

Purpose, Mission and Vision

Our *purpose* is to spiritually shepherd a growing community of believing households that are maturing in their relationship with God, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, to the praise and glory of the Father.

Our *mission* is to equip heads of households to effectively lead their families in worship, discipleship, service and evangelism.

Our *vision* is to see the earth filled with the true knowledge of God through spiritually strong households working together as the local church.

Core Beliefs

Foundational to our mission and ministry is the belief that strong households are at the core of strong churches and strong churches are the basis for effective outreach to others. Therefore, our intent is to build a spiritual environment that is conducive to equipping a growing number of households to effectively carry out Christ's great commission to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19).

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Therefore, we intend,

- To glorify God and enjoy Him all the days of our lives in everything that we do.
- To make diligent use of God's ordinary means of grace which are word and sacrament.
- To devote ourselves to prayer.
- To promote a proper concept of Christ, who He is and what He has done for His church.
- To make the Word of God central to all we do.
- To build loving and caring relationships with others in the church.
- To cultivate intentional relationships with people outside the church with the desire to proclaim Christ.
- To be good stewards of our gifts and talents for the building up of each other in Christ.

Our Doctrines in Faith and Practice

Given our purpose, mission and vision, the following are some summary statements of our doctrine (faith) and how they relate to everyday living (practice).

Scripture

FAITH

We believe the Bible alone is our final authority and is sufficient for faith and practice. Since the Bible is the sole source of God's written divine revelation, it alone can bind the conscience of man. While nature reveals the glory of God, it is in the Bible alone that we learn of God's eternal plan of redemption through Jesus Christ and His will for our lives. The Bible is sufficient for equipping believers "for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, it is the truths of Scripture that determine how we are to live our lives, individually and collectively.

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While accepting the Bible as our final authority, we recognize the value of the great ecumenical and reformational creeds such as: The Apostle's Creed, Nicene Creed, Baptist Confession of 1689, Westminster Confession of Faith, Heidelberg Catechism, Canons of Dort, and other like-minded affirmations of the historic Christian faith.

PRACTICE

Therefore, we place a high value upon training families in the historic Christian faith. This is accomplished through a commitment to preaching the whole counsel of God and teaching biblical doctrinal truths with special emphasis upon who God is, what He accomplished in Jesus Christ, and who we are in Him (Acts 20:27, 32; II Timothy 3:15-17).

The Church

FAITH

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is actively building His church upon the faith that was once for all handed down to the saints in the Scriptures (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:19-22; Jude 3). The building of His church is

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the working out of the covenant of redemption between the members of the Trinity before all time. We also believe that the church is the expression of His fullness in the world today and is God's chosen vehicle to accomplish global evangelization (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 28:19-20). We also believe that it is through the ministry of the church that God's ordinary means of saving and sanctifying grace are conferred upon sinners. These ordinary means of grace are the preaching of God's word, the sacraments of baptism and

the Lord's Supper, church discipline, and the use of our spiritual gifts for the growth of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16). It is in and through the right and regular practice of these ordinary means of grace that the true church of Jesus Christ is recognized.

PRACTICE

As God supports the physical and earthly life of His creation, so He has ordained the means for supporting the spiritual and heavenly life of His church. Believing God's fatherly favor and spiritual life are exclusively provided to His flock, the church, we highly prize the gathering of the saints for worship and God's ordinary means of grace for salvation and sanctification. Therefore, we strongly encourage sanctification of the Lord's Day by participation in both public and private worship services and the ordinances of Baptism and Holy Communion.

While the church gathers weekly to worship God on the Lord's Day, worship ought to be part of the everyday life of believing households as they grow in a passion for God's sovereignty in all things. Therefore, we encourage the head of each household to be leading his family in private worship on the Sabbath and throughout the week. Family worship should include things

such as singing Psalms and Hymns, reading the Bible, catechizing children, confession of sin, prayer, the reading of biographies of godly saints and other such activities. Like the gathered church, individual households are small congregations that give visible expression of God to the world. Households exhibiting healthy biblical relationships are vital for evangelism because in them the loving relationships among the Godhead, and between Christ and His church, are most clearly visible in everyday living.

