



STONY HILL  
BAPTIST CHURCH

*Membership Class*

WEEK 1

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WEEK 4

*Understanding Membership*

*Active Membership*

*Beliefs and Commitments*

*Godward Pursuits*





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**THIS MEMBERSHIP GUIDE BELONGS TO:**

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# Session 1: Understanding Membership

## WE ARE THE BODY

The New Testament speaks of the church in several ways:

- **Building** (1 Cor. 3:9, Eph. 2:21, 2 Cor. 6:16)
- **Flock** (1 Peter 5:2)
- **Family** (1 Tim. 3:15, Eph. 1:5)
- **Body** (Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 12)

All the images that are used about being a Christian in the New Testament have this *corporate aspect* to it. The individual Christian is one part of a larger entity.

Let's think for a minute about the church as a body:

- It highlights that every part of the body is needed
- Every part of the body contributes to the health of the whole
- It is local – we do not expect the foot to be in Kazakhstan, while the hand is in Milwaukee

We try to instill in people the attitude of seeing themselves as providers, not just consumers.

- Practical: attending regularly, on time
- Committing ourselves to each other through the church covenant.
- One incredibly practical way we do this is by encouraging members to pray through the church directory for our brothers and sisters.

All this is a biblical foundation for the idea of joining a church. If you get nothing else out of this class, let it be this: if you are a Christian, God's purpose in saving you was that you might bring glory to him through the life you live in communion with other Christians. If you do not join yourself with a body of believers in order to live that out, you have failed to live out what the Bible says is absolutely fundamental to what it means to be a Christian. It is not about you or about me, it is about you and me as part of a church community bringing glory to God.



## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT

Church membership is a formal relationship between a local church and a Christian characterized by the church's affirmation and oversight of a Christian's discipleship and the Christian's submission to living out his or her discipleship in the care of the church.

Notice that several elements are present:

- a church body formally affirms an individual's profession of faith and baptism as credible;
- it promises to give oversight to that individual's discipleship;
- the individual formally submits his or her discipleship to the service and authority of this body and its leaders (Heb.13:17)

Church membership is about a church *taking specific responsibility for* a Christian, and a Christian for a church.

- From the church side – it is similar to joining a health club – we are committed to work toward your spiritual health – and you are agreeing to have us help you be spiritually healthy
- From the Christian side – consider a family – you are adopting somewhat of a parent idea in terms of thinking this is your family and you will help take care of your own – through prayer, giving, and helping the younger mature in faith (more on that below)

### FROM THE SHBC BYLAWS > ARTICLE I > SECTION 4

*Membership in the church is a serious matter for the believer in that it represents a larger commitment to, and identification with, the Body of Jesus Christ. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. Those who follow Him will replicate His commitment to the Church by remaining faithful to and supportive of the Church. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, the following:*

1. *Attending faithfully the services of this church,*
2. *Giving of time and energy to the ministries of the church,*
3. *Sharing in the financial expenses of the church through regular offering and gifts to the church.*
4. *Developing spiritually through worship, service, prayer, and fellowship,*
5. *Exercising their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of themselves and others.*
6. *Protecting the church from discord and division by refraining from gossip, slander, or inappropriate discourse with members or guests.*
7. *Affirming continually the Church Covenant and Articles of Faith.*



## SHBC HISTORY

Stony Hill Baptist Church fondly remembers our past but is also excited about the future that God has planned for us. Our church remains a focal point for our community with its steeple reaching toward heaven, its bell ringing to welcome worshippers, and its light coming down the hill to guide us to God's eternal salvation. Our heritage is rich and we treasure it. Our future is bright and we pursue it. While God's blessings upon this church have been apparent for over a century, we believe that He is beginning to do a fresh work in our hearts.

### IMPORTANT DATES IN THE HISTORY OF SHBC

*Before the church was organized, people from the community held services under a tent called a brush arbor. The men, dressed in overalls, spread fish nets over a frame, then placed leaves and branches over the nets to provide shade. As the men worked, the women would sit on the ground and share cheerful talk about neighbors, friends, and the daily affairs of life that took most of their time and attention. Many of our early members walked to church, and the children sat with their parents. Baptism services were held at the Neuse River with the congregation standing nearby singing Shall We Gather at the River.*

- 1873 – SHBC and the appointment of trustees began on October 2nd.
- 1884 – SHBC was founded on November 22nd with 24 members by rural dwellers, in an area filled with a sawmill and farms, that produced milk, cotton, tobacco, corn, and other crops. SHBC was a Missionary Baptist Church that met in a schoolhouse about a half mile north of the present site.
- 1886 – SHBC joined the Central Baptist Association
- 1887 – SHBC built a house of worship on one acre of land
- 1888 – SHBC experiences slight growth, along with two baptisms
- 1889 – SHBC records instances of active church discipline
- 1930 – Members donated trees that were sawed at the mill and then planed and painted to form a new white wooden church building.
- 1951 – Steeple was added.
- 1962 – Church building was bricked.
- 1983 – Church building was remodeled. The meeting room was renovated by adding stained glass windows portraying the life of Christ, chandeliers, burgundy carpet, cushioned pews, and a baptismery.
- 2007 – Family Life Center was completed that features a larger worship area, professional kitchen and dining area, basketball court, as well as more classroom space for Sunday School and our children's programs.



## WHAT IS A SBC CHURCH?

- Over 47,000 churches
- Over 15 million members (though weekly attendance is just over 5 million)
- Southern Baptists provide direct support for almost ten thousand individuals who serve across the nation and around the world in direct ministry as the hands and feet of Jesus Christ, ministering to at least 377 people groups in 153 countries, many of whom have little access to the Gospel in their native language.
  - Overseas Missionaries: 3,562
  - Domestic Missionaries: 5,262



One of the ways we go on mission is by participating in the Southern Baptist Convention through giving towards the Cooperative Program. This allows us to contribute to several entities that are promoting the gospel of King Jesus.



The International Mission Board partners with churches to empower limitless missionary teams who are evangelizing, discipling, planting, and multiplying healthy churches, and training leaders among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God.



### North American Mission Board

The North American Mission Board assists churches with evangelistic church planting strategy, the identification and training of missionaries, chaplains, and church planters through the Send Network, and helps churches impact their communities through Send Relief.



**The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary**



**SOUTHWESTERN  
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**



**Southeastern  
Baptist Theological Seminary**



**GATEWAY SEMINARY**

Southern Baptist Theological Seminaries exist to prepare God-called men and women for vocational service in Baptist churches and in other Christian ministries throughout the world through programs of spiritual development, theological studies, and practical preparation in ministry.



**THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS  
LIBERTY COMMISSION  
OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION**

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission exists to be a catalyst to connect the agenda of the kingdom of Christ to the cultures of local congregations for the sake of the mission of the gospel in the world.



