

Fellowship Baptist Church



COVENANT

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Receiving Members

We must be very careful about receiving new members. Our aim is a regenerate church membership so that we are a spiritual body with one mind in Spirit and in truth (1 Co. 1:10). If we are hasty and careless in this matter, the church will grow weak because it will be a mixed multitude of saved and unsaved.

Not all who say they believe in Jesus are saved. The people in Matthew 7:21-23 call upon Jesus and do many works, but they are not saved because they do not know Christ personally. The people in John 2:23-25 “believed,” but Jesus knew that they were not believing on Him for salvation; they were merely wanting a king to provide for them and to conquer their enemies. Compare John 6:15, 26. In John 6:66, these same people turned away from Jesus because they were offended at His teaching. Also in Acts 8:12-13, Simon “believed,” but he was only believing in order to get power and was not believing sincerely for salvation. See Acts 8:18-23.

The requirement for those who joined the first church (Acts 2:36-42)

Acts 2 is the example of church membership in the first church, which is the pattern for every church throughout the age.

The following three fundamental things were required.

1. They were saved by repenting of their sin and believing on Christ (Acts 2:36-41).

Salvation is necessary for membership in a New Testament church. This is called a “regenerate church membership.” A New Testament church is a spiritual body composed of born again members (1 Co. 12:27). It is a spiritual house composed of living stones (1 Pe. 2:5). Carelessness and haste in the matter of salvation has turned multitudes of churches into weak mixed multitudes of saved and lost, faithful and unfaithful.

The members of the first church repented (Acts 2:38). They were pricked in their hearts and convicted of their sin and their lost condition (Acts 2:37). This is what produces repentance. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ also preached repentance (Lu. 13:3, 5). The apostle Paul preached repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). Repentance is to surrender to God’s authority. It is to turn *to* God *from* idols and false religion (1 Thessalonians 1:9). On the day of Pentecost, the Jews repented of their works religion. They repented of trusting in Moses and the law. They repented of their own self-righteousness. Repentance is a change of heart that produces a change of life. If there is a repentant heart, there is a willingness to change the life. Two examples of repentance are Zacchaeus (Lu. 19:5-9) and the Prodigal Son (Lu. 15:17-19).

The members of the first church not only repented; they believed on Christ. They received the gospel gladly (Acts 2:41). There is no compulsion. They believed that Jesus was crucified for their sin and rose from the dead (Acts 2:23-24). They believed that Jesus is the only Lord (Acts 2:36). Saving faith is to believe 100% from the heart that Christ is the only Lord and Saviour, that He died for my sin, and that there is no other way of salvation. Compare John 6:69; Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10.

2. They had a changed life; they had clear evidence of salvation; they were going forward in a new life in Christ (Ac. 2:42).

We see in Acts 2 that those who believed on Christ had a born again conversion experience. They gave evidence of their faith by continuing steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:42). They were moving forward in a new life in Christ. They

were growing and serving. This is the example for every church throughout the age. The members must be saved and give clear evidence of it by faithfulness to the church and zeal in Christian living.

Evidence of salvation is emphasized in Scripture and must therefore be emphasized by every church. Every example of salvation is a conversion experience. See also Mt. 18:3; Joh. 3:3; 2 Co. 5:17; 2 Ti. 2:19; Tit. 2:15-16; 1 Jo 2:3-4.

3. They were baptized scripturally (Acts 2:41).

They were baptized *after* they were saved, and they were baptized *by immersion* in water as a public testimony of their faith in Christ and as a picture of the gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Compare Acts 8:38-39; Romans 6:3-4.

Steps for receiving new church members by baptism

1. A candidate for baptism must meet with the elders and give account of his salvation and his qualification to be a member. The leaders will ascertain whether the individual understands salvation and baptism properly and whether or not the individual has been born again. They will check things such as the following: Does the person understand repentance? Does he understand the gospel (1 Co. 15:1-4)? Has he repented and turned from idols and false religion (1 Th. 1:9-10)? Has he believed on Christ as Lord and Saviour (Ro. 10:9)? Does he have new life (2 Co. 5:17)? Has he testified of his salvation before his unsaved relatives and friends (Lu. 9:26)? Does he understand the biblical purpose of baptism?

