

Providence Membership Book

WHO WE ARE, *WHAT WE BELIEVE,*
& WHAT WE DO





TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Why Membership? . . . 1

- a. Why Join a Local Church?

2. Who is Providence Church? . . . 4

- a. Core Values
- b. Distinctives

3. What Does Providence Church Believe? . . . 9

- a. Theological Philosophy
- b. Gospel
- c. Statement of Faith
- d. What Does Providence Believe About . . . ?
 - i. Sovereignty of God
 - ii. Church Governance
 - iii. Worship Style
 - iv. Church Discipline
 - v. Eschatology
 - vi. Gifts of the Holy Spirit

4. What Does Providence Church Do? . . . 20

- a. Philosophy of Ministry
- b. Adults (Home Groups, Men's, Women's, PU)
- c. Students (Student Ministry)
- d. Children (Children's Ministry)

5. What Does a Member of Providence Church Do? . . . 24

- a. Next Steps
 - b. Membership Covenant and Statement of Discipline
- 



Why Membership?



Why Membership?¹

The importance of joining a local church body

We've been asked that question on numerous occasions. For many Christians membership sounds stiff, something you have at your bank or the country club, but too formal for the church. Even if it's agreed that Christianity is not a lone ranger religion, that we need community and fellowship with other Christians, we still bristle at the thought of officially joining a church. Why all the hoops? Why box the Holy Spirit into member/non-member categories? Why bother joining a local church when I'm already a member of the universal Church?

Many people have not given serious thought to church membership. They are open to hearing the justification for something they've not thought much about. Here are just a few reasons why church membership matters.

1. In joining a church you make visible your commitment to Christ and his people.

Membership is one way to raise the flag of faith. You state before God and others that you are part of this local body of believers. It's easy to talk in glowing terms about the invisible church—the body of all believers near and far, living and dead—but it's in the visible church that God expects you to live out your faith. Sometimes we think that we wouldn't all be clamoring for community if we had actually experienced it. Real fellowship is hard work, because most people are a lot like us—selfish, petty, and proud. But that's the body God calls us to.

How many of Paul's letters were written to individuals? Only a handful, and these were mostly to pastors. The majority of his letters were written to a local body of believers. We see the same thing in Revelation. Jesus spoke to individual congregations in places like Smyrna, Sardis, and Laodicea. The New Testament knows no Christians floating around in “just me and Jesus” land. Believers belong to churches.

2. Making a commitment makes a powerful statement in a low-commitment culture.

Many bowling leagues require more of their members than our churches. Where this is true, the church is a sad reflection of its culture. Ours is a consumer culture where everything is tailored to meet our needs and satisfy our preferences. When those needs aren't met, we can always move on to the next product, or job, or spouse.

Joining a church in such an environment makes a counter-cultural statement. It says, “I am committed to this group of people and they are committed to me. I am here to give, more than get.”

Even if you will only be in town for a few years, it's still not a bad idea to join a church. It lets your home church (if you are a student) know that you are being cared for, and it lets your present church know that you will be cared for here. But it's not just about being cared for, it's about making a decision and sticking with it—something that many find difficult. We prefer to date the church—have her around for special events, take her out when life feels lonely, and keep her around for a rainy day. Membership is one way to stop dating churches, and marry one.

3. We can be overly independent.

In the West, it's one of the best and worst things about us. We are free spirits and critical thinkers. We get an idea and run with it. But who is running with us? And are any of us running in the same direction? Membership states in a formal way, “I am part of something bigger than myself. I am not just one of three hundred individuals. I am part of a body.”



4. Church membership keeps us accountable.

When we join a church we are offering ourselves to one another to be encouraged, rebuked, corrected, and served. We are placing ourselves under leaders and submitting to their authority (Heb. 13:7). We are saying, “I am here to stay. I want to help you grow in godliness. Will you help me to do the same?”

Mark Dever, in his book *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, writes,

Church membership is our opportunity to grasp hold of each other in responsibility and love. By identifying ourselves with a particular church, we let the pastors and other members of that local church know that we intend to be committed in attendance, giving, prayer, and service. We allow fellow believers to have great expectations of us in these areas, and we make it known that we are the responsibility of this local church. We assure the church of our commitment to Christ in serving with them, and we call for their commitment to serve and encourage as well.

5. Joining the church will help your pastor and elders be more faithful shepherds.

Hebrews 13:7 says, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.” That’s your part as a member of the church. Here’s our part as leaders: “They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.” As pastors we take very seriously the responsibility before God to watch and care for souls. To give just one example, we try to be diligent in following up with people who haven’t been at our church for a while. This is a challenge. But if you never become a member, we can’t tell if you are really gone, because we might not be sure if you were ever here! It’s nearly impossible for the elders to shepherd the flock when they don’t know who really considers them their shepherds.

6. Joining the church gives you an opportunity to make promises.

When someone becomes a member at Providence Church, he makes promises to pray, give, serve, attend worship, accept the spiritual guidance of the church, obey its teachings, and seek the things that make for unity, purity, and peace. We ought not to make these promises lightly. They are solemn vows. And we must hold each other to them. If you don’t join the church, you miss an opportunity to publicly make these promises, inviting the elders and the rest of the body to hold you to these promises—which would be missing out on great spiritual benefit, for you, your leaders, and the whole church.

Membership matters more than most people think.



Who is Providence Church?

Distinctives & Core Values



Truth

Core Values

“God is truth, and his truth is made known to us through his Word and through Jesus Christ. Providence Church seeks to know, love and live the truth.”

In John 14:6, Christ tells his disciple, Thomas, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” These are very direct words spoken to a man who, though he had lived with Jesus, watched him do miracles, heard the prophecies about his death and resurrection, and would soon see his death on the cross in fulfillment of those prophecies about his death, still doubted Jesus. Christ tells the disciples that it is he who has gone before to prepare their places in heaven. Dwelling in heaven (and therefore, eternal life), then, only comes through Christ Jesus. Jesus is the only “way” to God. Whereas, in the Old Testament, only the High Priest had direct access to God by going into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, the believer now has access to God through Christ Jesus. Not only this, but Jesus is the “truth.” He is truth revealed and fulfilled, and is the only true God. Last, Jesus is the “life,” meaning that he is the one who grants eternal life to those who believe in him. The Old Testament covenantal promises of eternal life come to completion in Christ Jesus.

