



Belonging

Belonging Curriculum

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♦ *Welcome*

Welcome to the Belonging curriculum! Over the course of the next six weeks, this curriculum will walk your Life Group through several places in scripture where the words “*one another*” provide us special insight into God’s desire for his church. In some instances, these words were spoken by Jesus as he commanded his disciples to love one another through their actions—actions that would deepen their relationships with each other and serve as a witness to their devotion. In other instances, they are given by the authors of scripture, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to help us understand how we, followers of Jesus, are to view, treat, and serve one another in the context of our everyday lives.

As we explore the many ‘one anothers’ in scripture, we begin to see an important theme consistently rise to the surface—the theme of belonging to a family. At Fellowship Dallas, our local expression of the worldwide Christian family, we want you to find a place where you belong. Like individual tiles come together to create a beautiful mosaic, we believe that each person is unique and plays an important role at Fellowship.

Within our church family, Life Groups are smaller contexts where we live on purpose with God and each other, where belonging happens in a practical and tangible way.

Belonging to a Life Group involves more than just attending a weekly meeting. At Fellowship, our Life Groups provide a safe place where we can be authentic and vulnerable with each other as we live out the one anothers of scripture. Life Groups are smaller expressions of our church family, a family where you can be yourself and, at the same time, be challenged to grow in your relationship with Jesus. As we explore the word of God together over the next six weeks, this curriculum should challenge you to understand the deep love of Jesus as you practically apply what you learn within your Life Group.

In addition to exploring the one anothers of scripture, this curriculum will also help us understand and consider Covenant Membership with the people of Fellowship Dallas. If you so desire, you are invited to covenant with our church family.

WEEK ONE ♦

It Starts with Love

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” –JOHN 13:34-35

READ ♦ *John 13:1–11*

What strikes you about Jesus’ attitude and actions, specifically in the way they reveal his love for his closest friends?

REFLECT ♦

The hour had come. The time for Jesus to fulfill his purpose was at hand. He knew exactly what he was stepping into.

The history of humankind would pivot as he sacrificed himself for the people—past, present, and future—that he loved. On that day, as he celebrated the Feast of the Passover, a day specifically set aside to remember God’s faithful action on behalf of his people, Jesus wanted to leave a lasting impression on those closest to him. As he had done throughout his brief three years of ministry, he chose to defy cultural expectations and perform an act that would astonish the people who thought they knew him best.

Not only did Jesus step into the menial role of a servant, but he quite literally stooped even lower into one of the most humiliating duties someone of his status could perform. As he washed the disciples’ muck-covered and road-weary feet, Jesus demonstrated an authentic,

servant-hearted love never before seen. He also modeled what humility and true love looks like for us. We are to humbly pursue ways we can express our Holy Spirit empowered love to others, defying cultural expectations by stepping (even stooping) out of our own comfort zones to meet the practical needs of those around us.

DISCUSS ♦

- ① How have you been impacted by the servant-hearted love of others? Was there a time in your life when someone stepped in to help you when you were in need?
- ② Do you know someone who consistently serves with this kind of God-empowered love?

READ ♦ *John 13:12-20*

As Jesus served his disciples by washing their feet, he pointed to his ultimate act of service—dying on the cross for their sins. The washing Jesus alludes to in these verses goes far beyond any act relating to physical hygiene. He was talking about a spiritual cleansing from the sin that dirties our soul and separates us from a relationship with the pure and holy God. Throughout his ministry, as Jesus lovingly served his disciples, he shaped them into a family that would continue to do the same for others.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” –John 13:34–35

At Fellowship Dallas, we want to be known as disciples (followers) of Jesus who show servant-hearted love towards others. This will cause us to step out of our comfort zones and into relationship with the people God has placed in our lives. This love should be a loud declaration to the world around us about who we follow.

- ③ How does Jesus' example of washing his disciples' feet, create a standard for us as we approach relationship with each other?
- ④ What practical expressions of love (through serving others) have we, as a Life Group, engaged in over the past few months? Do our group's actions represent the love we have for one another? For the world around us?
- ⑤ Who has God placed in your life that you can practically show Christ's love to this week? What act of service can you do to get this started?

PRAYER ♦

As a Life Group, share your prayer requests. Focus on the specific needs of each person in the group. Then have one person volunteer to pray that, over the next six weeks, the people in your group will increasingly engage in very practical acts of servant-hearted love for each other. Pray also that the group will continue to remember Jesus' example of and his command to love one another.

BENEDICTION ♦

Have the leader of the group pray the following prayer aloud as a blessing over the group:

In the Gospel of Mark Jesus says, "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Remember, Jesus, came to serve, not to be served. May you be like Jesus—empowered to love and serve one another so that the world will see your selfless love lived out. May the Holy Spirit give each of you the humility and the opportunity to wash one another's feet in practical ways so that you can grow together in humility and love.

ABOUT THE WEEKLY "AT HOME" PREP WORK ♦

It is our hope that the time you spend at home each week will challenge you to think deeply about how God is working in your life and your role as a vital part of our church! You belong! The time will also challenge you to take practical steps as you live out your faith and grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ and others. Because of this, it is vital that you set aside a specific time during the week and make this "at home" preparation a priority. Setting aside this time will also prepare you to make an informed decision about Covenant Membership here at Fellowship Dallas.

One of the most important aspects of the Belonging Curriculum will be this weekly time preparing your heart to engage on the topics being discussed. It has been specifically designed for our committed Life Group participants to deeply engage with one another. We understand that the people involved in Life Groups are the committed core of our church. Because of this, we are introducing Covenant Membership through our Life Groups later in this series, giving you the opportunity to engage the membership process with your community.

♦ *At Home*

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

As we look at how Jesus lived his life, exemplifying sacrificial love and calling his followers to do the same, we can easily see that he ministered with a servant's heart. He spent time with them, investing in and challenging them. He patiently showed them compassion, forgiveness, love, and acceptance. Every action lovingly communicated that they belonged.

WEEK TWO ♦

Abiding Love

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you... These things I command you, so that you will love one another.” –JOHN 15:12-14

“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”
–1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

AT HOME FOLLOW-UP ♦

As you read through the vision of Fellowship Dallas this week, what resonated with you most? How does our mission of “calling each other to live out our God-given purpose in Christ every day” exemplify love to others around us? Who can you actively love this week on purpose?

REFLECT ♦

Jesus was clear about his expectation for his followers to love one another (John 15). Little did the disciples know that Jesus would soon explicitly demonstrate this kind of love on the cross, laying down his own life as a sacrifice. This sacrifice will free them from the chains of sin and death.

Although the early church was founded on this loving act, they were still unpacking the implications of Jesus’ death decades later. In fact, one of the primary reasons Paul writes

his first letter to this culturally diverse Corinthian church is that they were starting to lose sight of the unity that they had because of Christ. Instead, their unhealthy focus on ranking the importance of spiritual gifts was beginning to fracture relationships and relegate the role of the Holy Spirit to some kind of impersonal power that made certain members of the community more significant than others.