The Gospel

FAITH

The gospel is this: God saves sinners. Salvation in Christ is based on a covenant made in His blood, which in the Bible is called the New Covenant. This is a covenant of grace whereby the persons of the Trinity accomplish our salvation based upon a covenant made among them in eternity past. It is often called the covenant of redemption (Titus 1:3; II Timothy 1:8-9). In it the Father, ordaining whatsoever comes to pass, chooses a bride for His Son, which is the elect, the church of Christ. The Son, sent by the Father, secures His bride via His incarnation, death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, applies the Son's redeeming work in the lives of the elect. In doing so, the Holy Spirit who is the Lord and giver of life, grants new life to sinners through regeneration, securing their redemption, sanctification, and glorification (I Corinthians 1:30; Matthew 26:26-29). God's gracious work of salvation includes preparing sinners for new lives of service for

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fervently love Him and live with Him and glorify Him.

His glory and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ (Ephesians 2:10). God saves us that we might rightly know Him as our creator, Him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify Him.

PRACTICE

Through the preaching of the gospel, God has rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). Though we still live in the midst of the kingdom of men, our calling, citizenship, service, and destiny are the city of God (Matthew

6:33; Philippians 3:20; II Corinthians 5:20; Colossians 4:11). Therefore, we desire to build a growing community of God-centered households that seek to be a living expression of the values and ethics of the kingdom of God.

We desire to reinforce the great doctrines of justification by grace alone through faith alone in worship, ministry and everything we do. Believing that God supports and nourishes the spiritual life He has effected in us, we reject the manipulative techniques and methods of men and proclaim God's covenantal faithfulness (Romans 1:16-17). Therefore, for the sake of the lost, and the strengthening of the saints, we desire to make regular use of God's ordinary means of grace.

Worship

FAITH

Corporate worship is the expression of the congregation's joyful satisfaction in all that God is and all He has done for us in Christ Jesus. Therefore, we desire our worship to be God-centered and for His glory. Corporate worship at Community Baptist Church is based upon God's covenantal faithfulness and graciousness toward us in Jesus Christ. Our worship is a dialogue between God and His people in the context of law and gospel in a covenantal renewal service. He speaks to us through the preaching of the word and sacraments. We respond to Him in singing, prayer, confession of our sin and the confession of our faith.

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PRACTICE

The format of dialogue in our weekly Lord's Day worship, based upon the covenantal patterns established in Scripture, looks something like this:

God Calls Us: Through Christ and the Holy Spirit we have access to the Father (Eph 2:18). So we draw near to the throne of grace with confidence in God's covenantal promises realized in the blood of Christ and applied by the Holy Spirit. We draw near to God to receive grace and mercy from Him and ascribe the glory due His name (Hebrews 4:16; Psalm 29:1-2).

God Cleanses Us: Through God's law, we are reminded that we are unfaithful covenant breakers in need of forgiveness. We confess our sins, believing that "He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" for the sake of Christ (I John 1:9). And we reaffirm our loyalty to Christ and His kingdom to the glory of God.

God Communes With Us: Through the preaching of the pure gospel and administration of the sacraments, God communes with His people, further sanctifying them in the truth and by the Holy Spirit (John 17:17; 16:5-11; II Corinthians 6:16).

God Commissions Us: Through Christ's authority as the head of His church, He has sent us into the world to preach the gospel of repentance and faith, make disciples of all the nations, and teach them to observe all that He has commanded. As the people of God we proclaim Christ to the world, worshipping together and living together in such a manner as to present an embodiment of what the kingdom will be in consummation.

Missions & Evangelism

FAITH

After the right worship of God, the church's primary task in this age is evangelism. Salvation is not merely affirming certain religious truths. Rather, it is God's delivering of sinners out of the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of the Beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). This call is from a way of life (or worldview) that is hostile to God into a worldview that is grounded in the values, ethics, and relationships of the Kingdom of God. We are Christ's ambassadors and have the ministry of entreating sinners to be reconciled to God through faith in Christ and His redeeming work (II Corinthians 5:20).

Our motivation for missions is to see God's glory increased as more people are drawn to Him through the preaching of the Gospel to become "true worshippers." It is our desire to bear witness to the grace of God at home and abroad for the same reason that the Apostle Paul shared the gospel, "that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God" (II Corinthians 4:15).

PRACTICE

Since it is the church's responsibility to fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, we seek to use our resources to proclaim Christ to every man. Since evangelism is more than mere intellectual assent, we desire to equip our households to live Spirit-transformed lives before a watching world. While the power of the gospel to save is dependent on God alone, we seek to adorn the doctrines of God in every aspect of our lives that the non-Christian may glorify God in the day of visitation (Titus 2:3-10; I Peter 2:12). The living expression of our doctrines is to be expressed privately and publicly. Privately, our family life is to be a living expression of the kingdom of God. Publicly, as the people of God we are to embody and reflect the culture and community of Christ's kingdom.