Not only this, but the truth of God’s Word is truth that grants life. In 2 Timothy 3:16, we read that “All Scripture is breathed out by God (*theopneustos*) and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”


Providence is firm in believing the truth of God’s Word, its inerrancy and infallibility. We believe that it is God’s Word that grants life to his people. We believe in the vital importance it has in the life of the believer, both in personal study and application, as well as its teaching in corporate worship gatherings. In this, Providence affirms the truth of Scripture by preaching, teaching and living out the Word. Sunday mornings will find the body diving into Scripture together by the preaching of the Gospel. Throughout the week, opportunities are given to study the Scriptures together in Home Groups and in specific Bible studies. Through dwelling in community, members of Providence are encouraged to live lives that honor the truth of God’s Word.

Community

“God exists in perfect community – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and he created us to live in community. As such, the Christian life is one that is to be lived in love, service and authenticity with the body of Christ.”

Throughout Scripture, we see the calling for the LORD’s people to dwell in and commit to community. In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was called on to take care of the poor, needy, widows and orphans in showing community to the less fortunate. There were numerous days of feasting and celebration where the nation came together to worship. Christ constantly drew people together as they came to him. The book of Acts shows us how the early church strove for everyone to have “...everything in common.” In the future, we will worship and work eternally before the LORD’s throne with those who have gone before us. Community permeates the life of the believer.

In Acts 4:32-35, we see how the early church was unified in not only their spiritual conduct, but their personal lives as well. Members of the church were selling possessions, opening their homes in hospitality, and making sure that less fortunate Christians were continuing to be taken care of.



From there, in Hebrews 10:24, we see a beautiful description of why community is a must. Beginning in verse 23, we are called to "...hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering..." as part of stirring one another up to good works. In this, we must meet together in community. To share one another's burdens, joys and sorrows is a natural part of the life of the body of believers.

At Providence, we seek to live this out through communal worship on Sunday mornings. One vital component of the early church was their passion for the public reading and exposition of Scripture. Meeting daily in the synagogue, the Word was read and the church grew exponentially as more and more came to faith in Christ. Every Sunday finds Providence meeting as a church body, to hear the Word of God preached. Another way Providence dwells in community is through gathering in smaller cells as Home Groups. Meeting throughout the week, Home Groups consistently promote the idea of community even further by being a more intimate place where this is actually lived out. Everyone at Providence is encouraged to seek to dwell in community through joining a Home Group.

Last, community is seen in fellowship and prayer nights throughout the course of the year. These large-group settings are designed to not only draw people further in to the Providence body, but to allow and facilitate for the enjoying and furthering of already growing friendships. These friendships add another layer to the life lived in community at Providence.

Redemption

"Redemption is the buying back of something that was lost. As people redeemed by Christ, we are now actively redeeming souls, hearts and lives to Christ. This includes our worship, our relationships and our work."

The story of redemption is one that runs throughout the course of the Bible. Adam and Eve were redeemed in the garden. Israel was redeemed and brought back out of slavery in Egypt. The Levitical Law was given to show what redemption and forgiveness of sin would look like. Christ Jesus completed the work of redemption on the cross.

In Ephesians 1:7, we read, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace..." This thought should stir the believer to their core, as we are reminded what redemption looks like and, ultimately, cost.

In Christ, we see that his people were bought back from the wages of sin. Through his penal substitution and atonement, Christ purchased his people by giving his own life. In the cross lies the redemption of the believer and our justification before Holy God.

As a body, Providence seeks to see the glory of Christ in redemption in all areas of life. Whether it is in conversation with a co-worker, the ways in which we serve and lead our families, or in meeting together to encourage one another and spur one another onward, we, as a church, passionately desire and strive for seeing the joy of knowing redemption come to more and more people. Our hope, as a people, is that the LORD would continue his work in and through us to see more people come to trust in the redeeming power of Christ's blood and to share in and enjoy worshipping him as a body.



Missional Living

“We are to passionately give our lives away for the glory of God in everything that we do.”

In Matthew 28:19-20, Christ Jesus gives the disciples what many know as the Great Commission. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” As a church, Providence passionately desires to see this lived out through the lives of each and every member.

As a people, Christians are called to continue this commission in being the hands and feet by which the LORD brings his gospel to the world. Our calling today is no different than in that we are called to go and make disciples. Isaiah 43:6-7 tells us, “I will say to the north, Give up and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

The beauty of this is that we are not called to just reach the people of the northern suburbs of Dallas, nor to only go into foreign mission fields... we are called to live our lives on-mission wherever we are. As a church, this means that Providence seeks to see God’s kingdom moved forward in the suburbs of north Dallas. From Plano to Prosper, Denton to McKinney, our hope, as a church, is to move the kingdom forward by sharing the Gospel in every thing we do. This also means preaching the Gospel on a weekly basis. It means starting new Home Groups in neighborhoods throughout our cities. It means establishing playgroups for women to have fellowship throughout the week and establish relationships with other moms in the area.

This also means that Providence is called to take the Gospel to the nations. In coming alongside local ministries, we are able to effectively be a light to the cities of the northern Metroplex. Partnering with domestic U.S. church plants, we are able to have a hand in seeing the LORD’s work in redeeming American cities. By partnering with international church planters, we are able to see more and more of God’s work elsewhere in the world. Providence’s desire is that the nations would come to worship Christ Jesus. From Frisco to the ends of the earth, we are a church committed to see the glory of the LORD and the advancement of his kingdom.

Prayer

“We long to see prayer become a lifestyle of the follower of Christ.”