2. The elders must agree unanimously as to whether to receive the candidate for baptism and membership. If there is doubt on the part of a leader, the decision should wait until there is full agreement. They can assign him further materials to read, courses to take, etc.

3. The candidate must go through the baptism course with a teacher who will be assigned to him. He must also study the church covenant. He must read each of the Scriptures that are referenced in the covenant and answer the review questions. He must agree 100% with the covenant. We want the body to be completely likeminded as God commands (1 Co. 1:10; Ro. 15:4). In order to protect our unity, we will not allow someone to join our church who works for an ecumenical organization, such as United Mission to Nepal, Campus Crusade, Youth for Christ, and Youth With A Mission. It is impossible to obey the Bible and work for such organizations. See Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Timothy 3:5; Jude 1:3. If we earnestly contend for the New Testament faith as commanded by God, it is impossible to be yoked together with ecumenical organizations that are composed of doctrinal mixed multitudes.

4. If the elders are satisfied with the candidate's testimony of salvation and qualification for church membership, they will recommend him/her to the church for baptism and membership.

5. An announcement will be made before the church at least one week before the baptism to give the members an opportunity to talk to the leaders if they have any doubts about the individual's qualification.

6. On the baptism day, the candidate will give his testimony of salvation before the congregation and will publicly agree with the church's covenant.

7. The church will receive the new member by a vote of hands.

8. After being baptized, the candidate becomes a member.

9. Every new member must go through the *One-Year Discipleship Course* with an instructor. He will be assigned a teacher, and he must make time in his schedule to meet with the teacher each week. If a member began these studies before membership, he will continue the studies afterward until the course is completed.

Steps for receiving members from another church

1. The church leaders will contact the leaders of the previous church to see if the candidate is a member in good standing.

2. The candidate must have a scriptural testimony of salvation. He must appear before the leaders and their wives and give his or her testimony and answer any questions. The leaders will ascertain whether the individual understands salvation and baptism properly and whether or not the individual has been born again. They will check things such as the following: Does the person understand repentance? Does he understand the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)? Has he repented and turned from idols and other false religions (1 Th. 1:9-10)? Has he believed on Christ as Lord and Saviour (Romans 10:9)? Has he experienced a changed life (2 Co. 5:17)? Has he testified of his salvation before his unsaved relatives and friends? (Luke 9:26)? Does he understand the biblical purpose of baptism?

3. The candidate must have a scriptural baptism. The baptism must be *after* salvation; it must be by immersion; and it must be performed by a New Testament church that has the authority to baptize. This does not mean that the church must agree with our church in all matters of doctrine and practice. It means that it is a church that has a sound gospel and a sound doctrine of Christ and other such “fundamental” doctrines of the New Testament faith so that it can be called a true church. We will not accept baptism from false groups such as the Roman Catholic Church, Mormon, Church of Christ (who teach baptismal regeneration and salvation by grace plus works), Seventh-day Adventist, or Jehovah’s Witness. We will not accept baptism from Protestant denominations that baptize infants. We will not receive members from any church that teaches that a child of God can lose his salvation, because this is a corruption of the gospel.

4. The elders must agree unanimously on the decision as to whether to receive the candidate for membership. If there is doubt on the part of a leader, the decision should wait until there is full agreement.

5. The candidate must study the church covenant. He must read each of the Scriptures that are referenced therein and take the covenant test. He must agree 100% with the covenant. We want the body to be completely likeminded (1 Co. 1:10). Someone will be assigned to help the candidate in this matter, to answer any questions, and to grade the test.

6. The candidate must fill out the application for church membership.

7. An announcement will be made before the church at least one week before the individual is received into membership. This is to give the members an opportunity to talk to the leaders if they have any doubts about the individual’s qualification.

8. On the day when the candidate is presented to the church for membership, he will give his testimony of salvation before the congregation and will publicly agree with the church’s covenant.

9. The church will receive the new member by a vote of hands.

10. After being approved, the candidate becomes a member and can take the Lord’s Supper.

11. Every new member must go through the *One-Year Discipleship Course* with an instructor, as mentioned previously.

Child Baptism Policy and Junior Church Membership

A child (meaning anyone under the age of 18) will be received for baptism after the same fashion as an adult. The child must be old enough to understand repentance and the gospel and must demonstrate a good understanding before his elders. He must testify of his repentance and faith in Christ. He must give evidence of his salvation before his parents and before the church. The child must go through the baptism class and show good understanding of biblical baptism.