## MEETINGS OF SHBC

- Corporate Worship Services
  - Sunday Morning Service – 11:00am
  - Sunday Night Service – 6:00pm
- Corporate Meetings
  - Members' Meeting – typically once a month – after Sunday morning service
    - The obligation of the congregation: read and study the Bible; discern if God speaks to the issue; vote in submission to God
- Other Meetings
  - Sunday School – 10:00am on Sundays
  - Wednesday Night – Awana – 6:30pm
  - Wednesday Night – Adult Bible Study – 7:00pm
  - Various Bible Studies (Brotherhood, WMU, Adult, Women's, etc)

## MINISTRIES OF SHBC

### Adult Bible Study

The Adult Bible Study meets weekly on Wednesday nights at 7:00 in the Fellowship Hall of the FLC. The study is designed to help Christians grow in a greater knowledge of God, love for God, and help them pursue greater obedience to God. Typically, we study a book of the Bible verse by verse. Though we have been known to study basic Christian doctrine or some other related subject.

Each week, the topic of study is known in advance. Those attending are encouraged to prepare in advance and all are welcome to contribute to the study when we meet. The study itself is less formal, allowing a person to participate if she wishes. There is no requirement for participation, so feel free to come to the study even if participation is not your thing.

The format of the study works on understanding the text, but also models how Bible study can be done alone. We practice thoughtful study of the text toward understanding the main point of the text and applying it to your life. Our hope is that in time participants will be better equipped to have deeper Bible study alone. This ministry is aimed at adults, though like the Sunday morning service, it is appropriate for all ages.

Contact: Jeff Mayfield (919) 671-3504



## **AWANA**

AWANA is a Bible-based program for children and youth that is an acronym derived from “Approved Workman Are Not Ashamed” (2 Tim 2:15). In AWANA, young people learn memory verses, listen to Bible truths, and participate in songs, games, and crafts.

**Puggles** — is an enriching program designed for 2 year olds that presents two basic principles: (1) We are a unique creation of God, (2) God loves us very much.

**Cubbies** — is our preschool AWANA program, created for 3 & 4 year olds. Through games, puppets, songs, crafts, Bible stories, and verse memorization, Cubbies learn fundamental truths, including “Jesus loves me.”

**Sparks** — is the program designed for Kindergarten through 2nd grade students. The curriculum is firmly grounded in Scripture and presents basic truths about God, Jesus, salvation, and the Bible. The gospel is presented through songs, crafts, Bible stories, and memory verses.

**Truth & Training** — reflects the priority to teach third through sixth grade boys and girls the TRUTH of God’s Word and to TRAIN them to follow Christ. The students learn to hide God’s Word in their hearts and to apply its truths to their daily lives.

**Contact:** Amy Kearnes (540) 746-2008

## **Brotherhood**

The Brotherhood is open to all boys and men of the church. We meet on the third Tuesday of every month at the Brotherhood Community House (across the intersection from the cemetery). During this time, we study God’s Word together and plan various mission projects. We lead the annual Baptist Men’s Day the last Sunday in January as well as host multiple Men’s Breakfasts throughout the year.

**Contact:** Ike Dupree (636) 875-8198

## **Children’s Ministry**

We are so grateful for the opportunity to love your children and lead them into a relationship with Christ. We believe that “all children are a gift of the Lord,” and encourage them by example to love God, love the Bible, and love others. All of our Children’s Programs incorporate biblical truths, while engaging the children in hands-on activities, songs, and fun!

For the safety of the children in our care, all of our workers have completed our church’s Child Protection Requirements, which involve an orientation, basic training, and background check. Parents, we ask that you please be considerate of all other children in our ministry. If your child has any symptoms of illness, we ask that you please not leave them with us.



**Nursery** — The nurseries at Stony Hill welcome any children birth through 2 years old. Our caring and qualified teachers get to know your child and make him/her feel secure when you leave. As a security measure, our workers will only release your child upon presentation of the matching parent pager.

**Sunday School** — We have Sunday School classes for all age groups, beginning at the age of 2 and continuing through 5th grade. Each class is taught by qualified and loving teachers who engage every student at every learning level.

**Children's Choir** — All children ages 3 years— 5th grade are invited to Children's Choir on a Sunday night once a month. The children enjoy learning upbeat songs that are based on God's Word...It is yet another way that we help kids "hide God's Word in their hearts!" (The Children's Choir sings several times throughout the year, during the Morning Worship service as well as special programs at Christmas and Easter.)

**Contact:** Judy Dupree (919) 410-4207

### **Helping Hands Service Organization**

In the spirit of Christian compassion and love, the Helping Hands is a ministry that serves the Lord and at the same time comforts those who are grieving. By providing a meal and fellowship, they express sympathy and concern following the death of a member of the church.

**Contact:** Eva Mae Keith: (919) 847-5003

### **Ladies' Bible Study**

The purpose of LBS is to make the Word central in the lives of our women by bringing together the women of the Stony Hill body to study it, guided by and existing under our pastoral leadership. Ladies purchase materials and complete reading and study on their own and come together for a time of discussion and application of what each one has learned in their personal study. Time is spent in prayer upon the completion of the study's discussion. Bi-monthly meetings are held on Monday evenings from 7-9pm in the FLC building for the duration of the year with holiday and summer breaks. Studies typically have alternated between reading a book and studying a portion of the Bible. Recent past titles have been Disciplines of Grace by Jerry Bridges, Colossians with MacAurthur Study Guide, Women of the Word by Jen Wilkin, Psalms Volumes I & II by Kathleen Neilson, and Ecclesiastes ~ Living Life Backward by David Gibson. All adult ladies are welcome to attend LBS and are encouraged to extend the invitation to believing and unbelieving friends. As sisters and daughters of One Father, participation in LBS brings bonding through the close study and careful handling of His precious Word.

**Contact:** Adrienne Mayfield (919) 556-6349



## Missions

Our mission as a church family flows from our worship of the One True God. The goal of our missions is to exalt Christ by sharing His love, making Him known, leading people to a saving knowledge of Him, and ultimately bringing all to worship Him.

*Contact: R.P. Rogers at [robertpaulrogers@gmail.com](mailto:robertpaulrogers@gmail.com)*

## VBS

Vacation Bible School — Every year, during the last full week of June, Stony Hill Baptist Church offers VBS to the children in our community. Each night, the children learn about God's work in their lives through themed songs and rotations of teaching rooms, craft rooms, game rooms, and snack time. The nights are busy but the kids have a blast! (This week-long program runs every evening, Monday through Friday.)

*Contact: Elise Quackenbos, [ewinn@liberty.edu](mailto:ewinn@liberty.edu) or (765) 274-6536*

## WMU (Women's Missionary Union)

The purpose of WMU is to "challenge individuals and churches to carry out the Great Commission." In addition, "WMU challenges Christian believers to understand and be radically involved in the mission of God." We pray, learn, support, and equip our members to engage with missions. This involves organizing special events, fundraising, and having discussions on how to engage with our neighbors and the nations. We meet quarterly at 9am on Saturday mornings.