In Matthew 21:13, Jesus declares that the house of God shall be called a “house of prayer.” Consequently, we desire to see Providence Church be a church that is rooted in prayer. The core value of prayer is our humble confession of our great need of Jesus in our personal and corporate lives. Just as Jesus was totally dependent on the Father while He walked this earth (John 5:19), we too are totally dependent on Him (John 15:5). Jesus has granted us both the access and ability to pray to our Heavenly Father. In John 16: 23-24, Jesus teaches His disciples that as a result of His mission on earth, they would “in that day” be able to ask of the Father in His name through prayer. Romans 8:26-27 teaches us that the Spirit of Christ actually “intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

Since we have access to the throne of God through the blood of Christ, prayer is a vital part of who we are at Providence Church because it is our means of communing with God. Finally, Jesus teaches us in Luke 18:1-8 that we are to pray persistently. In order to establish the lifestyle of prayer, we want to be a praying people both in our private lives (Matthew 5:6) and when we gather together as a church body to pray for one another (James 5:16).



Everything is About Jesus

Distinctives

For the life of the believer, everything—every word, every thought, every action—is ultimately for the glory of our Savior, Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:15-20 tells us, basically, that everything is about Jesus. All of Scripture points to him, all of creation bows before him, all of our justification comes from him and sanctification allows us to look like him. Verse 20 says, “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” By the blood of his cross, we are justified and free to truly live where everything is about the Redeemer and Savior who has done exceedingly great things for us. Providence desires to be a people marked thinking, speaking, and acting unto Jesus Christ.

Everything Starts at Home

Parents are given the God-honoring duties of raising their children in fear and loving worship of the LORD. Proverbs 22:6 tells us simply, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

As a church, Providence believes in equipping parents to pastor their children and homes well. Ephesians 5:22-28, 6:1-4 is a great example and blueprint of how a Godly home ought to look. We are a church that is committed to training men to be the primary leaders and shepherds of their homes, training women to lovingly submit to their husbands and help guide their children, and training children to obey the Word of God and love Jesus. The Christian home is the main place where discipleship, teaching, and living out the Gospel really takes place. As a church family, Providence seeks to encourage one another to glorify Christ in how everything begins at home. Additionally, we desire to be a church that equips singles to glorify God with their lives in the homes they find themselves in.

Everything Serves the Mission

As Christians, we are called out to live wholly focused on Jesus and magnifying his glory among the nations. From Frisco, Texas, to the far corners of this earth, believers are called to exalt the name of Christ.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Both as individuals and as a church body, everything we do is done bearing in mind the mission our Lord Jesus, has given us. Every sermon expands the mission to its hearers. Every ministry of Providence is in place to further the mission. A people commanded to go and make disciples, Providence desires to be a church where everything truly does serve the mission of making worshippers of Jesus Christ.



What Does Providence Church Believe?

Understanding the Doctrine and Theology of Providence Church



What Does Providence Church Believe?

Understanding the Doctrine and Theology of Providence Church

Theological Philosophy

Our philosophy in teaching theology is teaching it two-handed. In one hand we hold some things in a tight fist in order to protect their purity, and in the other we hold some things in an open palm to signify freedom and harmony. Liberal theology is all open-handed, compromising any doctrine for the sake of unity. Fundamentalist theology is all closed-handed, compromising unity for the sake of unessential doctrines. We labor to grow in the whole counsel of the Bible and we will fight vigorously for essential doctrines and agreeably disagree on non-essential doctrines. In the theology section of this class we will pass over some essential doctrines and go into others in detail. Non-essential doctrines are made up mostly of philosophies and not Scripture, and we will not spend any time on those.

Our philosophy in teaching theology is also three-fold and will always influence our structure and style.

1. Clarity

Clarity is crucial to interpretation, because if we do not rightly define and explain we can do two things wrong in our teaching: First, there will be manipulation of truths to fit our point of view or to discredit another viewpoint. Second, there will be confusion over questions raised in opposition of this view and difficulty in application.

2. Integrity

Integrity is a vital part of our presentation. We commit to model integrity in two ways during our teaching: First, we will keep Scripture central with all our views and presentations. Second, we will not dismiss a view by misrepresenting its argument.

3. Humility

Humility is inevitable in proclamation. Paul exhorts us to speak the truth in love. When humility is absent, two things happen: First, our disagreements will dishonor God. Second, our disagreements will cause divisions among us. Our goal is to be clear and true to everything we present in this book and class, so that interpretations will lead to our edification and God's glory.

The Gospel

“Gospel” might just be the most common word that you hear in church today, but it also might just be the most confusing word you hear. Ask ten church members of a given church to define the Gospel and you will likely get ten different answers. If you were asked to define the Gospel in sixty seconds what would you say?

Paul tells us that he delivered the Gospel to the church of Corinth as the matter of first importance² and he also says that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone that believes.³

Because the Gospel is of the utmost significance in the life of the Church and the Christian, Providence Church exists to “glorify God through lives changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁴ At Providence we communicate the Gospel in terms of a four-part grid: God, Man, Christ, Response. Rightly understanding these areas will lead to right Gospel understanding and right Gospel living.

John tells us that God was in the beginning of all things⁵ and the beginning of the Gospel is no different as it begins with God. His essence, being, and character is the genesis for the wondrous Gospel we proclaim. Foundationally God is Triune, spirit, eternal, unchanging, holy, righteous, just, and good.

God is Triune

To say that God is triune is to say that God exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three persons are one God⁶, equal in substance, power, and glory.

God is Spirit

Contrary to common pop culture, God is not a physical being (Christ is the physical manifestation of God), but He is spirit.⁷ He consists not of matter, nor possesses physical characteristics of body, size, and shape. He is incomprehensible and beyond imagination.⁸

God is Eternal

God is eternal. Before anything came to be, God existed in perfect Trinitarian community.⁹ He is without beginning and without end¹⁰ and was actively at work before the creation of the world.¹¹ This characteristic means that God does not view time as we humans do. He exists outside of time, therefore He sees all events—past, present, and future—with complete clarity.

God is Unchanging

The essence, characteristics, purposes, and decrees of God are unchanging. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow in how He relates to His creation.¹²

God is Holy

God is utterly and completely set apart from His creation in all His ways.¹³ Whereas, by virtue of the fall, creation is bound to sin, God has always existed and will continue to exist completely separate from all sin and evil.

God is Righteous and Just

Distinguishing between God's holiness and righteousness can be a tricky endeavor, yet when you realize that righteousness is synonymous with justice, the attribute becomes clearer. Therefore, we have lumped the two together as they are imperative in our greater understanding of the Gospel.

