making disciples, training leaders, starting churches, reaching nations and caring for the poor and the planet.

We're called to be a part of a great story and to a great work.

www.best-

\$10

**GOOD
NEWS
IS COMING**

Witness

Jesus' first disciples really were witnesses. They listened to him teach, they saw him heal, they watched him die. Then on the third day they saw him alive again. So they went and told people all that they heard and all that they saw.

We're also witnesses. We may not have seen Jesus but we have our own stories. We witness to a new a kingdom in the midst of the world. Our generosity reveals that we do not follow the gods of greed and money. Our simple lives testify that our hearts find rest in Jesus and nothing else. Our peace in the midst of struggle testify that we have a Father who cares for us.

"I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no saviour. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed— I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "that I am God."

ISAIAH 43:11-12

We can be witnesses in a few different ways. We can use our words and tell people of who Jesus is and what he has done.

We can show people God's love and kindness by being loving and kind to people. Making the effort to love even those we may find difficult to love.

We can also pray for people when they are sick or when they are hurting and ask God to bring his healing to their body and their lives. We believe God can and still does change lives in this way.



Compassion

We live in a broken world. The evidence sadly is not too hard find. Families still break up, minds and bodies can break down. People can hurt themselves, hurt others and hurt the environment. Christian minister and author John Stott once said, "We should not ask, 'What is wrong with the world?' for that diagnosis has already been given. Rather we should ask, 'What has happened to salt and light?'"

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

MICAH 6:8

We are not to be watching and complaining from the sidelines.

This means growing in generosity to those who are poor, both locally and internationally. Opening our homes and wallets to each other as we have need.

It means supporting every member to be salt and light, impacting our society in areas of business, culture, health, education, politics and family life. We're called to be in the world but not like it. We're called to join with God in the renewal of all things.



Agree

Committing to a church family means aligning yourself with their values and their vision. In practice at Grace Church this means:

1. That you are a Christian. You affirm that you have been spiritually born again through turning away from sin and turning with faith towards Jesus Christ.
2. That you have been obedient to the command of Jesus to be baptised as a sign of your faith and trust in the saving work of Jesus Christ.
3. That you are committed to living as a disciple of Jesus as one who seeks to be like Christ in your character and follow his teachings in your life.
4. That you want the best for the church and are committed to supporting the worship and work of the church.

"Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?"

AMOS 3:3

We understand that making a decision to commit to a church shouldn't be taken lightly and that you might agree with some but not all of our positions. If that's the case for you, we understand. You remain very welcome to worship Jesus with us.



Invest

The picture we see of Christians in the first church is not one of isolated individuals or passive consumers. Instead we see devotion - to Christ, to his mission and to his church. In Grace Church we express this by making a commitment in four main areas: spiritually, relationally, missionally and financially.

Spiritual Commitment

We commit to regularly spending time with God in personal worship, prayer and reading the Scriptures. We commit to regular fellowship with other believers in small groups and on Sundays. We commit to pray with and for the church.

Relational Commitment

We commit to pursuing good relationships with our church family seeking and encouraging the best for others. We commit to acting and speaking in love and honour.

Missional Commitment

We commit to sharing our love for Jesus with others around us and praying for their salvation. We commit to doing good in our world as citizens of Christ's kingdom. We commit to using our gifts and abilities to serve the church as we have opportunity.

Financial Commitment

We commit to seeking to grow in generosity by contributing to the mission of the church. We commit to helping meet the needs of others as we have opportunity.



Connections

Grace Church enjoys autonomy - that means we're responsible for our finances, practices and vision. That doesn't mean Grace Church is either independent or isolated. In fact, quite the opposite. We're part of a larger family of churches (Relational Mission), which is itself part of an even larger family of churches (Newfrontiers), which is a part of the global church of Christ.

We love Relational Mission's vision to be globally fruitful, crossing all boundaries to reach the nations, make disciples and plant locally-led churches. We share their values and are grateful for their friendship. As a result we welcome their involvement with us and are invested in this bigger vision.

Newfrontiers is a group of apostolic leaders partnering together on global mission, joined by common values and beliefs, shared mission and genuine relationships. We're grateful for the heritage and inheritance we have through Newfrontiers and through them our connections to the church of Jesus all over the world.

relational
mission



newfrontiers



Learn

If you have any questions about the material presented here please feel free to ask one of the church leaders. If you want to know more about what the Bible says about the various topics, we've included some (but not all) of the key references here.

Gospel: John 3:3-5; Rom. 3:22-25 & 6:22-23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; Eph. 1:4-8

Grace: Acts 11:23; 2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 2:8-10; Col. 4:6; Titus 2:11-14

Spirit: John 14:16-17; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:18

Word: Deut. 8:3; Ps. 119:9-16; Jer. 15:16; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:13;
2 Tim. 3:16; Titus 2:1

Baptism: Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:37-41; Rom. 6:2-4; Col. 2:12

Church: John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor. 1:2;
Eph. 2:19-22, 3:10-11 & 5:25-32; Heb. 10:25; 1 Pet. 2:9-10

Presence: Psalm 29:2; John 4:23-24; Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 12:4-8;
Phil. 4:4-6; Col. 3:15-17

Family: Gal. 6:10; 1 Thess. 2:8; 1 John 3:1 & 16-18

Teams: Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:1-16; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Tim. 3:1-13 & 5:17;
1 Pet. 5:2-3

Mission: Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 1:8; Phil. 1:5; 1 Thess. 1:6-8

Witness: Mark 12:31; Luke 9:2; Rom. 1:16; Gal. 6:9-10

Compassion: Gen. 1:26-27; Lev. 19:18; Isa. 1:17; Amos 5:24;
Luke 4:18-19; Acts 4:34-35; James 1:27 & 2:14-26