*Contact: Brea Rogers (717) 870-7505*

## Worship Ministry

The worship ministry at Stony Hill Baptist Church seeks to be God-centered and Christ-exalting. It is only in Jesus Christ that we are able to commune with Almighty God, so in corporate worship we must focus on and make much of Christ! Corporate worship is when our body of believers worships together. Worship, however, encompasses far more than what the gathered body does on Sunday mornings or evenings; it is the offering of oneself as a living sacrifice to God and the continual renewing of one's mind (Romans 12:1-2). An effective worship service is one in which the things that are done by the gathered body (reading of the Scriptures, singing, preaching of the Word, prayer, baptism, the Lord's supper, and more) are done "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23).

- In Spirit – with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- In Truth – in full accord with God's revealed Word

*Contact: Christian White (919) 604-3286*



## Youth Ministry

The purpose of the youth group ministry is to work alongside parents to train teenagers on how to study and apply the Bible in their daily lives, share the Gospel, know God's Word, and serve God with the gifts God has given to them to use for His glory.

The High School Sunday School Class is a Bible School approach focused on teaching Biblical essentials to teenagers such as: Bible Survey (overview of every book in the Bible, and how the Bible fits together as a whole) Theology, and Hermeneutics (how to study the Bible).

Wednesday night Bible study is a time for the youth group members to share with one another what they've studied throughout the week. The Youth Group and youth leaders all use the same Bible study reading plan for their daily Bible reading which asks the reader to write answers to two questions for every day's passage: "What is the writer saying?" and "How can I apply this to my life?"

This is a time to get deeper into the word, and share what they've applied, and ask questions of the leaders, and each other, about what they didn't understand in the passages they've read.

The Youth Group also looks for ways to assist those in need of assistance, such as yard work, service projects, etc. The youth group usually meets once/month for a service project such as these

Teens in the Youth Group are expected to bring their Bibles when attending Youth Group Sunday School and Wednesday Bible Study. For Wednesday Night Bible Study, teens are expected to have read at least some of the passages, answered the questions, and come prepared to share what they learned, how they applied it, and ask any questions they have about the passages. The Bible reading plan can be obtained from John or Jessica Cottier for any teens interested in joining the Youth Group.

The Youth Group is for ages 12–18 and meets for Sunday School in the old church building every Sunday morning at 10:00, has youth games following the Sunday evening service (service begins at 6:00, youth games run from 7:00-7:30) and meets on Wednesday nights at 7pm in the Family Life Center for Bible Study discussion.

This is a great opportunity for members interested in helping with the Youth Group to study the Bible alongside teens, and be able to disciple teenagers, get involved in their lives, and help bring teenagers to spiritually mature adulthood.

**Contact: John Cottier (608) 751-7148**



## HOW MUCH SHOULD WE GIVE?

by Jamie Dunlop

(<http://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/sermon/how-much-should-we-give/>)

In the Old Testament, God commanded his people to pay ten percent of their income to support the Levites—the religious teachers of the day. And there was not just one tithe but three, averaging roughly 23% of their annual income—in addition to the temple tax and voluntary offerings. Today, we have received so much more blessing in Christ than those Old Testament saints could ever have imagined. Giving for the Christian is a wonderful opportunity to take the temporal money that God has given us and invest it in returns that are eternal. It is an opportunity to loose the chains that money can wrap around our hearts by making it clear that God is sufficient, and though he may use my money, I don't ultimately need it. But to really understand how much we should give, we need to carefully examine what the Scriptures say about giving.

### Giving in the New Testament

Many Christians assume that their responsibility starts and ends with a gift of 10% to a favorite charity—though few do even this. But this is far from an accurate picture of Biblical giving. 10% of our income may well be a good starting point. After all, Abraham tithed to the high priest Melchizedek hundreds of years before the tithe was required the law that was eventually fulfilled in Christ. And Jesus nowhere tells us *not* to tithe. But it's notable that in all the instructions to the churches in the New Testament, the tithe is absent. Instead, we see Paul instructing each Christian to give “in keeping with his income” (I Cor. 16:2)—in other words, give as much as he is able. And he writes to the churches in Galatia, “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.” (Gal. 6:6). All good things—not just 10% of what God has given us.

And yet it's clear that there *are* a few things we do with our money that are more important than giving to the church. If one were to give so much that he was unable to provide for his family's basic needs, the apostle Paul would say “he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (I Tim. 5:8)

Ultimately, money is but one of many stewardships God has given to us. So along with our time and our abilities and our relationships, we should take our money and make “the best use of the time” (Eph. 5:16) for the glory of God. Start at giving 10% of your income (or less if Biblical constraints such as I Tim. 5:16 so require) and see every dollar as an opportunity to bring glory to God. Would your next dollar better serve God if given to the church, or used to hire a babysitter so you can disciple a younger Christian? Would your next dollar better serve God if given to the church or used to take your family on vacation to enjoy God's good gift of creation (I Tim. 6:17) and build into those relationships (Eph. 6:4). These are the kind of questions you'll need to answer as you determine how much to give. If you have no income, your goal should be to give of what you do have (money, time, relationships, etc.) so that the first day you have an income it is second-nature to give some of it as well.



## Some Practical Considerations

1. *Give to your local church first.* A good application of Galatians 6:6 (cited above) is that since your local church is your primary source of teaching, it should be the primary recipient of your giving.
2. *Give regularly and deliberately.* Paul told the Corinthians to set aside money on the first day of every week (1 Cor. 16:2). Giving to the church should not be a spontaneous decision. Instead (ideally with your budget in hand), carefully consider how much giving will enable the best use of your money.
3. *Give sacrificially and cheerfully.* God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7) and he calls all of us to take up our cross and follow him (Luke 9:23). So use your giving to make possible a life lived in sacrificial obedience, knowing that whatever you give up pales in comparison to what you are receiving in Christ.
4. *Seek wise counsel.* We should not give to impress others (Matt. 6:2). And yet we are foolish to make decisions about money alone (Prov. 15:22, 1 Tim. 6:10). Be transparent with at least someone at your church about your whole life—including how much and where you give.



## CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND THE LOVE OF GOD

Jonathan Leeman

(<http://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/sermon/church-discipline-and-the-love-of-god/>)

Do the words “church discipline” seem like they don’t belong together, like “painful friendship” or “conditional grace”? In fact, church discipline builds healthy churches and vibrant gospel witnesses.

### What Is Church Discipline?

Broadly, church discipline is one part of the discipleship process. As in many areas of life, Christian discipleship involves both instruction and discipline, just like soccer practice or math class. Narrowly, church discipline is correcting sin. It begins with private warnings. It ends, when necessary, with removing someone from church membership and participation in the Lord’s Table. The person will generally be free to attend public gatherings, but he or she is no longer a member. The church will no longer publicly affirm the person’s profession of faith.