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We also desire to partner with existing congregations and plant new congregations both domestically and abroad as the Lord leads and equips us.

Regular times of family worship can also be an effective means of evangelism. As a household entertains their neighbors and relatives, family time of worship can be a way to introduce others to the gospel and the primacy of Christ in our lives. It is also a means by which we can fill our community with the right knowledge of God.

Sanctification

FAITH

Like our justification, sanctification is a work of God accomplished in the believer through the work of the Holy Spirit and faith in the truth (II Thessalonians 2:13-16). The Holy Spirit, as the Lord and giver of life, works Christ's redemptive graces in the sinner. This work includes regeneration and the gift of faith (John 3:1-6; Ephesians 2:8). The regeneration is not inferior in power to the original creation and the raising of the dead. All

those in whose heart the Holy Spirit works are certainly, unfailingly, and effectually regenerated and do actually believe. The Holy Spirit-given new life and faith overflow into the good works that God has prepared before hand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

There is also a corporate element to sanctification. While God has promised to present each believer before Him holy and blameless, He is also actively preparing for His Son a bride, which is the church. When the Holy Spirit unites us to Christ in the new birth, He also unites us to His church. “For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body...for the body is not one member, but many” (I Corinthians 12:13a, 14). It is in the context of the community of believers that God causes us to grow up “into the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-16).

PRACTICE

Therefore, believing God’s promise that Christ is our sanctification, we desire to make diligent use of God’s ordinary means of grace for the making progress in the fruits of our sanctification in our daily lives.

It is within the relationships of the church, through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, that we grow.

The believer is no longer under the law as a curse and never again needs to fear its condemnation. Yet, in His law, God shows us His will for our lives and shows us areas of our lives that are in need of repentance. However, because of our new disposition given to us in regeneration, the righteous commands of God’s holy law are the great delight of our hearts. Our burden is no longer the law of God but the daily struggle with the remains of sin in our bodies. This spiritual struggle causes us all the more to seek those gifts of Christ’s redeeming work.

We also believe that God has ordained the office of elder for the purpose of teaching and equipping the people of God to bring her to maturity in Christ. It is therefore the elders’ responsibility to know and love God’s people, seeking to understand the unique needs of each individual and household (Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 13:17; Titus 1:9).

Finally, committed loving relationships in the local church are vital to our maturity and growth. It is within the relationships of the church, through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, that we grow “with a growth that is from God” (Colossians 2:19). Both the personal and the corporate elements of sanctification are vital for joyfully realizing all the riches of Christ’s redemptive graces in daily living. Therefore, we seek opportunities for households to serve and recreate together exercising individual gifts and talents to encourage the pursuit of excellence in all things to the glory of God.

Church Leadership

FAITH

The Scripture recognizes two offices in the church: elders and deacons. Biblical eldership is not simply businessmen making business decisions. Elders are to watch over the souls of the people of God, shepherding, guarding, teaching and equipping them unto Christian maturity (Ephesians 4:11-16; Acts 20:28-32). In order to accomplish this, the elders must be growing in their knowledge of God, their understanding of the Bible and its doctrines, and their comprehension of the redemptive plan that God has for His church.

Qualification for leadership in the church of Christ is evidenced in the leadership of the family.

It is vitally important that all who serve, and especially the elders, do so because God the Holy Spirit has uniquely gifted them (I Peter 4:10-11). The ability to serve the body of Christ flows from God’s special gift of grace that is given according to the working of His power (Ephesians 3:7). Having recognized the gifts of its members, the congregation submits to the Holy Spirit by calling upon members to exercise their spiritual gifts for the building up of the body (I Corinthians 12-14; Hebrews 13:17).

Qualification for leadership in the church of Christ is evidenced in the leadership of the family. Biblical male headship in the home is the proving ground for church leaders (Titus 1:6; I Timothy 3:4).

PRACTICE

Key to leadership development is the training and equipping of husbands as the heads of their households to love their wives, evangelize and disciple their children and represent their family as a unit in the life of the church and society. If a man cannot lead his own family, how can he ever lead the church (I Timothy 3:5)? Seeking to help men grow in their role as the covenantal heads of their households, we provide regular training in leading Bible studies, family worship, and sound doctrine. As men grow in their desire and skill to shepherd their households, some will be set apart by the Holy Spirit for oversight of the congregation.