Quite often, when we look at 1 Corinthians 13, we see a beautiful poem about love. It’s a consistent feature at weddings, usually showing up in some form in a pastor’s sermon describing the love a husband and wife should strive to show each other. While the language is beautiful and the truths are timeless, Paul’s includes this poem as part of his explanation of the Holy Spirit’s role in the community. In the chapters leading up to this poem, Paul takes great lengths to describe how the Holy Spirit binds the church together as one, in one body, one heart, and one purpose. The source of their unity isn’t based on a shared cultural heritage or social status. Instead, their unity is founded in the sacrificial act of love Jesus has accomplished on their behalf and the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst. The source of their power is God himself, and their gifts should exemplify the love of Jesus, unifying them as a family.

READ ♦ 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13

The love Paul speaks of exists far beyond our human capacity. It’s a love that is not easily bent or broken but stands firm through difficulties, always assuming the best of each other. It’s a love that communicates belonging and being known. It’s a love that finds worth not in what we think or do, but in what God has done for us. It’s the love of Jesus, the love that creates a lens through which he sees us, finding us worthy of the cost he paid. Because of Jesus’ sacrificial love, we now belong to a family that transcends genetic entanglements and affiliated ancestry. The Holy Spirit provides our community access to

the same love through his presence and empowerment in our lives, a love that should be ingrained in our Life Group's identity so deeply that it spills out from our core, permeating everything we do.

DISCUSS ♦

① How is the love that Jesus shows different from what the world has to offer?

L.O.V.E ACROSTIC ♦

For this activity, your Life Group will create an acrostic from the word "Love". This acrostic will do two very important things. First, it will capture the heart of your group. Second, it will give your group practical ways in which you can collectively express your love for one another.

① To begin, each group participant will use the diagram below to create their own acrostic out of the word "love". You can be as creative as you would like, crafting the words into a poem or simply thinking of words that begin with each letter. Remember to think in terms of the servant-hearted sacrificial love that Jesus exemplifies in today's scripture passages. After each person has had a chance to create their own acrostic, spend time sharing these within your group.

L _____
O _____
V _____
E _____

② Following this individual activity, you will then create one acrostic for your entire group. This acrostic should represent the hearts of the people in your Life Group when it comes to the group's scripturally informed perspective concerning sacrificial love. This perspective can be aspirational. For instance, a word could represent what your group desires to become, even if it hasn't been previously part of your group culture.

L _____
O _____
V _____
E _____

③ For each perspective word you have decided on in your acrostic, think through a practical next step for your group to practice this kind of love over the course of this next year. Craft this practical step into a declaration statement that begins with, "As a Life Group, we will [perspective word] by [practical step]."

Example: "As a Life Group, we will [Look] by [keeping our eyes open for opportunities to provide free childcare for the single mothers of our group]."

Be careful *not* to create a practical step that is too general and doesn't specifically define something you can act on. For example (and, don't forget this is a bad example): "As a Life Group, we will [Look] by [opening our eyes to people in need and loving everyone with the love of Jesus]." This is a great perspective to have but it is not pointed towards a practical action. If you need help thinking through this, use the SMART goal paradigm (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based).

As a Life Group we will:

L _____ by _____

O _____ by _____

V _____ by _____

E _____ by _____

Email your group declaration to Groups@FellowshipDallas.org so we know how we can be praying for your group!

PRAYER ♦

This week, in addition to sharing individual prayer requests, reflect on the love that God has shown your Life Group, thanking him for the spiritual gifts that are represented within your Life Group.

BENEDICTION ♦

Prayer to God:

O Lord of All Gifts, You have taught us to live and to love. You have taught us how to serve one another as You served, not counting the cost but being available to all.

Blessing to be prayed over your group:

May God continue to give you generous hearts and spirits as you give of your time, talent and treasure to build up His Kingdom here on earth. May the Holy Spirit guide your feet where they need to go, giving you hands that readily reach out to others, ears to hear the silent cries of another, eyes to see their needs and hearts to reach out to them. May you draw them into the presence of Jesus with your sacrificial love and servant's heart. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.¹

♦ *At Home*

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

The only way we can authentically love is to first place our faith in Jesus and pursue being satisfied in our relationship with him. When we know we belong and receive love, forgiveness, patience, compassion, and kindness from a perfect God while abiding in him; we are empowered to love like him. Otherwise, we will tend to love selfishly, co-dependently, and out of an unhealthy desire, hoping to fill our own needs and the needs of others. This is not authentic love. It is not the kind of love revealed to us in God's word. The source of strength to live out the one anothers of scripture and truly belong to one another comes from a life abiding in Him.

This week at home we will prepare to share where we are on our faith journey with Jesus. Take some time this week to think and pray through the questions on the next few pages.

¹ CBMidwest.org/Prayers

WEEK THREE ♦

Welcome Home

“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

-ROMANS 15:7

THE STORY OF FELLOWSHIP DALLAS ♦

In the early 1970's, hoping to address the decline in church attendance in America (especially by young adults), a young seminary professor, Dr. Gene Getz, had a dream to start a church where culture and Christianity could meet. Desiring to attract people who felt they didn't belong in a conventional church setting, Getz set out to create an environment where the love and acceptance of Jesus could be experienced by all.

Built on valuing the truth of God's Word over church tradition, along with a heavy emphasis on God's grace and acceptance, people from all walks of life came together in that first church setting. With an unconventional come-as-you-are mentality and a faithfulness to the Gospel, the first Fellowship Bible Church soon grew to four church services, with another five branch churches and one mission church.

Our Fellowship Dallas family has its roots in that first church. And, for the past forty years, our church family has continued to thrive. As we grew, we continued to move to the spaces God provided - from the first circle of chairs in a living room, to our first building on Boedeker Lane in Park Cities, to a newly constructed building on Meadow Road. In 2005 we came to our current location on Park Lane, a movie theatre repurposed to be our church home.

Over the years, like any family, Fellowship Dallas has experienced a lot of change. But, while the form may be different, the function of our church has remained the same. Our desire is that, as we stay faithful to God's word and committed to one another, we would be a winsome expression of God's love to a lost and broken world.

Our mission, “Calling each other to live out our God-given purpose in Christ every day,” includes a desire for every person who calls Fellowship Dallas their home to feel a sense of significance and belonging in our church family.

In the same way we can see God at work over time in the life of Fellowship Dallas, we can also observe times in our own walk with Jesus that have significantly impacted our lives. From the moment we placed our faith in Jesus to the difficult times where he has shown up in powerful ways, our faith story impacts the way we approach relationship with the people in our community. In Romans 15:1-7, Paul talks about the influence and opportunity we have as followers of Jesus to love each other by the way we treat each other. This, says Paul, is an essential aspect of promoting harmony within the body of Christ.

READ ♦ *Romans 15:1-7*

At Fellowship Dallas, living life together in harmony with each other is an important part of existing as a church family, a family that desires to know each other. Our emphasis on living life together challenges us to lovingly receive each other, accepting that each of us are uniquely created and gifted by God himself. The way we receive each other also communicates our recognition that the Holy Spirit is at work, creating a community where we belong.