A number of sins might call for loving warnings in private. But formal public discipline typically occurs only in cases of sin that meet three further criteria. A sin must be outward—it can seen or heard (unlike, say, pride). It must be serious—serious enough to discredit the person’s verbal profession to be following Jesus. And it must be unrepentant—the person has typically been confronted but refuses to let go of the sin.

### Is Discipline Biblical?

Church discipline first shows up in Matthew 18, where Jesus says concerning the person in unrepentant sin, “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (v. 17). That is, treat him as outside the covenant community. The person has proven uncorrectable. His life does not match his Christian profession.

Another well-known passage on discipline, I Corinthians 5, helps us see the purpose of discipline. First, discipline exposes. Sin, like cancer, loves to hide. Discipline exposes the cancer so that it might be cut out (see 1 Cor. 5:2). Second, discipline warns. A church does not enact God’s judgment through discipline. Rather, it stages a small play that pictures the great judgment to come (v. 5). Third, discipline saves. Churches pursue it when they see a member taking the path toward death, and none of their arm-waving causes him or her to stop. It’s the device of last resort (v. 5). Fourth, discipline protects. Just as cancer spreads from cell to another, so sin quickly spreads from one person to another (v. 6). Fifth, discipline preserves the church’s witness. Strange to say, it serves non-Christians because it keeps churches distinct and attractive (see v. 1). After all, churches are to be salt and light. “But if salt has lost its taste...” Jesus said, “It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet” (Matt. 5:13).



## Is Discipline Really Loving?

Church discipline at its core is about love. The Lord disciplines those he loves (Heb. 12:6). The same is true for us.

The problem is, many people today have a sentimentalized view of love: love as being made to feel special. Or a romanticized view of love: love as being allowed to express yourself without correction. Or a consumeristic view: love as finding the perfect fit. In the popular mind, love has little to do with truth and holiness and authority.

But that's not love in the Bible. Love in the Bible is holy. It makes demands. It yields obedience. It doesn't delight in evil but rejoices in the truth (1 Cor. 13:6). Jesus tells us that if we keep his commandments, we will abide in his love (John 15:10). And John says that if we keep God's word, God's love will be perfected in us (1 John 2:5). How do church members help one another abide in Christ's love and show the world what God's love is like? Through helping one another obey and keep his word. Through instruction and discipline.



# Session 2: Active Membership

## BEING AN ACTIVE MEMBER

### *Equipped to Work*

#### **Ephesians 4:11–14**

(<sup>11</sup>) And he gave ...the shepherds and teachers, (<sup>12</sup>) to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (<sup>13</sup>) until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, (<sup>14</sup>) so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

### *Contribute to the Body*

- Consider the newly enlisted Service Member
  - ▶ Initially untrained and not useful in service and defense of the country
  - ▶ In time, trained and capable to offer truly valuable service
- Likewise, a church member
  - ▶ Initially, needing to be served – helped to grow in the Lord
  - ▶ In time, growing through personal discipleship, helping others grow, sharing the Gospel
- In short, you are a part of a church to make it stronger – and to take initiative to make it happen – not a passive audience member in a worship service

### *Some ways in which a member should be active:*

- You personally pursue a love for God
- You personally practice love for neighbor
- You come to church regularly and encourage others in the Lord through godly conversation
  - ▶ Members should view the church as their primary context for fellowship and ministry  
– The New Testament is full of “one anothers” that were written to the members of local churches. That’s not to say that Christians shouldn’t fulfill those commands among Christians in other churches as occasion arises. Still, the New Testament envisions Christians fulfilling those commands primarily among a concrete group to whom they are accountable (e.g. 1 Cor. 12)
- You pray for other church members (for their spiritual well-being)
- You seek out others for spiritual encouragement outside of the meetings of the church (discipling relationships)



- Be in transparent relationships with other church members in which they care for, encourage, rebuke, teach, and learn from each other (Eph. 4:15-16)
- Submit to the church's leadership and teaching (Heb. 13:17)
- Promote unity in the body (Eph. 4:3)
- Financially support the church's ministry (Gal. 6:6)
  - Primarily: Gospel Proclamation through global missions, local evangelism, and Word-based ministry to build up and equip the congregation for the work of the ministry
  - Secondarily: maintaining the facilities in which we carry out Gospel Ministry
- Use the spiritual gifts God has given them to build up the body however they can (1 Cor. 12:7)
- You worship God in private and with your family
- In short, each member must be a **disciple-making disciple** (Matthew 28:19-20)



DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY (See chart on next page)



# Session 3: Beliefs and Commitments

## ARTICLES OF FAITH

### Concerning the Word of God

We believe that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of Old and New Testaments, were originally and inerrantly communicated by God and therefore are verbally inspired and constitute the infallible authority in all matters of faith, life and conduct.

### Concerning God

We believe that there is one God but three persons in the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- the same in essence and equal in wisdom, goodness, power and glory.

We believe that the love of God is unbounded, His power unlimited, His mercy and goodness in the gracious gift of His Son our Savior fully worthy of the admiration of all men and loudly calling for the love and gratitude of every heart.

### Concerning Jesus Christ

We believe that God the Son came incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, who possesses a real divine and a real human nature. These two natures are united, fully present yet distinct, in the one man Jesus Christ. We believe in His virgin birth; in His sinless life; in His inerrant teaching; in His miracles; in His substitutionary and propitiatory death, by which we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; in His bodily resurrection from among the dead; in His ascension into Heaven; in His present ministry as Intercessor; in His personal return at the end of the age to raise the dead, glorify the church, judge the earth, and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

### Concerning the Holy Spirit

We believe the present ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment and to indwell and enable the Christian to live in a sober, righteous, and godly manner, unspotted by the world in this present age.

### Concerning Mankind

We believe that all persons are created in the image of God yet fell in Adam, the first man, resulting in separation from God, and therefore are not able to keep the perfect law of God nor to obtain salvation by the works of the law.

### Concerning Salvation

We believe that the salvation of lost and sinful man comes only through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit as man repents toward God and exercises faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Mediator.



### **Concerning the Church**

We believe that the church on earth consists of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ who are dedicated to the worship and service of God through the proclamation of the Word, the observance of the ordinances, fellowship, prayer, and the administration of discipline.

We believe it to be our duty to assemble ourselves together at least once a week for the purpose of worshiping God and of setting in order the things that belong to His house.

We believe it to be our duty to support and maintain the preaching of the Gospel in our church and abroad by giving our means as we may be able.

### **Concerning the Ordinances of the Church**

We believe that immersion is the only proper mode of water baptism and that believers are the only proper subjects thereof.

We believe that baptism represents the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and that communion represents the broken body and shed blood of our Savior and is to be given only to believers. Unsaved persons may not partake of communion.

### **Concerning the End Times**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust: the just to everlasting life and bliss, the unjust to everlasting shame, misery, and perdition.