Development of Biblical Households

FAITH

God's covenants are never purely individualistic but have been given to federal heads and their households. Christ is the federal or covenantal head of the church and as such He is the head over His house whose house we are (Hebrews 3:20; Ephesians 1:22-23). The husband is the head of his wife, as Christ also is the head of the church (Ephesians 5:23). According to the apostle Paul, this analogy of the headship defines the nature and responsibilities in family relationships. Therefore, our concept of the family is to be molded by the nature of biblical covenants rather than American individualism. In the household, headship is the responsible stewardship for the spiritual, physical, and emotional welfare of the family for the glory of God and His kingdom.

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Typically, households or families are thought of as more than one person. However, "household" equally applies to a family of one as to family of four. In a sense, a single adult is as much a household as a married couple with children and has similar responsibilities to the church and the world. Lydia, as a single woman, was head of a household (Acts 16:14). A widow or widower does not stop being a household simply because her/his spouse is no longer living. Nor do covenantal responsibilities of a household

stop just because there has been a divorce. While different circumstances may alter how certain things are done, or even severely complicate our biblical roles, our responsibilities still stand. A strong church will have strong households that are growing expressions of biblical manhood and womanhood in the circumstances God's providence has provided.

Adam and Eve together uniquely expressed the image of God's character in the world. This image is most clearly expressed in terms of male and female laboring together as the two become one flesh in the covenant of marriage. Adam's calling was to a task given to him by God for the care of the garden and the subduing of the earth. Eve was Adam's suitable helper, uniquely gifted by God for work in His kingdom. Together they were to fill the earth with righteous progeny and subdue the earth to the glory of God. The rebellion of our first parents has not removed this responsibility or its attendant commands. This is why all the New Testament instructions concerning the roles of men and women are tied to the creation narrative and not contemporary culture.

In God's kingdom, value is a quotient of essence not function. This is clearly seen in the Godhead itself. Jesus is not of lesser value than the Father because He is sent as a suffering servant. Neither is the Holy Spirit inferior to the Son because He is sent by Christ to glorify Him. Our value as persons is a result being created in God's image. Therefore, distinctions in biblical roles for men and women are rightly understood by analogy to God's self-disclosure as trinity and not by an arbitrary significance based upon culturally approved usefulness.

Men, as the covenantal heads of their households, are to be responsible stewards of the spiritual, emotional, and physical welfare of their wives and children. As Christ initiates the relationship with His church, so the husband is to pursue his relationship with his wife and family. He is to lead, love and nurture his family in the gospel, worship, discipleship, service, and evangelism. The apostle Paul warns men, writing in I Timothy 5:8, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever."

Wives are to love, respect, and be subject to their own husband as the church is subject to Christ, cultivating the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God (I Peter 3:4). As mothers, they are to love their children, take proper care of their families and households, living modestly, in faith, love, and holiness. Wives are to

assist their husbands in all good things helping them be profitable servants for the kingdom of God. Together, they subdue the earth as they express the glory of God in the quality of their two-in-one relationship, expand their influence through generations of godly progeny, and make disciples of the nations, teaching them to observe all that Christ commanded.

Part of the subduing of the earth is the raising up of a godly progeny. Parents have the primary responsibility for the training of their children inside and outside the home, in order to effectively pass on the faith to the next generation (Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Psalm 78:1-8). Confident in God's covenantal faithfulness, parents diligently applying the means of grace by faith should anticipate future offspring not only to be believers, but also to make greater progress for the kingdom than previous generations.

PRACTICE

Community Baptist Church seeks to teach and admonish heads of household to joyfully fulfill their God-given responsibilities as covenantal heads. Therefore, we desire to effectively equip and train heads of households (and future heads) in the practice of family worship, discipleship, catechism training, and service as families to the body of Christ and to their neighbors.

Community Baptist Church seeks to teach and equip older women to mentor and encourage the younger women “to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored” (Titus 2:4-5).

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Not every family has a godly father or mother and some have only one parent, while others are a blending of several households. This in no way negates the covenantal responsibilities though it can serve to greatly complicate the issue. Every head of a household will give an accounting for their stewardship. Even an unbelieving father will be held responsible for how he has led (or not led) his family for God and His kingdom. Therefore the church will have to carefully consider what appropriate measure can be taken to aid each household according to its own circumstances.