The child must appear before the church leaders and their wives to give his or her testimony and to answer questions.

A child that is accepted for baptism becomes a church member, but not a full voting member. He is a Junior Member. He or she can take the Lord's Supper and participate in ministries according to his age and ability and qualifications.

At age 18, the Junior Membership will expire and he or she must seek membership under full adult privileges. He does this by approaching the leaders and giving his testimony of salvation before them. He also studies the church covenant, answers the review questions, and agrees to it 100%. If approved, he gives his testimony before the church and is received as a full member by vote of the church.

This is meant to be a check point. It is a protection for the individual and for the church. It is common for those who are baptized in childhood to later express doubt about their salvation. This gives each one an opportunity to reexamine his salvation experience to make sure that he has full assurance of faith. If he has doubts, he can settle the matter by professing repentance and faith in Christ and being baptized. It also gives the youth an opportunity to confirm his personal commitment to church membership when he reaches adulthood. Decisions made in childhood are made under adult supervision and must be reevaluated in adulthood from an adult perspective. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Standards for Workers

Standards for Elders

The standards for elders are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 11 and Tit. 1:5-9. These standards emphasize that the pastor must be blameless in his personal Christian life, in his family, and in his reputation before the community. A divorced man cannot be a pastor because he cannot be the example that he should be before the church and the community (1 Pe. 5:3). The pastor's wife and children must also serve the Lord and not have a bad reputation (1 Ti. 3:4, 5, 11; Tit. 1:6).

Standards for Deacons

The standards for deacons and their wives are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-11.

Standards for General Workers

1. *Good Christian testimony* (2 Co. 8:18). Church workers must have a good testimony so that the name of Christ and the reputation of the church are not injured. There must be a good testimony in the home, in the church, in the school, and on the job.

2. *Sound in doctrine* (1 Co. 1:10; 1 Ti. 1:3). Church workers must agree with the doctrines of the Bible as taught by the church.

3. *Faithfulness* (1 Co. 4:2; Pr. 25:19). Church workers must be faithful--faithful to the church services and required activities (Heb. 10:25), faithful to their assigned church duties, etc. If a church worker must miss a service or other required activity because of his job or some emergency, he should inform the leaders.

4. *Honest reputation* (2 Co. 8:21). Church workers must be honest in their dealings with all men and must have a reputation of honesty. The church worker must not steal, must not lie, and must pay his debts.

5. *Diligence* (2 Co. 8:22). Church workers must show diligence in their Christian lives and in their work for the Lord. A person who is lazy and half-hearted should not be involved in Christian ministry. See also Ro. 12:11; Eph. 4:28; 1 Th. 4:11; 2 Th. 3:10.

6. *Separation from the evil things of the world* (Ro. 12:2; 1 Joh. 2:15-17; Jas. 4:4). Church workers must avoid such things as unwholesome movies and television programs and YouTube, worldly things on social media, video games, using or selling liquor, and worldly partying. They should also not work in places where such things are conducted. Church workers should avoid worldly music such as cinema music, pop music, and contemporary Christian music.

7. *Godly submission to the pastor-elders* (1 Th. 5:12-13; 1 Ti. 5:17; Heb. 13:17). Pastors are not lords over the church (1 Pe. 5:1-3), but they are overseers. God has given them authority to teach the Word of God, to exhort in the way of righteousness, to lead in the fulfillment of the Great Commission, and to discipline those who err. Thus, as long as the pastors are following the Bible, the church members should submit and be a blessing to and seek for unity in the congregation. (See *Pastors, Deacons, and Church Members*, a free eBook available from www.wayoflife.org.)