## CHURCH COVENANT

Forasmuch as almighty God by His grace has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light and we have been baptized by immersion upon a profession of our faith in Christ Jesus and have given ourselves to the Lord and to one another in the Gospel of Christ, we have committed to form ourselves into a local church body of baptized believers to be governed and guided by a proper discipline in accordance with the Word of God.

We do therefore in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through His assistance, covenant and agree to keep the church discipline that sustains our brotherly fellowship with one another, in brotherly love to pray for each other; and if need be in the most brotherly manner to reprove and admonish one another, observing the direction of our Savior, as given in the 18th chapter of Matthew.

We also agree by God's assistance to pray in our families, attend our church meetings faithfully, observe the Lord's day and keep it holy, partake regularly of the communion of the Lord's supper and not absent ourselves from it without a lawful excuse, and give generously of our means, as God shall prosper us, to aid in maintaining the ministry among us and help in sending the Gospel to all people.

We agree to bear a reasonable part in all the expenses of the church and, as individual members, not to depart from the church or to leave its fellowship without a regular letter of dismission therefrom.



# Session 4: Coward Pursuits

## CORE PURSUITS

### **Love God**

God desires that His people **love God**. This accords with Jesus' response when asked about the greatest commandment: "love the Lord your God" (Matthew 22:37). Loving God is pursued by knowing, beholding, and delighting in God. God is described as glorious and delightful in the Bible; the Bible is revelation from God about God. Though the goal is for the church to love God, this only happens as individuals love God personally. A Christian commits himself to know God, not as an end in itself, but to the end that he might grow in love for God. Therefore, the study of God and His ways as revealed in the **Bible** should be the regular pursuit of a disciple. This reading should be accompanied by meditation on the truths of the Bible, so that our glorious God may be known, beheld, and delighted in. A love for God is understood as primary; the fountain from which a healthy Christian life flows. Also key in the pursuit of the love of God is  **fervent prayer**. A disciple prays that God will cause her to love God more and turn her affections away from all rivals for our affection (**idols**). Additionally, prayers should be made that God will cause her to have steadfast faith, that God will cause her to walk in a manner worthy, and that God to cause her to love her neighbor.

*How ministry pursues loving God:*

- **Expository preaching:** Each sermon is biblically based and seeks to make the point of the sermon be the point of the biblical text.
- **Prayer:** Each member prays for the spiritual good of themselves and for the individual members of the church.

### **Love Neighbor**

God desires that His people **love their neighbor**. This accords with Jesus' response when asked about the greatest commandment, and replied that the second greatest was: "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). Love of neighbor includes many things, but must never neglect **evangelism**. As John Piper has urged, we must care about all suffering, especially eternal suffering. Love for neighbor must include desire for their good – the greatest good we desire is the salvation of their souls. Loving neighbors happens well as we obey Jesus' words to "**do unto others**" (Matthew 7:12). Thus we must **care for the needy**: for the poor, the widow, and the prisoner. We must **show compassion** for those who are hurting. We must know, speak with, and minister to those who are hurting and are going through personal struggles (divorce, loss of loved one, wayward child, etc). We must **show ourselves to be good friends** by get to know our neighbors and coworkers. We should let them know our friendship is not contingent upon them coming to church or becoming a Christian. In this we do make them aware that we desire their salvation above all – yet this will never become necessary for our care and concern.



We must be a person of integrity. In this we are careful to not lie, cheat, or steal, but be upright in all we do. This means that as employer or supervisor you will treat all those under you as you would want to be treated by your boss. You will run your business in consideration of those you do business with (those who provide goods, employees, customers), not making the maximization of profits the highest priority at the expense of Christian integrity. As an employee, we will seek by God's help to be the kind of employee you would want to have if we were the employer (honest, hard working, diligent).

*How ministry pursues loving neighbor:*

- **Allow time for this:** The church calendar must allow time for Christians to be away from church to allow them to develop friendships with unbelievers.
- **Loving on purpose:** Loving neighbors must be emphasized and pursued intentionally.
- **Prayer:** Relationships with neighbors will achieve spiritual good on as God works through them, thus it must be pursued in prayerful dependence upon God.

### **Active Church Membership**

God desires that His people be gathered in local bodies known as the **church**. Each member has a responsibility before God to be a **disciple-making disciple**. Discipleship includes **personal spiritual growth, helping others grow spiritually, and proclaiming the Gospel to make new disciples**. Each member should seek to be used of God to meet with and spur one another along in spiritual growth, pray that God would grow her love for God and the brethren, and demonstrate love by caring for those who are in need of ministry. Each member should **support the work of the ministry** through attendance, verbal encouragement, prayers, service, and giving. All members are to **love one another**. Each member should **work toward unity** in the church through discouraging gossip (and not personally gossiping), speaking positively about the church and church leaders, personally work toward unity in areas of disunity in which he is involved, humbly confess his sins and offenses to one another in order to pursue reconciliation, and when appropriate, speak with leadership about issues that challenge unity. Our church gatherings are times to express our desire for a **greater love for and satisfaction in God**, while we cry out to God that He might grant it.

*How ministry pursues active church membership:*

- **Informal Discipleship:** Each member should seek to obey God's command to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). This happens as members befriend each other and get together outside of church for prayer, Bible study, and spiritual encouragement.
- **Formal Discipleship:** This will happen through the regular ministries of the church: pulpit ministry, Bible studies and Sunday School.
- **Active attendance:** Each member should not consider himself a consumer at church, but part of God's means of improving the overall spiritual health of the church.



Members will seek to serve wherever there is a need, love and care for all members, and pray for those gathered each week.

- **Worship pursuing God:** The worship services are a time to express our desire for a greater love for God and pray that He might grant such an increase

### ***Christian Family***

Many individual disciples will also be part of a **family** as a father/husband, mother/wife, or child. God also has expectations for this aspect of the disciple's life. Each family must take care to be **centered on God**. A family should make it a priority to study God's Word together, praise God together, and pray to God together. Collectively the members of the family should **work for the spiritual good of all family members**. In pursuing this, each member must be slow to take offense at the sins of one another, be quick to confess your sins and repent, and work to be used of God to help other family members battle sin and experience victory over sin by the power of God.

*How ministry pursues Christian families:*

- **Intentional family worship:** Families will seek to make God's Word and prayer a regular part of family life. This need not include a daily sermon, but families should aim for regular reading of the Bible and prayer.
- **Humility and forgiveness:** Each family member must recall his own sin, humbly confess it, and seek forgiveness when appropriate. The offended member must be quick to forgive, mindful of his own sin, and a desire to be used of God to minister grace to the offending party.



## DISCIPLING RELATIONSHIPS

New church members have lots of questions.

A common one is, “How do I get connected in a discipling relationship?”

What a great question! Discipling is critical for our Christian growth as individuals as well as for making the gospel visible in our life together as a church. We want to make a special effort to cultivate a culture of discipling in our church.