Belonging to a community involves entering into a shared story with each other, a story in which we are no longer the main character. Instead, this story becomes about Jesus and what he has done on our behalf. This week, we are each going to share our individual faith stories, testimonies about how God has worked in our lives bringing us to the point where we have trusted in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Use the questions below and the work done at home this week to guide this process.

As we engage in this time of sharing, let's be sure to welcome each other with the same kind of love and care Jesus has shown us in our own lives. After each individual shares their testimony, the group should speak the following words over that individual:

"[Name], thank you for sharing your faith story with us. [Name], I want to affirm that you belong here with us. You are loved and accepted."

DISCUSS ♦

- ① What part of the good news of God's love (the gospel) most impacted you when you came to truly understand and put your trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior? (This could be the day you first believed, or when you fully dedicated your life to him.)
- ② What has been your biggest challenge as a follower of Jesus?
- ③ We know that God is always at work. We don't want to focus only on how Jesus saved us, but also how he is challenging us to become more like him. How has the Holy Spirit been at work in your life over the past year spiritually growing and shaping you?

BENEDICTION ♦

Now go into the world in peace; have courage; hold onto what is good.

Honor all men, strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak.

Help the suffering, share the Gospel.

Love and serve the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. ¹

♦ *At Home*

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

This week we talked about the story of Fellowship and our personal faith stories. God's story has been revealed through His word. He shares his nature and character, and things he desires us to know through the Bible. We see the overarching story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. Our church has established a set of core beliefs—summaries of truths found in scripture. When looked at together, they show us this story.

Our core beliefs also allow us to express what our church holds in common with the larger Church body found around the world. They focus on the major beliefs that identify us as Christians, not on practices based on various convictions different churches and denominations hold.

At home this week, read through the core beliefs of Fellowship Dallas starting on page 52 and prayerfully work through the following questions. (If any of these are new or confusing to you, take a few minutes to prayerfully look up the Bible verses listed and ask God to show you the truth of His word.)

¹Old Anglican Benediction

① God's story is found in His Word, so we must start there. What stands out to you about our belief in the Word of God? How will abiding in His word help us love authentically?

② We believe in a triune God. Read Romans 15:5-6. What attribute of the Trinity are we called to exhibit with one another?

③ Read our belief about humanity and Jesus Christ. What about the person, work, or return of Jesus Christ amazes you most?

④ Jesus established the Church. Think about this statement: "We are the church, the body of Christ, a family." Is this your own experience of church? Why or why not? How can you help to make it true in the story of Fellowship?

⑤ Is there anything in our core beliefs that are different from what you expected or what you have been previously taught? Are there any that you disagree with?

WEEK FOUR ♦

The Shared Life – You Belong

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

–ROMANS 12:9-10

AT HOME FOLLOW-UP ♦

Last week we took some time to look at how each of us began our faith story and how our relationship with Jesus has affected each of our lives. The work of Jesus Christ on our behalf is an essential part of each believer’s story. This, and the other truths in God’s word that form our core beliefs, are foundational to our faith.

- ① Is there anything in our core beliefs that are different from what you expected or were previously taught?
- ② Are there any core beliefs that you disagree with?
- ③ Did you learn anything new this week as you reflected on these core beliefs?

REFLECT ♦

The context of today’s passage is extremely important! At the beginning of Romans 12, Paul explains that we are to offer ourselves in worshipful service to God as living sacrifices, putting aside our own wants and desires (Romans 12:1-2). He then goes on to explain how, when this happens, we live out our purpose as the body of Christ. (Romans 12:3-8) However, belonging to a church family is more than just being part of a well-functioning

congregation. The key to being unified in one purpose, Paul explains, is found in our Holy Spirit empowered love for one another.

READ ♦ *Romans 12:9-16*

“Let your love be genuine.” What a powerful statement! Because of what Jesus has done for us as the ultimate example of love, we can authentically love others. Paul’s command in Romans 12:9 is a sober reminder that a self-serving love is a false love. The Greek phrase Paul uses (translated “genuine love”) has several connotations which we should unpack and apply to our lives today. It is an unpretentious love, a sincere love, an unfeigned love that isn’t muddled with selfish motivation.

Perhaps the easiest way to describe this kind of love is a love without hypocrisy. “Genuine love” (*agape anhypokritos*) was prevalent among the followers of Jesus during his day. It describes a love revealed by Jesus who intentionally lived the words he spoke and embodied the commands he gave. He loved without hypocrisy, not only expecting his followers to do the same, but also making the practice of this kind of love possible as they remained in intentional relationship with him. If we foolishly attempted to generate this love on our own, the result would be tragic, a hypocritical love. Instead, we are called to take part in how God is already moving among us, accomplishing the impossible through the Holy Spirit and creating a family from the unlikeliest combinations of unique individuals, a family where we all have a place to belong.

At Fellowship Dallas, we have developed a covenant expressing our commitment to become more like Jesus and to show genuine, Christ-like love as we belong to one another. For this week’s group discussion, we are going to read through the “I will” statements of our membership covenant, exploring what the shared life of our church family could look like as we covenant with one another.

DISCUSS ♦

Turn to page 57 and read through the Fellowship Dallas Membership Covenant together. Today you are going to look more closely at the “I will” statements with your Life Group taking time to explore the attached scripture references. Discuss what it looks like to love one another by living out these “I will” statements in your group context and as part of the larger church family.

- ♦ I will live this out with my Fellowship family as I get to know others and let them get to know me. (*Romans 12:5*)
 - ♦ I will make every effort to maintain unity with others. *Romans 12:14-16*
 - ♦ I will come alongside others in times of spiritual, emotional, and physical need. (*Galatians 6:2*)
 - ♦ I will accept biblical encouragement (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*) and calls to repentance and restoration. (*Galatians 6:1-5*)
 - ♦ I will offer my time (*1 Thessalonians 2:8*), spiritual gifts (*1 Peter 4:10*), and financial resources (*2 Corinthians 9:6-7*) to build up this church body.
- ① Which of these statements will be the easiest for you to personally live out? Which will be the most difficult?

PRAYER ♦

Be sure to check with each other to celebrate any answered prayers from the past three weeks where you have seen God’s hand at work. Take some time to encourage one another where answers haven’t been received yet.

BENEDICTION ♦

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity.

Remember! No one has done more to secure our unity than the Lord Jesus.

No one is praying more for our unity than Jesus.

No one is more glorified by our unity than Jesus.

May Jesus continue to heal us, reconcile us, and send us into the world, together.

We pray this in the glorious and gracious name of Jesus Christ. Amen.¹

♦ *At Home*

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

This week, spend time prayerfully reading through our Fellowship Dallas Membership Covenant. Our covenant with one another is a commitment to belong and become—an expression of your heart that you belong to this family and you desire to help make it become all that God intends as it helps you become all God intends. It is a covenant, not a contract. We are building a church family, not a roster. We care more about transformation than participation and invite you to take this next step in discipleship with us, keeping in mind that this is a call to progress, not perfection.

After reading, answer the questions on the next page for yourself.

¹ Adapted from the Gospel Coalition Prayer for Unity

① What does it look like to live out this covenant? What could hold me back?