8. *Modest dress*. The following are six Bible principles that teach God's people how to dress properly in this fallen world. Our church requires that the female workers dress in a modest fashion all of the time and not just when they are at church. *First, the Christian's clothing must cover the body properly and not*

expose the parts of the body which have particular sexual appeal. Isaiah 47:2 says that for a woman to bare her leg and thigh is nakedness. Thus immodest clothing would include skirts or dresses that show the leg, shorts, slit skirts that tease, low blouses, short blouses that bare the midriff, deep V-necked dresses, backless dresses, halter tops, and any modern swimsuit. Immodest clothing would also include any style that uses flimsy material that can be seen through. *Second, the Christian's clothing does not sensually accent the body.* Tight, clinging attire is as immodest as skimpy attire because the woman's figure is emphasized and accented. *Third, the Christian's clothing is not extravagant.* When the apostle deals with modest attire in 1 Timothy 2:9, he mentions "broided hair, gold, pearls, and costly array." The goal of this world's godless fashion industry is to create a haughty, ostentatious, worldly-wise look, as well as a sexual look. The godly woman will reject such fashions. This means that a godly woman would not wear excessive jewelry and makeup that would draw undue attention to herself. We must remember to "let our moderation be known unto all men" (Php. 4:5). We must dress for the Lord's glory and not our own (1 Co. 10:31). *Fourth, the Christian's clothing is to be sexually distinctive* (Ge. 1:27; De. 22:5; 1 Co. 11:14-15). The woman's attire and appearance is to be distinctively feminine and the man's distinctively masculine. The modern unisex movement is in open rebellion against Almighty God and His Word, and the Christian should have nothing to do with any fashion associated with it. We believe that this means the woman should not wear pants, because these have historically been man's apparel and it was the feminist unisex movement in the 1960s that popularized pants on women. Revolutionary fashion designers such as Mary Quant, inventor of the mini-skirt, wore pants as a sign of "woman's liberation." This also means that men should not wear long hair or earrings or anything that is feminine in appearance. *Fifth, the Christian's clothing is to be identified with holiness and godliness and not to be identified with anything that is evil* (1 Th. 5:22; Eph. 5:11). If a clothing style is clearly identified with rebellion against God's laws, with anarchy, with sexual license, with blasphemy, with idolatry, with moral decadence, or with any other evil, it should not be worn by a Christian. This would prohibit fashions, for example, that have come out of the world of punk and rap, such as long hair on men, tattoos, tight jeans on women, torn jeans, low pants, and such. This would also prohibit tattoos with their historic identification with rebellion and paganism. *Sixth, the Christian's clothing is to mark him or her as peculiar unto the Lord, as one who has been redeemed from all iniquity and who is zealous for good works* (Tit. 2:14). God's people are to be separate, peculiar, different, set apart, pilgrims, heavenly citizens in a foreign world. We must bear His stamp. We must stand out from the crowd because we are walking by heaven's light. We must not fly the world's flag. When God's people are no longer peculiar before the world they have compromised the Word of God. We must fear God more than man. We must be more concerned about pleasing God than man. We must not draw back from bearing Christ's reproach in this wicked world. He said, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mr. 8:38). Paul said that if we deny Christ, he also will deny us (2 Ti. 2:12).

USHERS

"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10).

The Usher's Qualification

The qualifications of the usher are as follows: He must be a member of the church in good standing. He must be faithful and have a good spiritual testimony in the church and in the community. He must have a respectful attitude toward the leaders. He must have a servant spirit so that he does his job diligently and cheerfully. He must be old enough and mature enough for the work. He must have the courage to enforce peace and order in the services and to confront people who are disturbing.

The Usher's Appearance

The usher is required to wear a dress type shirt and tie and have a clean, respectable appearance from head to toe.

The Usher's Duties

The usher's job is not merely to sit by the church door and watch people. He must stay alert and pay attention to his responsibilities. For this reason, we appoint enough ushers so that they can rotate every week. This way they can pay attention to the services when they are not on usher duty. The usher supervisor will set the weekly schedule.

1. Maintaining peace and quiet and good order during the services (1 Co. 14:40).

- Keep people from talking on their mobile phones. (If they go outside to talk, they should move away from the church building so they cannot be heard.)
- Help keep children quiet. Separate children who want to sit in groups. Sit them between adults. Take control of visiting children as they enter. Don't let them run in and out. If they do this more than once, do not let them back into the service.
- Don't let people in after the song service except during breaks in the service (such as after announcements). Every person who comes in late disturbs the attention of people. Let them stand or sit outside quietly without talking or otherwise making noise. This includes those who go out to the toilet etc. They have to remain outside until there is a break in the service. But the ushers must do this very kindly and explain the reason. The ushers must make sure that there are benches or chairs for men and women to sit on while they wait.
- When mothers take children out, have them take the children far enough away so they don't disturb the service.