### *I. What do we mean by “discipling”?*

In one sense, almost everything we do as a local church is about being and making disciples. The songs we sing, the prayers we pray, and certainly the sermons that are preached all aim to grow us as God-glorifying disciples.

But for this handout we have something more specific in mind when we use the word “discipling.” We are thinking particularly about individual relationships. More formally, we are talking about the *intentional encouragement and training of disciples of Jesus on the basis of deliberate, loving relationships.*

Jesus tells us to pursue one another like this: “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:17). How did Jesus love his disciples in ways that could be imitated? He loved them intentionally, purposefully, humbly, joyfully and normally. Let’s think about these descriptions.

**Intentional:** “You did not choose me but I chose you...” (John 15:16a). Jesus did not merely stumble across his disciples; he took loving initiative. He chose them. Christ-like love is not passive; it takes initiative. Loving other Christians like Christ love us means taking the initiative.

**Purposeful:** “...and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16b). Christ’s love for his disciples is purposeful. He called them to bear fruit for God’s glory. In other words, his love is not merely sentimental, but has a wonderful, God-glorifying agenda. If we are to love one-another as Christ has loved us, surely we will share Jesus’ goals for one another, namely, the spiritual good of our friend and God’s glory through their joy in the gospel.

**Humble:** Jesus says, “As the father has loved me, so have I loved you,” (John 15:9) and “Instead [of slaves], I have called you friends” (John 15:15a). Jesus condescends to be our friend, even though he is infinitely far above us in majesty, holiness, and honor. Surely, then, we must relate with all humility to our fellow fallen brothers and sisters. We treat them as friends whom we love, not as “projects” or “lessers.” We don’t lord it over; we honor and cherish.



**Joyful:** “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:11). Jesus commands us to love one another so that we would know his joy. Setting out to care for other Christians, encouraging their growth in grace, can be hard work. But it is wonderful work, and Jesus says it is joy-producing work!

**Normal:** Jesus makes this kind of loving discipling his basic command to all his people and, thus, normal for all Christians. Listen again: “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” Not surprisingly, you will find talk of basic Christian discipleship throughout God’s Word:

“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Heb. 3:13).

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves” (Rom. 12:10).

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thess. 5:11).

The New Testament is filled with such exhortations. Jesus and the apostles did not mean for discipling between Christians to be exceptional, but normal.

As a member of our church, we want *you* to be: *intentional, purposeful, humble, and joyful* as we work together at making these kinds of one-on-one relationships normal.

Do this by letting people get to know you. Do this by working to know them. Really, it is all of our work to cultivate a culture of discipleship in this place.

## **2. What do we mean by a “culture of discipling”?**

We want this phrase to be commonly used by us. Most dictionaries define a “culture” as something like “the shared values, goals and practices that characterize a group.” That is pretty much what we have in mind when it comes to discipling at our church. We don’t want just a program, we want mutual love and encouragement to be a value, goal, and practice that increasingly characterizes all of us.

Formal programs are not necessarily bad, but we want to make sure we do not fall short of the biblical ideal. And the biblical ideal, we have said, is to become a place where it is normal to take initiative in doing one another spiritual good. You don’t have to sign up for anything or get permission before loving fellow members this way. Nor do you want a church where discipling only happens when the staff sustains it. That’s not a healthy church! No, we want you to pray and think about how you can jump in. And talk to an elder or some other member about your unique opportunities and stewardships.

## **3. What should I do in a discipling relationship?**

The most significant aspect of any discipling relationship, often, is not exactly what you do when you meet, but *that* you build a relationship with biblical truth at its core. As such, there is no “set program” for discipling relationships in our church. Members do a number of things:



- Meet weekly to discuss the prior Sunday's sermon, a Christian book, or a book of the Bible.
- Attend Sunday School together and discuss specific application in one another's lives.
- Invite unmarried members to sit in on family devotions.
- Accompany mothers with young children as they run errands.
- Help dads with yard work and ask them for counsel.
- Schedule "play dates" for kids and talk about the Sunday sermon.

Examples abound, and the venues are flexible. What's important, again, is that you pursue something, something where you have time to relate to another member with the intentional aim of encouraging and being encouraged by the truth from God's Word. So be creative! But be intentional about loving one another in the best, the highest, the most biblical way—by aiming to do the other person spiritual good.

#### ***4. How can I get into a discipling relationship?***

There are two ways to establish a discipling relationship at Stony Hill Baptist Church. First, take the personal initiative to try to work out a discipling relationship with any other member (of your same gender, please). No staff permission needed! Instead, show up to church early, stick around late, and start getting to know other people. Over time we hope you will begin to build the kind of relationships where these things happen naturally.

Second, feel free to contact a pastor for help. There may be reasons why you are unable to set up these meetings yourself. In these cases a pastor is happy to help. Just call the church and ask for help.

We do encourage you to start with your own initiative. It just might cause you to flex and even develop the discipline and evangelism muscles that will serve you and others for years to come. You might find that doing so becomes one of the most satisfying experiences of your life as a Christian. And you might find yourself understanding more clearly what Jesus meant when he said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

Adapted from: 9Marks. Website: [www.9Marks.org](http://www.9Marks.org).



# Personal Elder Care

## HOME VISITATION

Visitation is an opportunity for your pastors to spend time with you caring for your soul. Unlike the regular corporate meetings of the church, visitation is personal and informal. But it is not unconnected from the life of the church. Rather, visitation is the natural extension of all we do: studying God's Word, preaching, praying, singing, fellowship, ministry, and missions. In visiting with you, we want to help you consider how God is at work in your life and how we can help aid in your spiritual growth. Our church covenant reminds us that as members of Stony Hill Baptist Church we are "living witnesses" who are "continually reaffirming the principles" of things like: *the gospel, sound doctrine, giving ourselves to one another, brotherly fellowship, church discipline, and praying in our families.* We are bound in a covenant to pursue spiritual growth together by loving and serving, training and edifying, and reminding and reproofing one another.

As a church family, spiritual growth is what we are all about. For those who love God there is a holy purpose for their lives. That purpose is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-29). Therefore, everything we do should be evaluated upon the standard of Christlikeness. We pray that our time visiting with you will be for your spiritual good, so that you might grow in your knowledge of, love towards, and obedience for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here are some of the things you can expect for our visit with you.

- We plan to schedule visits in advance at a convenient time for you.
- We would be glad to meet with you or your family at the church building instead of at your home if that is what you would prefer.
- Our goal is to visit with you for about 90 minutes once a year.
- We do not expect refreshments.
- We want to focus on spiritual matters in several spheres: *personal, family, church, and world.*
- We are only expecting 30–90 second answers to most of the questions.
- We want to begin and end our visit with prayer.