② What do you like about the covenant? What might make you hesitant to enter into a covenant relationship with the people of Fellowship Dallas?

③ How would I see living out this covenant in real life? In my walk with Jesus? As part of a Life Group? With others in my Fellowship family?

If you have questions or concerns about the covenant, write them down and talk about them next week in your Life Group. For answers to questions about specific parts of the covenant, visit the FAQ section at FellowshipDallas.org/CovenantMembership. You can also reach out to your Life Group leader directly, or our staff at Connect@FellowshipDallas.org.

WEEK FIVE ♦

Better Together

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” –COLOSSIANS 3:12-14

AT HOME FOLLOW-UP ♦

Last week we spent time walking through the Membership Covenant. Although your Life Group is one of the primary places where you will live out this covenant, we can’t lose sight that this commitment is to the larger church body. As a church family, we desire to be for one another, to call each other to live out our God-given purpose, and to grow in becoming more like Jesus.

Talk through any questions, concerns, or excitement that surfaced as you prayerfully read through the covenant this past week.

REFLECT ♦

In today’s passage, Paul explains how our core identity is transformed when we enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ. At the core of our being, we undergo a dramatic change—our old self is dead and we have been resurrected with Jesus. Because of this, our perspective must shift from the things of this world to the things that honor God for

what he has done on our behalf. As you read this passage, carefully observe the words Paul is using to describe how we should approach relationship with one another in the context of our church family.

READ ♦ *Colossians 3:1-17*

What an amazing thing Jesus has done for us! But, let’s remember, he is still working in our lives to develop us into people who will accomplish great things in his name. One of the most powerful things about this whole process of spiritual growth is that we are not meant to accomplish it on our own. Not only do we have the Holy Spirit to guide us, we are also part of a family of believers that will accept us, love us, and challenge us. This is a family that God designed, Jesus established, and the Holy Spirit empowers. It is a family to which all followers of Jesus belong.

DISCUSS ♦

Our Membership Covenant reminds us what our local expression of the worldwide church body looks like as we belong and become more like Jesus. As we continue this process of spiritual formation, we will individually live out our God-given purpose and, collectively, draw others to experience the love of Jesus!

Within our Membership Covenant are specific calls that declare our intention to become more like Jesus. As a Life Group, we have the privilege of coming alongside each other as we seek to become more like Jesus. Again, these calls are about progress, not perfection. None of us are or ever will be perfect in these areas. But we do want to strive toward growing in them together.

Spend some time reading through the “I accept” section of our covenant together. Read a few of the scripture passages and think about how they challenge us to grow in our faith.

I accept the call to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ in becoming:

- ◆ CONSISTENT IN PURSUING A GOD-CENTERED LIFE as we get to know Him more and surrender our lives to Him. (*Mark 3:7-20, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, John 13:4-5, Romans 8:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:17*)
 - ① What is your next step in pursuing a God-centered life? What do you need to surrender to make this happen?
- ◆ RESISTANT TO DOING LIFE ON MY OWN as we acknowledge our need for authentic relationships that remind us of our identity in Christ. (*Acts 4:23-37, John 3:34-35, Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25, Romans 12:5*)
 - ② Why is it difficult to be authentic, even with people you trust? How do communities you're involved in (i.e. Life Group, social clubs, work teams, etc.) help you resist doing life on your own?
- ◆ PERSISTENT IN DESIGNING A LIFE OF INTENTIONAL INVESTMENT as we learn to make more purposeful commitments and be boldly generous in the places God calls us. (*John 17:1-18, Colossians 3:17, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, Philippians 3*)
 - ③ If you have been through the Repurposed Training Experience and have gained clarity around your God-given purpose, share it with your group. Do you know where God is calling you to intentionally invest? How can your Life Group be praying for you?
- ◆ INSISTENT ON A LEGACY OF EXPONENTIAL IMPACT as we invest in the next generation, develop in our servant leadership, and draw others to Christ to build His Kingdom. (*Acts 16:1-5, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, John 13:12-17, Philippians 2:5-18, Psalm 145:4-7, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 71:15-18, 2 Timothy, Acts 2:46-47*)

- ④ Who will be part of the legacy you leave behind, following you as you follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1)? How are you multiplying your impact?

Living out the one another of scripture together and becoming more like Jesus will require us to movement on our part. We will need to listen and obey. We will need to encourage each other as we take one courageous step after another. This is how we grow as his disciples and as a family. We will need to be vulnerable with each other—willing to confess our sins to one another, forgiving one another, praying for one another, and calling each other to live more like Jesus.

PRAYER ◆

Have your Life Group Leader share about a specific time when they were challenged to grow in their faith. Then pray that God would clearly show you areas in your own life where you need to be challenged to grow in your relationship with him. Thank him for his forgiveness and the freedom that he has given you through Jesus.

BENEDICTION ◆

“Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another; live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.” Amen.

-2 CORINTHIANS 13:11

♦ *At Home*

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

A covenant has historically been defined as a sacred bond between two parties whereby each party solemnly pledges to bless and serve the other party in some way.

Covenanting with the Fellowship Dallas church family is a voluntary next step for someone who desires to grow as a disciple of Jesus and pursue authentic relationships with one another.

We are inviting you to covenant with us this week. Read through the covenant and ask God what he has for you in this season of your life. Ask him if entering into this covenant relationship with the people of Fellowship Dallas is your next step. Some of you are new to Fellowship and may not be ready to make this commitment right now. Some will want to take more time to consider this decision. Others are ready to covenant with us today. No matter where you stand, we want you to know that you are welcome and belong at Fellowship Dallas. If you are ready to take this step, you can sign this covenant and return it to your Life Group Leader next week.

For answers to questions about specific parts of the covenant, you can visit the FAQs about Covenant Membership at FellowshipDallas.org/CovenantMembership. You can also contact your Life Group leader directly, or our staff at Connect@FellowshipDallas.org. To take a deeper look at the scripture surrounding our covenant, see page 57 in the Appendix. If you chose to complete the covenant at a later date, you can bring it by the Connecting Center on a Sunday morning.

My Covenant with My Fellowship Family

Desiring to covenant with the body of Christ at Fellowship Dallas...

I DECLARE my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior and affirm the core beliefs of Fellowship Dallas and our mission of calling each other to live out our God-given purpose in Christ every day.

I ACCEPT the call to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ in becoming:

- ♦ *Consistent in pursuing a God-centered life* as we get to know Him more and surrender our lives to Him.
- ♦ *Resistant to doing life on my own* as we acknowledge our need for authentic relationships that remind us of our identity in Christ.
- ♦ *Persistent in designing a life of intentional investment* as we learn to make more purposeful commitments and be boldly generous in the places God calls us.
- ♦ *Insistent on a legacy of exponential impact* as we invest in the next generation, develop in our servant leadership, and draw others to Christ to build His Kingdom.

I WILL LIVE this out with my Fellowship family as I get to know others and let them get to know me. I will make every effort to maintain unity with others. I will come alongside others in times of spiritual, emotional, and physical need. I will accept biblical encouragement and calls to repentance and restoration. I will offer my time, spiritual gifts, and financial resources to build up this church body.