When we say that God is just, we are saying that He always does what is right, what should be done, and that He does it consistently, without partiality or prejudice. The word just and the word righteous are identical in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. God's righteousness (or justice) is the natural expression of His holiness. If He is infinitely pure, then He must be opposed to all sin, and that opposition to sin must be demonstrated in His treatment of His creatures. When we read that God is righteous or just, we are being assured that His actions toward us are in perfect agreement with His holy nature.¹⁴

God is Good

Everything that God is and everything that God does is good.¹⁵ His goodness is reflected in the truth that God does all things for His glory and for the good of His people. Thomas Manton said, "He is infinitely good; the creature's good is but a drop, but in God there is an infinite ocean or gathering together of good."

The second part of our grid is the category of “Man.” To rightly understand the Gospel is in part to have a proper understanding of what man was created for and what happened as a result of his fall.

God declared in Genesis 1:26-7, “Let us make man in our image . . . so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.” To be made in the image of God is to say that man was made in God’s likeness. This does not mean that we physically represent a spiritual God, rather we reflect God in a few ways:

- ***Man Was Created Rational and Spiritual.*** Man alone has the capacity—out of all creation—to worship God and reason intellectually.
- ***Man Was Granted Dominion Over Creation.*** Genesis 1:26 says, “. . . let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” We image God by implementing His will and establishing His lordship over all of creation.
- ***Man Was Originally Righteous.*** The first man, Adam, was created without sin (although he did have the capacity to sin).


In addition to bearing the image of God, man was created for God’s glory.¹⁶ That means everything man did in the garden of Eden did in fact, by virtue of original righteousness, proclaim—through word and work—the infinite worth of God Almighty. However, we find that all men have fallen short of the glory of God¹⁷. . . so what happened?

Man’s Problem

After only two blissful chapters of joyful and holy relationship with God, we find that Satan tempts and coerces Eve to deliberately disobey the express command of God to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.¹⁸ And this was not a simple sin of eating a piece of food God asked her not to take. Rather it was an all-out rejection of God’s authority and a proclamation of independence from God. Thus we have the first example of sin and the purest definition of sin: Sin, at its very core, is the deliberate and willful offense of disobedience against a holy God.

Adam subsequently partakes of this same sin. Then in Genesis 3:14-17, we find that God curses man and woman, removes them from the Garden of Eden, and places them under the condemnation of death due to their sin. Now, the genesis of our sin problem is indeed found in the book of Genesis, but its pervasive nature is expounded in the New Testament. Firstly, Romans 5:12 tells us that all men are under the curse of sin: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.” (emphasis added) Secondly, Ephesians 2:1 tells us that every human is dead in his trespasses and sin. So Adam’s fall and sin are imputed to us in two ways:

1. ***We are Legally Condemned before God.*** The condemnation of sin is death.¹⁹
2. ***We are Completely Corrupt in Nature.*** Man is born void of any righteousness²⁰ and utterly deprived in mind and will.²¹



Our legal condemnation and complete corruption is a massive issue because every human being is now under the righteous wrath of God for their sin and is totally unable to remedy their sin problem. Sin separates man from God not only in this life, but for all eternity. God's holiness, righteousness, and justice demand that sin be punished, and punished to the fullest. His very essence and character expounded in the first section will not allow Him to tolerate sin.

Man was created to live eternally with God, but God's utter righteousness now destines us for eternal separation and punishment.

This is our problem.

In understanding this we now can move to and understand God's solution for sin: Jesus Christ.

What is the Gospel? - Christ

If you were to sum up the Gospel in one word, Jesus would be the best answer. That is because the Gospel declarations, blessings, and benefits all come from Jesus Christ. To understand the significance of Christ in the Gospel means we need to understand who He is, why He came, and what He accomplished.

Who Was Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is fully God. Colossians 2:9 tells us, "In Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." Revelation 22:13 says, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Christ made all things, and they were created through Him and for Him.²² If Jesus was not fully God, He could not have borne the full penalty of sin. If he did not bear the full penalty of sin, there would be no true atonement for sin, and no one could be saved.

Jesus Christ was and is fully man. He was born of the virgin Mary,²³ had a physical body,²⁴ felt the full range of human emotions,²⁵ and had a mind like ours.²⁶ He was like us in every way except one: He was completely without sin.²⁷ It was necessary for Him to be sinless in order that He be our perfectly obedient representative. Romans 5:19 says that "as by [Adam's] disobedience the many were made sinners, so by [Christ's] obedience the many will be made righteous." Jesus had to be human to live in our place. Likewise, He had to be human to die in our place. Hebrews 2:17 is clear on this point, "He had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

What Did the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ Accomplish?

Romans 3:21-25 is extremely helpful in understanding what the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ accomplished for sinners. These verses read:

"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood."

Paul has just said in Romans 3:10-18 that "there is no one righteous," but now we see that Christ has accomplished righteousness for the sinner, and Paul uses three words to describe this: justification, redemption, and propitiation.

- **Justification.** A judicial act of God pardoning sinners (wicked and ungodly persons, Rom. 4:5; 3:9-24), accepting them as just, and so putting permanently right their previously estranged relationship with himself. This justifying sentence is God's gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:15-17), his bestowal of a status of acceptance for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 5:21).²⁸
- **Redemption.** Christ's saving work viewed as an act of "buying back" sinners out of their bondage to sin and to Satan through the payment of a ransom (Romans 3:24; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:7).²⁹
- **Propitiation.** A sacrifice that satisfies God's wrath to the end and in doing so changes God's wrath toward us into favor (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 4:10).³⁰

Moreover, through His perfect life, death, and resurrection Christ conquered death and removed the penalty of death from the people of God. That begs the question, "Just who are the people of God?"

What is the Gospel? - Response

We have seen that God is holy and just, man is sinful and corrupt, and Christ is the perfect substitute for sin. Yet, how is a sinner made right with God?

One word: faith. We see this clearly in Romans 3:25 when Paul says that the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ is to be "received by faith." What is faith? Faith is the means by which Christ's righteousness is imputed to us and thus the means by which we are reconciled to God, has been described by theologians as being composed of three dynamic elements: knowledge, assent, and trust.