We are visiting with you because we have been entrusted by God with the care of your souls. We are seeking to pay attention to the flock which the Holy Spirit has made us overseers and shepherds (Acts 20:28), to shepherd the flock of God that is among us, exercising oversight (I Peter 5:2), and to keep watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account (Hebrews 13:17). These visitations are not always easy, for you or for us, but we believe they are important for all of us as we pursue godliness together as a church family.

One of the enduring images in church history for pastors, is that they are "physicians of the soul." You can consider these visits something like a check up for the health of your soul. We want to help you take a spiritual inventory of your life so that we might best know how to pray for, counsel, and care for you.



On the following pages, we have some of the types of questions we plan to go over with you during our visit. Prepare yourself by working through these questions in the days before we arrive. It is not necessary to write out your answers, but you may if you find that useful. Lastly, please carefully review p. 5–8 before our visit so that we may discuss them with you.

## VISITATION QUESTIONS

### PERSONAL

#### **Your Soul (What is God doing in you?)**

##### Salvation and Spiritual Health

- Do you know for sure that you are a Christian? How so?
- What has God been teaching you about himself recently?
- What areas of your spiritual life do you think you have grown most in recently?
- What have you grown to love, desire, long for more in recently?

##### Sin

- Are you responsive when you sense the Holy Spirit convicting you of sin?
- What people, experience, or object are you especially tempted to make your chief source of significance, satisfaction, or fulfillment?
- Do you have any sin you would like to confess?

#### **Your Doctrine (What has God done for you?)**

- In brief (1-2 minutes), what is the gospel?
- Are there any theological truths/doctrines that you are wrestling with, confused about, or need clarification on?
- Have any of your theological beliefs changed?
- Do you sense that you are growing in your knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, his word, and spiritual matters?
- What Christian books have you read lately?
- What areas of Christian doctrine or life would you like to study more so that we might recommend some resources for you?

\* Review our SHBC Articles of Faith before Visit

- Do you have any reservations in affirming the SHBC Articles of Faith?

#### **Your Practice (What is God doing through you?)**

- What are your current practices regarding bible engagement?  
(Reading, Studying, Meditating, Memorizing, Teaching)  
If you are having difficulty with this, would you like us to help you in this area?
- What are your current practices regarding prayer?  
If you are having difficulty with this, would you like us to help you in this area?
- Would you like to be discipled or counseled by someone in the church?



## FAMILY

### Marriage

- How is your relationship with your Spouse?

### Children

- *Head of Household:* Are you maintaining order in the lives of your children through loving leadership, biblical training, and appropriate discipline?

### Whole Family

- How is your family doing spiritually? Is your family enjoying joy and harmony?
  - What are your current practices regarding family worship or devotions?  
*(Bible Reading, Prayer, Catechism, Singing, etc...)*
- If you are having difficulty with this, would you like us to help you in this area?

## CHURCH

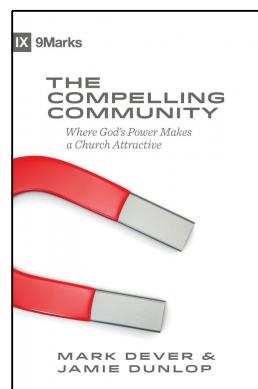
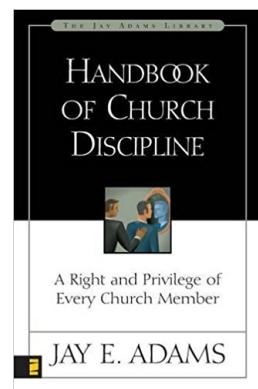
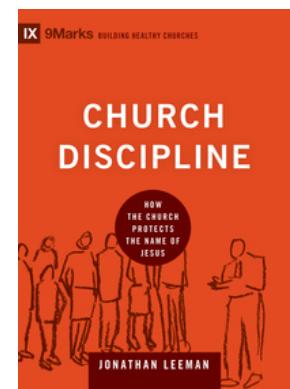
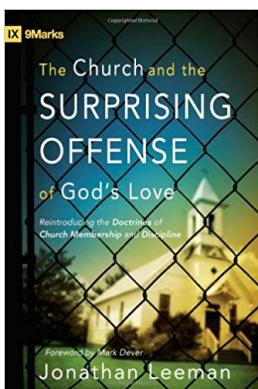
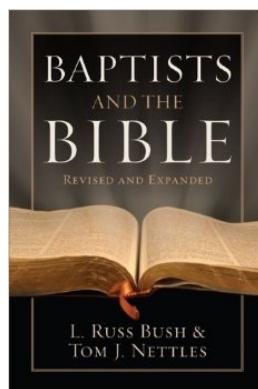
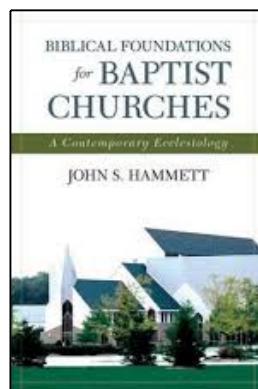
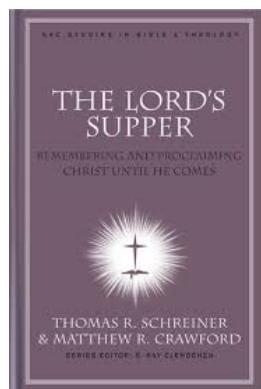
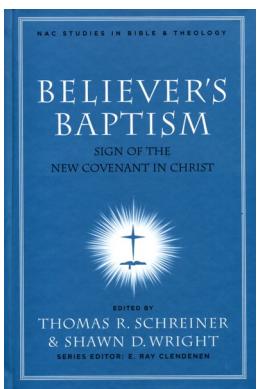
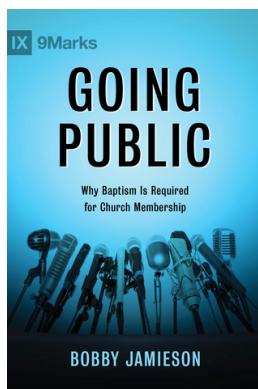
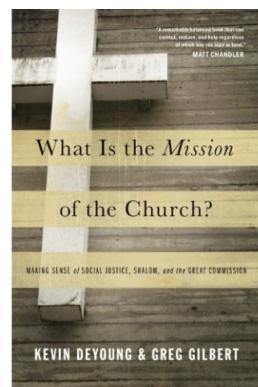
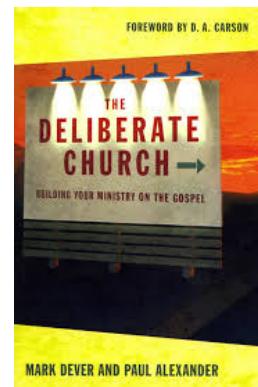
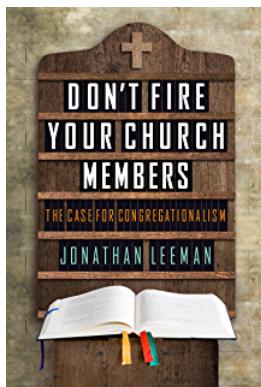
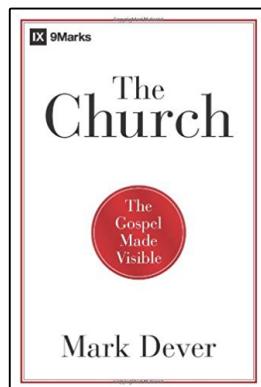
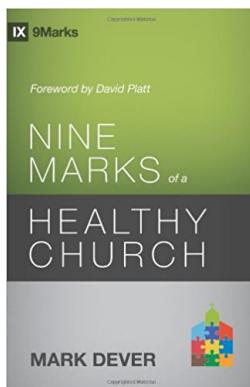
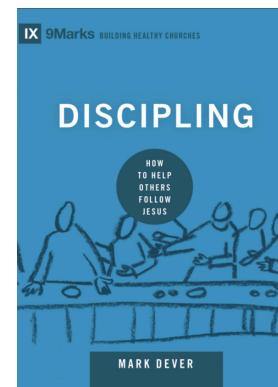
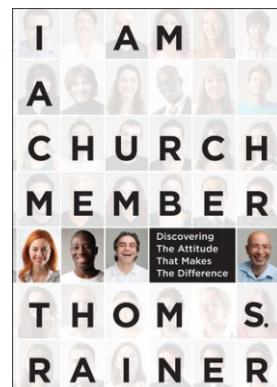
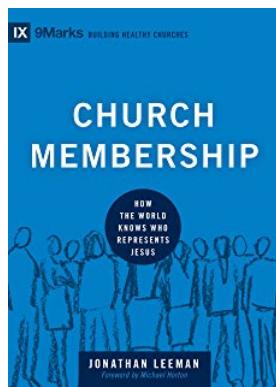
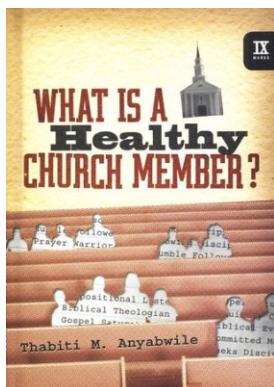
- How are you benefiting from the ministry of the church?
  - How are you contributing to the spiritual benefit of other members?
- \* *Review our Church Covenant before the Visit*
- Do you have any reservations in affirming our church covenant?
- \* *Review our Bylaws: Article 1. Section 4. Responsibilities of Membership*
- Do you have any reservations in affirming these commitments?