I CAN EXPECT early communication and invitations to give input; regular opportunities to assess my spiritual health and receive guidance toward next steps; leadership development opportunities; and environments where I can worship with the body, live in community, serve in my gifting, and be trained up to live out my God-given purpose.

PRINTED NAME

EMAIL

SIGNATURE

DATE



WEEK SIX ♦

Calling Each Other

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

-HEBREWS 10:23-25

REFLECT ♦

“We often think of community as simply one more thing we have to follow in the rules of behavior. ‘Okay, I have to read my Bible, pray, stay sexually pure - and I need to go to fellowship.’ But community is best understood as the way we are to do all that Christ told us to in the world. Community is more than just the result of the preaching of the gospel; it is itself a declaration and expression of the gospel. It is the demonstration of the good news of freedom in Christ through the evident display of our transformed character and our life together. It is itself part of the good news, for the good news is this: this is what Christ has won for you on the cross - a new life together with the people of God. Once you were alienated from others, but now you have been brought near.”

-TIM KELLER, CENTER CHURCH

READ ♦ *Hebrews 10:19-25*

As you look closely at these verses, you can see just how important committing to one another really is as we expectantly follow Jesus together in community. When we “live life

on purpose, with God and each other” we live in a way that is supernaturally empowered, giving us deeper meaning and purpose together. But, our communities aren’t islands. Each of our Life Groups exists within the larger structure of our church family where we live out our overarching church mission statement, “calling each other to live out our God-given purpose in Christ every day.

We see in scripture that each of these one anothers, even the more difficult ones, must be done from a heart of love and humility for the good of our brothers and sisters. We have been called to comfort and confront, confess and forgive, be devoted and spur on one another. But, most of all, we have been called to love one another. When this love is authentically empowered in a relationship with Jesus, it creates a context of belonging that is, at its very core, distinctly different from anything the world has to offer. In fact, it serves as a witness to the world, showing them what a church family really looks like.

Today, in the last week of our Belonging curriculum, we are going to put this love into practice, encouraging and challenging one another. We will do this by sharing our next steps and spending time praying for and encouraging each other.

DISCUSS ♦

Whether you have chosen Covenant Membership or not, there is an ongoing opportunity to become like Jesus and belong to one another. Let’s consider what’s next. Take a moment quietly to consider and complete the statement below. (If you need ideas, turn to page 59)

I desire to become more like Jesus and follow Him closely this year. I am working towards progress, not perfection. I will take a courageous next step of becoming and belonging in the following area: _____

Share the big idea with your group and think of at least one person with whom you can share this more specifically. Ask them to pray for you and encourage you as you begin to live these out. This is what belonging is all about.

There may also be a next step that your Life Group wants to take together. For example:

- ◆ Is there a way our group desires to grow in becoming intentional in pursuing a God-centered life together?
- ◆ How will we as a Life Group be more resistant to doing life on our own? Is there a way we want to grow in making an intentional investment? Is there a way for our group to make an exponential impact on the world around us?
- ◆ What is our group's next step in becoming and belonging?

LEADER INSTRUCTIONS ◆

Those who have taken the step to covenant with each other and with the rest of the body of Fellowship Dallas will sign their covenant and give it to their Life Group Leader. Leaders, please return these to the church in the envelope provided to you with your curriculum.

In the Appendix starting on page 47, there are additional resources for you to explore! There you can find information concerning courageous next step ideas, ongoing care and resources available to you, giving and church finances, church leadership and elders, and healthy transitions within the church.

PRAYER ◆

Spend some time praying for each other as you trust in God to help you live out the one another's of scripture together.

BENEDICTION ◆

"In response to all God has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and in doing good. Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming is drawing near." -HEBREWS 10:24-25, NLT

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VISION ♦

Repurposing for Kingdom Advancement

Summary: In the next ten years, Fellowship Dallas will become a training and launching ground for more than 10,000 men and women who will discover and live out their unique, God-given, Kingdom purpose in Christ.

The Dallas Metroplex is a target-rich environment for the gospel. This increasingly complex and diverse city is made up of distracted, discontented and detached people looking for purpose, hope and happiness. Many are living “lives of quiet desperation” unaware of the joy and fulfillment available through Jesus Christ whose desire is to call them to an abundant life as He uses them uniquely to build His Kingdom and change the world. We have no shortage of churches in Dallas but we do have a shortage of churches that prioritize sending capacity over seating capacity. Jesus said, “Go, make disciples of all nations,” not “Come, sit and enjoy the show.”

At Fellowship Dallas, we believe our first calling is life transformation through a relationship with Jesus Christ. This transformation results in a growing understanding of our God-given purpose to be pursued daily where we live, work and play. We delight to encourage and call one another to purposeful living as we worship, live together in community, and serve alongside one another.

Our aim is to awaken people to the purpose of God, to re-imagine our church as a starting place and coaching ground for followers of Jesus to discover their unique calling and then lead others on a similar journey. We believe that success is ultimately measured by successors. To that end, by 2026, we will depend on God for at least 10,000 people to be engaged in a repurposing process so they can experience the joy of identifying, connecting to and living out their God-given purpose in Christ every day in their homes, workplaces and communities.

We see a future where new and long-time believers discover how their unique story combined with their unique gifts, talents, and experiences inspires them to gladly offer up their lives for the glory of God and the good of His Kingdom. We see men and women who are “ordained” plumbers and teachers and doctors and business leaders who view their job as a mission field. When God’s people are living life on purpose, confident of their calling, their joy becomes contagious and others are drawn to do the same. Compelled by the love of Christ, we will multiply this repurposing process through our personal relationships and our strategic partnerships around the world. We will celebrate what God is doing through thousands of shared stories.

Can you see it? It will be inescapable for anyone attending Fellowship Dallas to be invited to experience the daily adventure of discovering and living out their God-given purpose. Each person who walks through our doors will see that God loves them and has created them on purpose, for purpose. They will hear countless testimonies affirming the fact that He desires to enter into their current situation and lovingly draw them to something more. Students will begin to see their school as a mission field. Young moms and dads will realize that they are not just parents but disciple- makers. Those who are tired of their jobs will be energized as they begin to see their work as a Kingdom assignment. Even those who have retired from the work force will begin to realize the freedom they have to put their experience, wisdom and gifts to work leading others in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

When we all see ourselves as repurposed agents of the Kingdom, experiencing the fullness of life lived as God’s missionaries where we are already doing life, we will be full of joy, contagiously attractive to others and influential for the Kingdom. We who have been awakened to the purpose of God and have re-imagined what life could be, will have the joy of awakening others to the call of God on their lives as we invite them to live on purpose with us.

Mission, Values, Calls, & More

MISSION ♦

Calling each other to live out our God-given purpose in Christ every day.

VALUES ♦

GET REAL: We live in honest relationships as we're transformed through the unchanging truth and grace of Jesus Christ.

GET MOVING: We challenge each other to discover and act on God's next step for our lives.

GET TOGETHER: We gather as diverse generations, ethnicities, and backgrounds to live and love in unity.