- **Knowledge.** Our knowledge of our faith. In order for us to have true saving faith, the content of that faith, must also be true.
- **Assent.** The believer's intellectual assent – or agreement – to the truth of the content of the Gospel. It is vital to note that assent and knowledge alone are not sufficient for saving faith as James noted in his epistle (James 2:19), even the demons know and intellectually agree with the statement "Jesus is the Son of God." What is lacking in these affirmations is the vital third element of trust.
- **Trust.** Submitting our entire will to receive and rest on the truth.

The emphasis on faith as the hinge on which our standing from unrighteous to righteous turns is primary through the New Testament.³¹ Although it is faith alone that justifies the sinner, we understand that faith is never alone. The fruits of the spirit, repentance, and good works always accompany true saving faith. Therefore, it is for the sinner to repent of his sin nature and through faith place his trust in Christ as Savior. This is the proper response to the Gospel.



Statement of Faith

We recognize that the unity of the church universal is based solely on the person and work of Jesus and not on absolute agreement of other doctrines outside the atoning work of Jesus. While we as a local fellowship of believers understand that some believers do not agree with all of the following doctrinal beliefs, we ask that all incoming members agree with the following statement of faith:


1. **GOD IS TRIUNE** – There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty and perfect in holiness, truth, and love. In the unity of the godhead there are three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; co-existent, co-equal, co-eternal. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit, yet each is truly Deity. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

2. **GOD THE FATHER** – God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By His word and for His glory, He freely and supernaturally created the world from nothing. Through the same Word He daily sustains all His creatures. He rules over all and is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love Him, and in His unfathomable grace, gave His Son Jesus Christ for mankind's redemption. He made man for fellowship with Himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of His glory.

3. **JESUS CHRIST** – Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He is perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He is fully God and was fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through Him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in Him all things hold together by the word of His power. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in Him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world having shed His blood and died a vicarious death on Calvary's cross. By His death in our place, He revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, the third day He rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and the powers of darkness and for a period of 40 days appeared to more than 500 witnesses performing many convincing proofs of His resurrection. He ascended into heaven where at God's right hand He intercedes for His people and rules as Lord over all. He is the Head of His body, the church, and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all.

4. **THE HOLY SPIRIT** – The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel He persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who in turn came to glorify the Father. He will lead the church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored, and worshipped as God the Third Person of the Trinity (Phil 1:6, Acts 1:5).

5. **THE SCRIPTURES** – We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is an essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all it teaches. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession, or theology must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in holy Scripture.



6. MAN – God made man—male and female—in His own image, as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with Him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God. Being estranged from his Maker, yet responsible to Him, he became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will, and affections. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ.


7. THE GOSPEL – Jesus Christ is the gospel. The good news is revealed in His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel, His resurrection is the power of the gospel, and His ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God because of what He has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches and ministries to proceed from and be related to the cross.

8. MAN'S RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL – Man's response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for His own pleasure and glory. It is also true that the message of the gospel is only effectual to those who genuinely repent of their sins and by God's grace put saving faith in Christ. This gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service. Neither repentance nor works save, and unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Christ, he cannot become Christ's disciple.

9. MAN'S INHERITANCE THROUGH THE GOSPEL – Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ and His substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is declared righteous by God as a free gift. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. He is justified and fully accepted by God. Through Christ's atonement for sin an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes His child. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and through the miracle of regeneration, liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit.

10. SANCTIFICATION – The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though indwelling sin remains a reality, as we are led by the Spirit we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping His commandments and endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word and deed. The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship, and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve His people until the end, which is most certain.

11. EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT – The Holy Spirit empowers believers for Christian witness and service. The promise of the Father is freely available to all who believe in Jesus Christ, thereby enabling them to exercise the powers of the age to come in ministry and mission. The Holy Spirit desires to continually fill each believer with power to witness and imparts His supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and the work of ministry in the world.



12. THE CHURCH – God by His Word and Spirit creates the church, calling sinful men into the fellowship of Christ's body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves those who have been redeemed. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church universal is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will in the earth. This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached and churches planted in the entire world for a testimony. The ultimate mission of the Church is the making of disciples through the preaching of the gospel. When God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper and prayer.

All members of the church universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context they are called to walk out the new covenant as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gifts to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries all members of the church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of the ministry. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in His service in relation to one another and to the world.

13. SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH – Water baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself, and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin.

As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf, and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body.

14. THE CONSUMMATION – The consummation of all things includes the visible, personal, and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the consummation, Satan with his hosts and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with Him forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God who makes all things new.

What Does Providence Church Believe About . . . ?

This section of the membership book addresses common questions we receive regarding our doctrine and theology that have not already been clearly addressed in the prior sections of “What is the Gospel?” and the “Providence Church Statement of Faith.”

The Sovereignty of God

At Providence Church we believe in the complete sovereignty of God over all things. By sovereignty of God we mean that all things are under God’s rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction or permission. God works not just some things but all things according to the counsel of His own will.³² His purposes are all-inclusive and never thwarted;³³ nothing takes Him by surprise. The sovereignty of God is not merely that God has the power and right to govern all things, but that He does so, always and without exception. In other words, God is not merely in principle but in practice.

In regards to God’s sovereignty over salvation we hold to a monergistic view, meaning that there is only one party involved in effecting and securing salvation within the sinner’s heart: God. It is only according to the divine purpose of God that a sinner is saved and can rest assured that salvation will be fully realized at the final judgment.

Church Governance

Providence Church is elder-governed and elder-led. We hold that only men can be elders and that there must be a plurality of elders in the body that leads a church. Every elder must unequivocally meet the standards and qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. See Appendix I for a further articulation of these requirements. Elders are called primarily to lead and feed the church body. They lead the church through setting the vision of our mission, through administering church discipline, and equipping the saints for ministry. They feed the church as leaders charged with the right teaching of doctrine and guarding against heresy. Additionally, they feed the church through personal discipleship and shepherding church members to growth in godliness.

Worship Style

We hold worship style in an open hand. We do not hold to a “regulative principle” that demands we only worship according to what Scripture prescribes. Such a view would not allow the use of modern instruments like electric guitars and acoustic drums. Moreover, we hold that God can be worshipped in many ways and with many styles as long as the worship is not contradictory to Scripture or irreverent towards God. Worship at Providence includes traditional and historic hymns as well as contemporary praise music. Our aim is to communicate theological truth and Gospel clarity through any song or means possible.