## WORLD

- Do you think you are living a consistent, godly life before others? (neighbors, work, etc...)
  - Do you have any unresolved conflict with anyone?
  - Are you regularly sharing your faith with others?
- If not, would you be interested in learning how to share your faith?

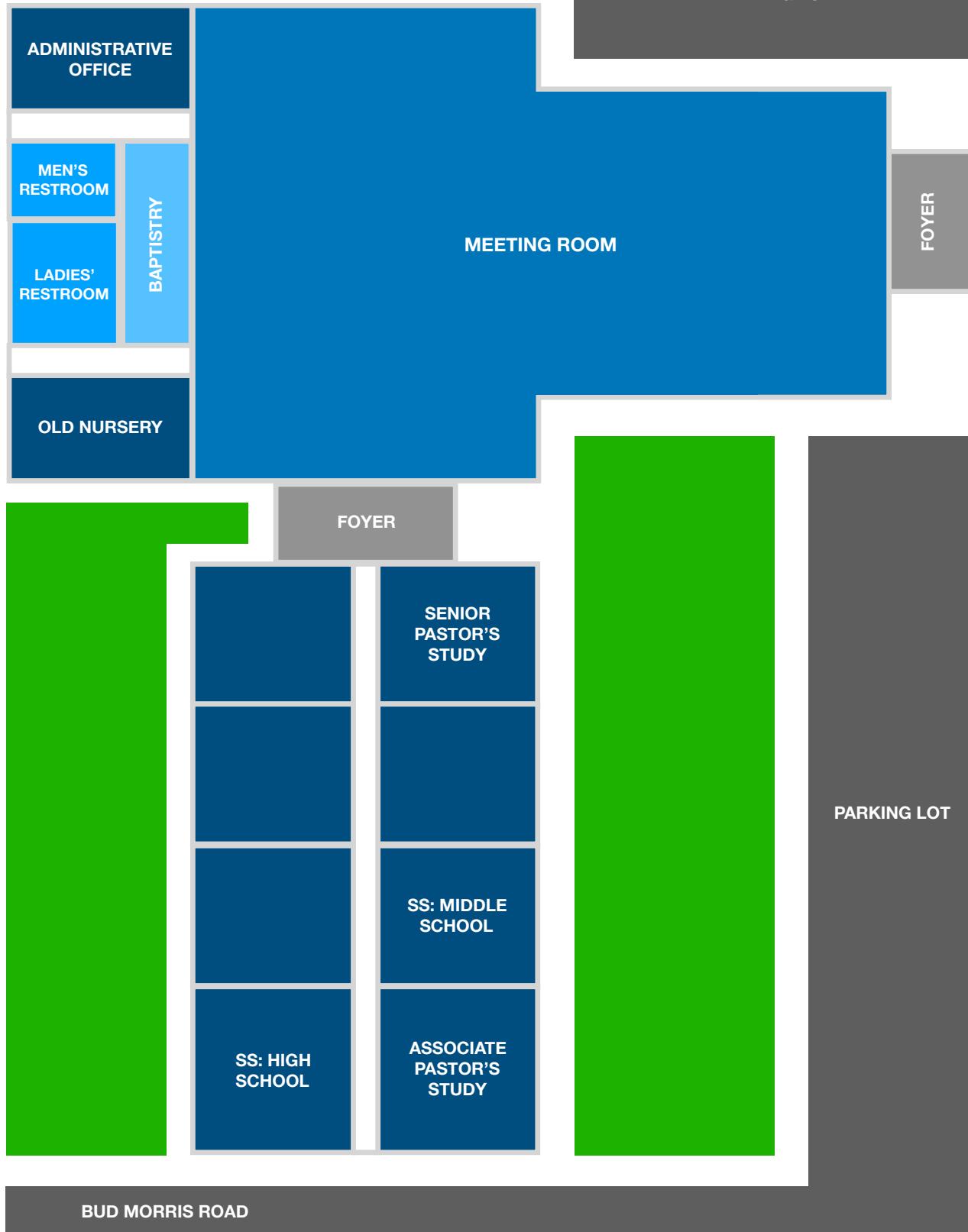
## CONCLUSION

- What comments or questions do you have for us?
- When can we visit with you next?
- How can we be in prayer for you today and over the next several weeks and months?  
(We would like to conclude by spending time in prayer with you)





## SHBC OLD CHURCH BUILDING





# SHBC FELLOWSHIP LIFE CENTER