GET OUT: We go beyond these walls to transform our homes, communities, and world.

CALLS ♦

CONSISTENT IN PURSUING A GOD-CENTERED LIFE as we get to know Him more and surrender our lives to Him.

SCRIPTURE: *Mark 3:7-20, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, John 13:4-5, Romans 8:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:17*

VALUE: *Get Real*

RESISTANT TO DOING LIFE ON MY OWN as we acknowledge our need for authentic relationships that remind us of our identity in Christ.

SCRIPTURE: *Acts 4:23-37, John 3:34-35, Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25, Romans 12:5*

VALUE: *Get Together*

PERSISTENT IN DESIGNING A LIFE OF INTENTIONAL INVESTMENT as we learn to make more purposeful commitments and be boldly generous in the places God calls us.

SCRIPTURE: *John 17:1-18, Colossians 3:17, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, Philippians 3*

VALUE: *Get Moving*

INSISTENT ON A LEGACY OF EXPONENTIAL IMPACT as we invest in the next generation, develop in our servant leadership, and draw others to Christ to build His Kingdom.

SCRIPTURE: *Acts 16:1-5, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, John 13:12-17, Psalm 145:4-7, Philippians 2:5-18, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 71:15-18, 2 Timothy, Acts 2:46-47*

VALUE: *Get Out*

ENVIRONMENTS ♦

WORSHIP GATHERINGS: Where we worship God in Spirit and Truth.
(Weekly)

LIFE GROUPS: Where we live on purpose with God and each other.
(Weekly)

SERVICE TEAMS: Where we share the love of Jesus in our church, city, and world.
(Regularly)

TRAINING EXPERIENCES: Where we explore challenging topics to help us grow.
(Seasonally)

Core Beliefs

The core beliefs of Fellowship Dallas are the commonly held beliefs in Christian Orthodoxy. They major on the majors that make us Christian, not on the various convictions that different churches or denominations hold to. We ask that those who choose to covenant with us affirm that they agree with these core beliefs.

THE BIBLE ♦

We believe the Bible is inspired by God, without error in the original manuscripts, and the final authority on all matters about which it speaks. We believe that the scriptures were given for our inspiration, encouragement and practical instruction. They are the source of spiritual growth and the basis for personal and corporate conduct as the New Testament church. (*Psalm 19:7-11; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 1:16; 17:2-3; 18:28; 26:22-23; 28:23; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 10:11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21*)

THE TRIUNE GOD ♦

We believe in one God who exists as three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and that these three are one God with the same nature, attributes, and perfection and are worthy of the same love, trust, and obedience. We believe that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe, rules supremely over it, desires the worship of His creation, and pursues personal relationship with mankind, the pinnacle of His creation. (*Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Colossians 1:14-16; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6*)

JESUS CHRIST ♦

PERSON OF CHRIST – We believe that Jesus Christ, as the eternal Son of God, is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah. He came into this world to reveal the Father and save the lost from their sin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born physically of the virgin Mary, but was sinless in nature and in His life on earth. Therefore, He was worthy to give His life as a ransom for all people and die for the sin of the world (*Luke 1:30-35; John 1:1-2, 14, 18; 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 1:3*). We believe that His unique nature was both fully God and fully man and He functioned in both the divine and human realms (*Luke 2:40; John 1:11; Acts 2:22-24; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9-10; Hebrews 2:14; 4:15*). We believe that He rose from the dead in a glorified body and that those who believe in Him will also have a resurrected body (*John 20:20; Philippians 3:20-21*).

WORK OF CHRIST – We believe that Jesus Christ demonstrated the infinite love of God by becoming the sacrificial Lamb and, by dying, took away the sin of the world. Through His death, He took the penalty for sin which God's holy, righteous nature demanded. He died in man's place and by His death He became the Savior of the lost. We believe that His death and resurrection were fully accepted by God the Father as sufficient payment for the sin of mankind (*John 1:29; Romans 3:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Hebrews 10:5-14; 1 Peter 3:18*). We believe in salvation by grace, through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ through His life, death and resurrection (*Ephesians 2:8-9*). Presently Christ functions as Head over the church, which is His body, and in this ministry He intercedes for His people as their Great High Priest (*Ephesians 1:22-23; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1*).

RETURN OF CHRIST – We believe that the present Christian life both individually and corporately should be lived in light of Jesus' promised return. His return is imminent—

that is, He could descend from heaven at any moment, known only to God, to gather the Church together with Him for eternity. All Christians should live in a state of readiness as we live out our brief lives upon this earth. God's future plan for His church provides hope and perspective as we serve the Lord in anticipation of His return and all that is to come. (*1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-13; Revelation 22:20*).

THE HOLY SPIRIT ♦

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He is our advocate and leads us into all truth. He is a source of spiritual life, reminds us that we are God's children, helps us in our weakness, and intercedes for us. His role is also to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates the unbeliever, seals and baptizes the believer, and sets apart the believer to a holy life. At regeneration He baptizes the believer into the body of Christ and comes to indwell him fully and permanently. (*John 14:16-17, 26; Romans 8:9-11, 16, 26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 12:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; Titus 3:5*)

HUMANITY ♦

We believe that the first man and woman were created in God's image and thus all humans have great value in God's sight. But when the first couple sinned, they brought both physical and spiritual death to the human race. As a result, all human beings are born with a sinful nature separated from God. They live in darkness, commit acts of sin in their lives, and need to be reconciled to God. The only exception is Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, who lived a sinless life and in loving obedience to His loving Father paid the ultimate price by dying on the cross to pay for all the sins of all mankind thereby reconciling to God all those who believe in His Son. This is the work of God's grace to save and restore men and women created in His image, to bring them to light and give

spiritual life where there was only spiritual death. He has made a way for us not only to be restored to right relationship as the sons and daughters of God, but also to join Him in building His kingdom on the earth. We have eternal life through Him and that life begins here as we live out the purpose of God in our lives today. (*Genesis 1:26; 2:17; 3; 6:5; Psalm 14:1-3; 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:6, 16; 5:40; 6:35; Romans 3:10-19, 23-26; 8:6-7; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 3:8*)

LIFE IN CHRIST ♦

We believe that as followers of Christ our calling is to walk worthy of the Gospel of Christ, which is a call to holy living. Though we desire to live a holy life for Christ, we feel a tension. We are opposed by the devil*, our own flesh, and a worldly culture that challenges and tempts us to live contrary to our calling. We believe that sinless perfection is impossible in this life, and that Christians still experience sin and suffering in this world. But, in His grace, God has made provision for us to live an abundant, God-honoring life through the Holy Spirit, who lives in our hearts and empowers us. As we resist the enemy and our fleshly desires and yield to the Holy Spirit, He gives us power that enables us to walk in Him and not give in to the opposition and temptations. (*Romans 6:11-13; 8:1-17; 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 2:1-10; 3:1-10; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 1:4-7; 3:5-9*)

*We believe that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (*Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19*), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (*Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14*), and by introducing sin into the human race (*Genesis 3:1-5*). Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man. He has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (*Romans 16:20*).