Church Discipline

We practice church discipline. In the broadest sense, church discipline is everything the church does to help its members pursue holiness and fight sin. Preaching, teaching, prayer, corporate worship, accountability relationships, and godly oversight by pastors and elders are all forms of discipline.

In a narrower sense, church discipline is the act of correcting sin in the life of the body, including the possible final step of excluding a professing Christian from membership in the church and participation in the Lord's Supper because of serious unrepentant sin (see Matt. 18:15-20, 1 Cor. 5:1-13).

Discipline is designed to encourage growth in holiness and promote repentance and although it is formally administered by the elders, the informal aspects of Matthew 18 are done by fellow members.

Eschatology

Eschatology is the study of the "last things." The usual interest in this area relates to the events surrounding the second coming of Christ. When and how will Christ return? What will be the signs of His coming? What is the nature of the millennial kingdom? How one answers these questions usually falls into one of three categories: Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Historic Premillennialism.

These categorical breakdowns of interpretations center primarily around one's understanding of Revelation 20:1-9 and the "thousand year reign of Christ." Amillennialism interprets the passage symbolically and believes that we currently are in the millennial reign of Christ. Postmillennialism is similar to the previous position, but it sees redemptive history moving toward the millennial kingdom (it has yet to come) and this kingdom will be a golden age of Gospel propagation. Christ will come back after the millennium. Historic Premillennialism interprets the Revelation 20 passage as literal in that when Christ returns He will usher in a thousand year millennium on earth prior to the final judgment. At Providence Church we hold the above three positions in an open hand.

Miraculous Gifts

We believe that the Holy Spirit is still active in His indwelling and empowers the Christian for acts of service and a life of holiness. But what of the miraculous gifts: tongues, healing, and prophecy? We hold to a continuationist view that says the miraculous gifts of the Spirit are still real and present in the world. We believe in Scripture that the miraculous gifts were given primarily as attestation to the truth of the Gospel in areas previously void of any Gospel truth. Therefore, we believe that because the areas served by Providence are filled with common attestations to Gospel truth (individual conversion), the primary means of the Spirit's work is through the ordinary means of preaching, prayer, and the ordinances.



What Does Providence Church Do?

Understanding the Ministries of Providence Church

What Does Providence Church Do?

Understanding the Ministries of Providence Church

Philosophy of Ministry

Our mission “to glorify God through lives changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ” fuels our philosophy of ministry. Therefore, everything thing we do, every ministry we engage in, and every program we promote must align with our great desire to glorify God by seeing the Gospel change individual lives. There are a few comparisons that provide insight to how this practically works:

Width vs. Depth. All of our ministries are not concerned with how many people are coming, rather with what people are becoming. A concentration on the width of our church means that we lead, disciple, and organize in such a way to increase the bottom line. Yet, a concentration on depth means that we lead, disciple, and organize in such a way to increase our members’ understanding and affection for the Gospel. If we shoot for width, we do not believe the depth is inherently likely, but if we labor for depth we believe that width will come.

Marketing vs. Mission. It is increasingly enticing to approach ministry with a desire to fit a certain style or achieve a certain brand. For instance, the church tries to become that church in a number of different scenarios: the church with a great multimedia approach, the most contemporary style, or the best family ministry. This aim results in the church body consistently trying to market itself as “that church.” At Providence we approach ministry through the lens of mission. This emphasis causes everything we do to go through a process of testing, “Does this ministry/program/teaching fuel the mission?” If the respective issue fails to do so then it should not be placed before the church body. If the issue does fuel the mission then it should be placed, modeled, and encouraged before the church body.

Entitlement vs. Service. The suburban context of North Dallas breeds a commonality within its citizens and a feeling of entitlement. Entitlement so often works its way into a church by members assuming that the church exists to fit their individual needs. This can cause a church to cater to individual needs through creating a large number of programs to serve the body. Yet, instead of truly serving the body this only serves the sinful desire of entitlement. Scripture calls us to not serve ourselves but to serve others. And the church is to set this example of service for the community nearby. Humility is the overarching characteristic of the Gospel; therefore, it should be the overarching characteristic of the church and her members.


We hope that this emphasis on deep, missional, and sacrificial ministry brings God great glory through lives changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Philosophy of Ministry

Our ministry to adults primarily falls into four distinct categories: Home Groups, Men’s Ministry, Women’s Ministry, and Providence University.

Home Groups

We believe that our sanctification—growth in Christlikeness—is best encouraged in a community of believers, and our Home Group ministry is the vehicle for such growth. Our groups meet throughout the week in the various cities that



surround Providence. Each group is uniquely designed to be a welcoming environment that fosters the biblical community we were created for and the relationships we long for. Some aspects of a Providence Home Group include:

- A welcoming atmosphere for strugglers and real sinners (Christ is for real sinners!).
- A family learning to live out of the Gospel.
- A safe place to share your struggles, confess your sins, and expect to be pointed to Jesus.
- A family learning to celebrate grace!
- A place to be quick to listen and sympathize with another's struggles, and respond with compassion and prayer, and if you can, practical help to meet the need.
- A place to worship God by enjoying one another and God's good gifts (new people, food, art, etc.).

Men's Ministry

One of our distinctives at Providence is that "Everything Starts at Home." We also believe Scripture is clear that men are the humble servant leaders of the home. Therefore, we are passionate about training men to be the leaders who exalt Christ in all that they do. We do this through various avenues of community and discipleship for men.

Women's Ministry

One of our distinctives at Providence is that "Everything Starts at Home." Therefore, we are passionate about training women to be daughters of God, wives, and mothers who exalt Christ in all that they do. We do this through various avenues of community and discipleship for women.

Providence University


In order to effectively equip our members with the vital tools for God-glorifying service and worship we regularly put on Providence University. Providence University is a semester-based equipping school that covers areas from biblical and systematic theology to practical theology and life equipping classes.

Student Ministry

NEXT—the student ministry of Providence Church—partners with parents to connect the next generation to Christ. NEXT is a family-centric community that brings parents and youth together around the truth of Christ. We believe that it's in this context that we will best see redemption in the lives of youth and empower them to live on the mission that God has uniquely called them to.

Children's Ministry

At Providence Church our desire is to partner with parents to help their children love and trust Jesus through innovative Bible teaching, exciting activities and experienced volunteers ready to engage each child.



We believe that parents—before any other institution—are responsible for the spiritual nurturing of their children. As parents shepherd their children through Scripture, our ministry serves as reinforcement to their teaching. We believe that children can begin to grasp biblical truths from a very young age, so instead of merely entertaining children or babysitting them, we seek to teach them using Bible stories and biblical illustrations.

At Providence Church, it is our goal to provide the safest environment possible for your children. All children's workers are required to go through training and a thorough background check. All rooms are checked each week to ensure the safest environment possible. All workers follow strict guidelines to prevent the spread of germs and keep your children healthy.

We understand that your children might be wary or fearful of being separated from you during the service, so we ask that you talk with your children beforehand about the need for both of you to be in environments where you can worship freely and genuinely and be taught in a way that you will understand and be encouraged. We want to make our children understand that the Children's Ministry is a safe place where they can learn about Jesus, make friends, and have fun even if their parents are not there with them.

At Providence we covenant with you to love, protect, teach, and pray for your children. Thank you for trusting us with your children. Trust that we are doing our best to keep your children in a safe and secure environment while we teach them about God.



What Does a Member of Providence Church Do?

Next Steps, Membership Covenant, and Statement of Discipline



What Does a Member of Providence Church Do? *Next Steps, Membership Covenant, and Statement of Discipline*

Not Ready to Join?

If you are not ready to join the church, simply answer the question, “Why am I not ready to join?” If it is for theological or philosophical reasons we encourage you to meet with an elder or pastor at Providence Church. Our leaders have a deep passion to see Christians join with other brothers and sisters in the local church for the glory of God through church membership. These leaders are more than willing to assist you as you continue to search for a church to join where you can grow spiritually, serve joyfully, and engage in community.

If you are not ready to join because of fear or trepidation surrounding the idea of church membership at Providence, please talk with one of our elders or pastors. We want to ensure that every member of Providence plants their life within our body because of joy and excitement about the church’s mission.

Ready to join?

- 1. Set up a “Potential Member Interview” time.** After the class, you will need to schedule a time to meet with one of our elders, pastors, or deacons for a Potential Member Interview. We use this time to get to know you (and your family), answer any questions you might have, and ensure you understand our theology, ecclesiology, and culture.
- 2. Sign the Providence Church Membership Covenant.** The Membership Covenant formally recognizes your membership at Providence Church. Simply fill out the form and drop it in one of the offering boxes in the worship center.
- 3. Sign the Providence Church Statement of Discipline.** The Statement of Discipline recognizes that you understand and can follow the church discipline process as practiced-when necessary-by Providence Church.
- 4. Register for baptism.** Baptism is a requirement for members at Providence Church. If you have not been baptized there will be an opportunity after the class for you to register for our next baptism service. Should you have any questions regarding baptism make sure to find a Providence elder or pastor.
- 5. Engage in Providence Church community.** If you have yet to engage in community at Providence, find one of our leaders to inquire about how you can join with other members of Providence through Home Groups, Men’s Ministry, Women’s Ministry, and other avenues of community.
- 6. Engage in regular service at the church.** Everything that Providence Church does is fueled by the people of Providence, therefore there are numerous opportunities for every member to serve in ways that bring them joy. Find (or create!) opportunities to give away your time, talents, and treasures to serve the mission and body of Providence.



Providence Church Membership Covenant

When anyone enters into a relationship with God by grace from, and faith in, the person and work of Jesus Christ, they are entering into two covenants. The first is to journey with God for the rest of their lives and love Him fully. The second is to journey with His other children in the community of the local church. Your membership in a church is an official recognition of this, and the purposes of the Providence Church Membership Covenant are:

1. To join the Spirit in forming an authentic church community that reflects the relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit.
2. To clarify the ongoing blessings and responsibilities of each member.
3. To encourage consistency, accountability, and loving unity within the church family.
4. To accomplish God's call for the Providence Church family.

This agreement does not imply that you will never fall short of the goals, but that the desire of your heart is to fulfill to the best of your ability each of the responsibilities stated. We trust that your commitment will be a personal blessing to your own journey in Christ, as well a blessing to those around you.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, the church leadership covenants the following:

1. We commit ourselves to lovingly care for you and seek your growth in Christ (1 Peter 5:2-4; Thessalonians 5:12).
2. We covenant to provide teaching, preaching, and counsel from the Scriptures (Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18).
3. We commit that this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27-28).
4. We commit to help you in times of need (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35; James 5:14-17).
5. We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13 & 5:17-22, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4).
6. We covenant to pray for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
7. We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).
8. We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1).
9. We covenant to help you become equipped to serve Christ (Eph. 4:11-13).
10. We covenant to seek God's will for our church community, to the best of our ability, as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-5).
11. We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of Church members (1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17, 1 Timothy 4:12).

With the guiding help of the Holy Spirit, I, the undersigned covenant the following:

1. I am a Christian who has been saved from my sins by the grace of Jesus Christ. I have been baptized by immersion to give testimony of my identification with the body of Christ and obedience to the Scriptures.
2. I have read and understood the Providence Church doctrinal statement and agree to not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Hebrews 13:7, 17; Ephesians 4:1-3).
3. I will endeavor to maintain a close relationship with the Lord through regular personal Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of the other spiritual disciplines. My journey in Christ will be evident through my regular participation in the corporate worship services and involvement in a home group or class (Psalms 119:97, 105; Acts 2:24-47; Hebrews 10:23-25).