THE CHURCH ♦

We believe the Church, both worldwide and local, should be a witness to the love of God for all the world as manifested in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The ministry, worship, and teaching of each local church should creatively adapt to the particular culture it feels called to reach, but without compromising Biblical absolutes. We believe that every person who has believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and has accepted by faith His finished work on the cross as their gift of salvation is a member of the Universal Church, which began at Pentecost. As a Christian, each believer is a member of the Church regardless of their standing or membership in localized assembly of believers. We believe that the Holy Spirit places each person into this Church at the point of salvation without regard for gender, ethnicity, class, or culture. (*Matthew 16:16-18; 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; Galatians 3:27-28; Ephesians 1:13-14; Colossians 3:11*)

Among other titles, the Church is referred to as the body and bride of Christ. As the bride, the Church's special relationship to Christ is presented and Christ's care for His Church celebrated. As the body of Christ, Christ's position as head emphasizes His authority and leadership over His Church. As the body, each member plays a key role in serving each other member. Within this relationship, each believer bears responsibility for promoting peace, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The love for one another that produces peace marks the body as true followers of Jesus. (*Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Colossians 3:11-17*)

We believe that within the Church the ordinances of baptism and communion should be consistent practices of worship to celebrate the work of Christ while waiting for His return. In order for these practices of worship to take place, Christ emphasizes consistent gathering together for prayer, fellowship, and teaching. (*Luke 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; 16:32-33; 18:7-8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Ephesians 1:4-14, 18-23; 4:3-10; Hebrews 10:24-25*)

My Covenant with My Fellowship Family

Desiring to covenant with the body of Christ at Fellowship Dallas...

I DECLARE my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior (*Romans 3:23-26, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 5:6-8, Romans 10:9*) and affirm the core beliefs of Fellowship Dallas and our mission of calling each other to live out our God-given purpose in Christ every day. (*Psalms 139:13-14, Ephesians 2:10, Hebrews 10:23-25*)

I ACCEPT the call to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ in becoming:

- ♦ *Consistent in pursuing a God-centered life* as we get to know Him more and surrender our lives to Him. (*Mark 3:7-20, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, John 13:4-5, Romans 8:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:17; Value: Get Real*)
- ♦ *Resistant to doing life on my own* as we acknowledge our need for authentic relationships that remind us of our identity in Christ. (*Acts 4:23-37, John 3:34-35, Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25, Romans 12:5, all the one anothers; Value: Get Together*)
- ♦ *Persistent in designing a life of intentional investment* as we learn to make more purposeful commitments and be boldly generous in the places God calls us. (*John 17:1-18, Colossians 3:17, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, Philippians 3; Value: Get Moving*)
- ♦ *Insistent on a legacy of exponential impact* as we invest in the next generation, develop in our servant leadership, and draw others to Christ to build His Kingdom. (*Acts 16:1-5, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, John 13:12-17, Philippians 2:5-18, Psalm 145:4-7, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 71:15-18, 2 Timothy, Acts 2:46-47; Value: Get Out*)

I WILL LIVE this out with my Fellowship family as I get to know others and let them get to know me (*Romans 12:5; Get Real*).

I will make every effort to maintain unity with others (*Romans 12:9-21; see also FAQs*).

I will come alongside others in times of spiritual, emotional, and physical need (*Galatians 6:2; see also FAQs*).

I will accept biblical encouragement (*Colossians 3:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 10:24-25*) and calls to repentance and restoration (*Galatians 6:1-5, Matthew 7:3-5, Luke 17:3, Matthew 18:15-17; see also FAQs*).

I will offer my time (*Psalms 90:12, 1 Thessalonians 2:8, 1 Peter 4:8-10*), spiritual gifts (*Romans 12:3-8, Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Peter 4:10*), and financial resources (*2 Corinthians 9:6-7; see also Additional Resources – Giving & Finances*) to build up this church body.

I can expect early communication and invitations to give input; regular opportunities to assess my spiritual health and receive guidance toward next steps; leadership development opportunities (*see FAQs*); and environments where I can worship with the body, live in community, serve in my gifting, and be trained up to live out my God-given purpose (*see “Environments” on page 51*).

FAQs About Covenant Membership

We know there can be questions about what Covenant Membership means and even about the covenant language in any given local church body. To see our current FAQ list around Covenant Membership, visit FellowshipDallas.org/CovenantMembership. If you have a question that is not answered here, please email Connect@FellowshipDallas.org.

Next Step Ideas

At Fellowship, our desire is to grow to become more like Jesus. We want to become what God dreamed for us when He created us. It means that we will be growing throughout our lives to love God and love others more and more. It means that we seek to focus our minds, hearts, and actions on the things of His Kingdom.

In order to become more like Jesus, we believe that we should have a courageous next step in our spiritual journeys. These next steps are possible with the Lord's strength and help. As you choose a next step in each area as you move through this year, try to be specific enough that you will know if you made progress or accomplished this step. Give yourself a timeline if you need to. And remember, there is joy when we allow God to work in our lives and get us out of our comfort zones. This won't be easy, but it will be a rich experience if we trust the Holy Spirit and allow Him to work in and through us.

Caution: We can come up with a spiritual checklist, but what we desire is to become more like Him. So, most importantly, listen to God and obey His leading.

If you are unsure of a next step towards active growth in your own life, here are a few suggestions to get you thinking and praying on it:

CONSISTENT IN PURSUING A GOD-CENTERED LIFE

- ◆ Trust in Jesus for _____ by _____
- ◆ Take the step this year to be baptized on _____
- ◆ Surrender _____ to God by _____
- ◆ Participate in the _____ Training Experience

- ◆ Read my Bible using the _____ plan or _____ times a week
- ◆ Attend Steps and get to the root of _____
- ◆ Begin keeping a gratitude journal and being grateful for _____ a day/week
- ◆ Make prayer a priority by _____
- ◆ Other ideas that come to mind:

RESISTANT TO DOING LIFE ON MY OWN

- ◆ Pursue healing in my relationship with _____
- ◆ Join a Life Group. Start by _____
- ◆ Get real about _____ with my community
- ◆ Open my home to _____ for _____
- ◆ Choose a healthy marriage by signing up for Marriage Mentors and being faithful in it
- ◆ Sitting by someone I don't know in church ___ times a month and getting to know them
- ◆ Inviting someone to coffee or lunch who I would like to get to know better ___ times this year
- ◆ Other ideas that come to mind:

PERSISTENT IN DESIGNING A LIFE OF INTENTIONAL INVESTMENT

- ◆ Complete Repurposed
- ◆ Join a Fellowship Service Team and serve _____
- ◆ Begin to be more generous through _____
- ◆ Increase my financial support of _____ by _____
- ◆ Be more intentional where I live (with my family or roommates), where I work (co-workers, job performance, attitude), where I play (teams, friends, community)
 - *Be specific:* _____
- ◆ Learn more about _____ issue/ministry and pray about where I make an impact
- ◆ Choosing to become a Marriage Mentor with my spouse
- ◆ Serve in the community in the area of _____
- ◆ Start a Life Group and be willing learn what it would look like to help lead it
- ◆ Other ideas that come to mind:

INSISTENT ON A LEGACY OF EXPONENTIAL IMPACT

- ◆ Pray consistently for three people you know to know Jesus
- ◆ Make a list of things I know, gifts I have, and time I have available, then offer them to the Lord, asking Him where I could begin to share them
- ◆ Ask a friend to help me brainstorm what I have to offer and how I can pass it on
- ◆ Go on a mission trip to _____

- ◆ Move towards servant leadership in _____
- ◆ Learn to share the gospel and share it with _____
- ◆ Invest in a younger believer or couple
- ◆ Make intentional time to spend with my kids
- ◆ Make intentional time to spend with my spouse
- ◆ Pour my experience in _____ into _____
- ◆ Serve in Children’s Ministry _____times/month
- ◆ Partner my life group with one that is younger than us _____ times a year and invest in them. Contact *Groups@FellowshipDallas.org* for ideas
- ◆ Other ideas that come to mind:

Want to learn more? Visit *FellowshipDallas.org/Becoming* to see other courageous next steps and to tell us about your own step in becoming more like Jesus.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ◆

Ongoing Care & Resources

CARE@FELLOWSHIPDALLAS.ORG

Our Fellowship church body cares for one another. Because our church is made up of hundreds of individuals, we know that the best care happens in smaller circles—our Life Groups. These communities are where prayer, encouragement, and support are most found, because your community knows you on a deep level. We encourage you to be part of a Life Group in part so that you will experience the joy of giving and receiving this kind of care from those you are in close friendships with.

In addition to Life Groups, Covenant Members will receive additional care from church staff and care teams during times of need. Whether in sickness, crisis, or other trying circumstances, we want to support you and come alongside you by helping you meet practical needs. Covenant Members will also receive discounted rates to use the church for weddings and funerals.

There are times when a Covenant Member’s need requires counseling or other assistance. You can learn more about the availability of these resources as a member of Fellowship by emailing *Care@FellowshipDallas.org*.

We want to care for the spiritual needs of our body as well. Each year, Fellowship will provide a spiritual health assessment to our entire congregation to encourage continued commitment to growth as disciples and answering the calls of Jesus. Discipleship conversations and resource suggestions will be available to help each person grow deeper.

See a list of other resources we offer on the next page.

OTHER RESOURCES ♦

LIFE GROUPS – Find community

FellowshipDallas.org/Groups

TRAINING EXPERIENCES – Get equipped to grow and find purpose

FellowshipDallas.org/Training

SERVE – Your City, Church or World

FellowshipDallas.org/Serve

STEPS – Find Freedom

Email Care@FellowshipDallas.org

MARRIAGE MENTORS – Have someone pour into your marriage or pour into another

Email Marriage@FellowshipDallas.org

Giving & Finance

We believe in giving as an act of worship.

- ♦ It focuses our hearts on our true treasure, which is Christ.
Matthew 6:21
- ♦ It is an acknowledgment that God is the owner of everything.
1 Chronicles 29:11-12
- ♦ It turns our focus from the idolatry of money to serving God.
Luke 16:11-13
- ♦ It is an expression of our love for God and our devotion to Him.
- ♦ It is born out of our free response to all He has done for us, not out of guilt or duty.
2 Corinthians 9:7

Since the founding of our church in 1977, God has faithfully provided financial resources for Fellowship Dallas through the generous giving of individuals who have been blessed by the Lord and the church. In turn, our church, city, and the world have been blessed through the ministries they have helped to fund. It's truly a beautiful circle of God giving to His people who give back to Him and others. It's all part of the "economy" God has ordained for His people and His church.

We keep our church updated on the state of our finances each week on our app and at *FellowshipDallas.org/Finance*. The Elders of Fellowship closely monitor and oversee our giving and expenses to ensure sound stewardship of the financial resources God has entrusted to us.

As part of that stewardship, the elders have mandated an excess cash reserve requirement of at least three months of operating expenses. The elder board also has in place a finance committee that looks closely at the financial statements of the church on a monthly basis and advises the board on all financial matters. The church undergoes an annual financial audit by an independent and well-known public accounting firm.

If you would like to know more about the finances of Fellowship Dallas, please contact our Executive Pastor, Tommy Shelton, at TommyS@FellowshipDallas.org

You can set up a one time or recurring gift online at FellowshipDallas.org/Give or by tapping the “Give” tab on our mobile app.

Elders & Ministry Leaders

At Fellowship, our church is governed by a board of elders that consists of at least seven but no more than 11 men who meet the requirements for elders set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 and in the board’s policies. The board collectively (as opposed to any one individual member or group of members) is the final human authority over all matters of our church, subject to scripture and Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. This form of church polity is called “elder ruled.”

Neither Covenant Members nor the broader congregation at Fellowship has an official vote in matters, which is typically the case among non-denominational churches with a history and foundation like Fellowship’s. However, the role and influence of the congregation—and especially Covenant Members—is significant. In important matters like the selection of elders, the congregation has the right and opportunity to give input on candidates who are being considered for elder. If enough negative input about a candidate were to be received, the board would withdraw that candidate from consideration.

On other important matters like a decision to move the church’s location, change its name, or hire a key staff member such as lead pastor or worship pastor, the input of relevant segments of the congregation is sought and considered before the final decision is made.

An “open door” policy exists when it comes to elders and staff leaders. Any member of the congregation can reach out to any elder or staff leader at any time on any matter to give input, express concern/disagreement, ask questions, offer suggestions, etc.

To learn more about our Staff & Elders visit: FellowshipDallas.org/About-Us

Healthy Church Transitions

The Church of Jesus Christ is made up of those who trust Him and live for His Kingdom around the world. If you have placed your trust in Christ alone for your salvation, you are part of The Church. We believe that God calls us to be resistant to doing life on our own. We are called into relationship with God and community with one another as we grow to be more like Him and live out the purpose He has for our lives through a local family of believers.

Leaving one church family for another is an important time of transition. Walking through these times of church transition in a God-honoring way will impact your relationship with God, the hearts of those you leave behind, and your ability to connect in healthy ways in your new place.

So, whether you are leaving a church to come to Fellowship Dallas or if you one day find that God is calling you to leave Fellowship Dallas, we would ask that you consider and follow the guidelines below as you evaluate your decision.

FIVE GUIDELINES FOR A HEALTHY CHURCH TRANSITION ♦

- ① A healthy transition is planned
 - ♦ It takes place in a timely manner.
 - ♦ It is properly communicated.
 - ♦ It happens in plain sight.
- ② A healthy transition is prayerful
 - ♦ It takes place with God's leading.

- ③ A healthy transition is pure.
 - ♦ Honestly deal with personal sin issues in your own life
 - ♦ Are you in a right relationship with those in authority?
 - ♦ How you leave is as important as why you leave.
- ④ A healthy transition is peaceable.
 - ♦ Are you motivated by your love for God and your desire to obey Him?
 - ♦ Has God given you peace to bless the leaders of your last church?
 - ♦ Could you ever return without guilt?
- ⑤ A healthy transition is positive.
 - ♦ Are you looking to the future or running away?
 - ♦ Are you ready to be an active part of this new family?