Providence Church Membership Covenant

4. I will strive to properly manage the resources God has given me, including my time, body, gifts and talents, attitude, finances, and possessions (Ephesians 4:1-16, 5:15-18; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-26; Proverbs 3:9-10). This includes regular giving to Providence Church that is sacrificial and cheerful (2 Corinthians 8-9).
5. I commit myself to the Providence Church family and agree to aid in fulfilling its missional purpose to both be and bring the gospel to the North Dallas area. I recognize that this will be accomplished by pursuing Providence Church's core values of Truth, Community, Redemption, Missional Living, and Prayer.
6. I commit to using the spiritual gift(s) God has given me for the building up of the church, both at Providence Church and universally (1 Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-31). I understand that serving regularly is an expectation and membership requirement.
7. I covenant to practice the humility and sacrificial attitude of Christ by considering the needs of others (Philippians 1:1-11), not gossiping (Proverbs 16:28; Matthew 18:15-17), and seeking spiritual friendships (Proverbs 17:17).
8. I covenant to have friendly Christian relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ from other churches, but I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family (Hebrews 13:17).
9. I covenant to follow the biblical procedures of church discipline and submit myself to discipline if the need should ever arise (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1-5).
10. I covenant to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalms 119; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). God enabling me, I will strive to consider my commitment to this membership covenant on a yearly basis. I understand that it is an evaluative tool, as well as an affirmation of my continuing convictions and purpose. My responsibility will be to notify the Providence Church leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Providence Church.

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and having been baptized and being in agreement with Providence Church's theology, ecclesiology, and culture, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Providence Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the above.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature (Spouse) _____ Date _____

Printed Names _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

Office Use Only

Church Leader Signature _____



Providence Church Statement of Discipline

As a church we agree that this is the way for us to approach someone who refuses to appropriate God's grace for change.


Initially, church discipline should be informal: If a Christian sees sin in a brother or sister that appears to be continual, he should approach that person and inquire about it. If in fact there is unrepentant sin and a refusal to repent, then the concerned brother or sister should involve one or two others, which may include a pastor and/or an elder. Should the unrepentance continue the process must move to formal church discipline.

When the church begins to formally discipline a member, the church's pastors and/or elders inquire with the individual member in question to confirm fact and to appeal for change. If change is not forthcoming, the elders will inform the church of the member and his sin, urging members to contact the member and appeal for repentance. During this time, the member under discipline may not participate in the Lord's Supper or attend meetings for the purpose of fellowship. Instead, his participation with members should revolve around his need for change. If, after a reasonable period of appeal, no repentance is forthcoming, the elders will inform the church again, this time announcing that they must revoke membership and that the church must now treat the unrepentant person as they treat unbelievers. In other words, when they interact with this person they should have "fellowship" as the Bible defines it, but they should appeal for the former member to put his faith in Jesus' work on the cross for them and to turn from his sin.

Church discipline has nothing to do with "shunning" a person. It involves first confronting in love and gentleness and, if unsuccessful, withholding fellowship. It is not rejection of a relationship but a change in the nature of a relationship. If a person under discipline is not factious or disruptive or a harmful influence, he is welcomed to attend all church meetings that are open to unbelievers with the exception of home groups that meet for the purpose of fellowship. The elders may decide to abbreviate or eliminate the process of appeal for repentance if the sin is especially notorious, or if the member proves to be factious, disruptive or leading others into sin or error. In these cases, the elders may ask church members to avoid all contact with an individual in order to mitigate his sinful influence.

At times a member may seek to withdraw from the church to avoid church discipline and its consequences. Just as a good shepherd will go after a sheep that has wandered from the flock (Matt. 18:12-14; Ezek. 34:4,8-16), so shall the pastors, elders and members of this church seek to restore a wandering member to the Lord through biblical discipline. Therefore, discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member seeks to withdraw from membership if the elders determine that such discipline may serve to guard and preserve the honor of God, protect the purity of the church, or restore the wandering member to the Lord. While the church cannot force a withdrawing member to remain in this congregation, the church has the right and responsibility to encourage restoration, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make a final determination as to the person's membership status at the time withdrawal is sought or acknowledged. In doing so, the elders, at their discretion, may temporarily suspend further disciplinary proceedings, dismiss any or all charges pending against the accused, or proceed with discipline and pronounce an appropriate censure.

If a member leaves the church while he is under the scrutiny of the disciplinary process or while a censure against him is still in effect, and if the elders learn that he is attending another church, the elders may inform that church that the person is currently under church discipline and may ask that church to encourage the accused to repent of his sin and to be restored to the Lord and to any people whom he has offended. Such communications enhance the possibility that a person may finally repent of his sin, and, at the same time, serve to warn the other church to be on guard against the harm that the accused might do to their members (see Matt. 18:12-14; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-14; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:9, 14-15; 3 John 9-10).



Once the elders make a sin publicly known, they also commit to inform the church of repentance and restoration to fellowship as appropriate to the situation and the good of the church.

Christians who attend Providence Church and have been excluded from fellowship from another church will not be allowed to participate in fellowship of Providence Church unless they repent of their sins and make confession and restitution with their former church or the elders of Providence Church are able to determine that the former church did not apply church discipline according to Scripture.

I, the undersigned, have read, understand and agree to the terms of Church Discipline outlined above.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature (Spouse) _____ Date _____

Printed Names _____

1. The content of this section is used courtesy from Kevin DeYoung
2. 1 Corinthians 15:3
3. Romans 1:16
4. Providence Church mission statement
5. John 1:1
6. Deuteronomy 6:4
7. John 4:24
8. Psalm 145:3
9. Psalm 90:2
10. Revelation 1:8
11. Ephesians 1:4
12. Hebrews 13:8
13. Psalm 145:17, 1 Peter 1:15-16, Revelation 15:4
14. Robert Strauss, *The Joy of Knowing God* pg. 140
15. Psalm 52:1
16. Isaiah 43:6-7
17. Romans 3:23
18. Genesis 2:17
19. Romans 5:18
20. Psalm 51:5
21. 1 Kings 8:46; Rom. 3:9-23; 7:18; 1 John 1:8-10
22. Colossians 1:16
23. Matthew 1:18
24. Luke 2:40
25. Matthew 8:10, 26:38; John 11:35, John 12:27; Hebrews 5:7
26. Mark 13:32; Luke 2:52
27. 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5
28. Definition from J.I. Packer's *Concise Theology*
29. Definition from Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*
30. *Ibid*
31. Romans 3:22, 3:28, 5:1; Galatians 2:16, 3:24; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 3:9, 2 Timothy 3:15
32. Ephesians 1:11
33. Isaiah 46:11