2. Greeting the people in a friendly Christian manner.

3. Helping visitors

- Welcome visitors and help them know where to go and what to do. This involves meeting visitors at the gate if it looks like they don't know what to do. Invite them in. Be friendly. This goes for children. Tell them about the Sunday School.
- Help visitors obtain a hymnbook and find a seat with someone who can help them. Don't give hymnbooks to children or to people who can't read. They are expensive, and the church must replace those that are damaged. Watch for children who are abusing the hymnbooks.

4. Guarding

- Watch for suspicious characters that might cause trouble.
- Watch for thieves. Guard the outside of the church during the services.
- Watch for people trying to remove things from the church, such as hymnbooks.

Miscellaneous

The usher operates under the authority given to him by the church and its leaders.

The usher can get courage from God. 2 Timothy 1:17 says, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Fears are common to man, but a child of God can face his fears and receive God's power and help.

The usher must arrive at the service at least 15 minutes early to begin his work.

Special meetings require more ushers. The supervisor must plan for special meetings with the leaders and have a training session prior to the special meeting to make sure that everything is ready.

Standards for Music Personnel

1. The singers and musicians must be members of the church in good standing and must meet the church's standards for workers.
2. Singers and musicians must be faithful to and on time for everything pertaining to the music ministry, including practices. Being on time means being early enough to be in your place and fully prepared to start. If an individual is sick or otherwise predisposed, he or she must contact the leader as soon as possible.
3. Singers and musicians must maintain a humble, servant spirit, not promoting themselves, not pushing themselves forward, not pressing themselves into a ministry, not requiring that they sing/play frequently.
4. Singers and musicians must be ministers and not performers or self-seekers. "If someone compliments you on a song you played or sang, it is proper to say thank you and then to direct one's attention to the glory of God."
5. Singers and musicians must be well prepared for their part in every musical ministry in the church. Everything must be well practiced. Instruments must be tuned. Hearts must be engaged with the Lord and with the Lord's people. Last minute preparation is not acceptable. Consider the Junior/Teen instrumentalist policy for Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Brogue, Pennsylvania: "Have the hymn/arrangement approved at least one month before you are on the schedule to play, then play it for Mrs. ----- at least two weeks before you are scheduled. Please let Mrs. ----- know the source of your hymn/arrangement. We want to stay away from last minute preparation. Failure to have your music approved by and played for Mrs. ----- will result in the forfeiture of the hymn/arrangement being played and will result in not being on the special music schedule the next quarter. Mrs. ----- may take time to explain why the hymn you chose may not be the best choice. She may ask you to select a different hymn, practice more and follow up with her, and she may give you pointers on dynamics, tempo, timing, posture, etc."
6. When ministering in the services, singers and musicians must be dressed properly, clean and neat and well groomed, and must present themselves in a good manner. "Realize you are always on display when you are on the platform. Do a mirror check in between services before you come on the platform. Avoid platform distractions (talking, whispering, chewing gum, yawning, open eyes during prayer, looking angry or bored, etc.). Facial expressions and body language communicate a lot! Minimize movement to and from the platform so as to not distract from what is taking place in the service" (Chris Starr).

Standards for Church Music

The following standards are summarized and abbreviated from “Biblical Principles of Music” in *Church Music Standards and Training Course* (www.wayoflife.org). See “Biblical Principles of Music” for the full teaching on these points and references to further explanation and training. This course also includes suggested resources for further training on the music issue.

The churches need to train the people in music so well that they can test it by biblical standards. They must be able to discern such things as soft rock, honky-tonk, dance rhythms, chords as used in CCM, and worldly vocal styles.

It is not enough to publish a list of unacceptable music. Such lists are helpful, but any list will be obsolete in a short time. Further, no list is exhaustive.

The music must be sound in doctrine (Col. 3:16).

The words of the songs must be theologically sound according to the teaching of the Bible. A great deal of Contemporary Christian Music is unacceptable because it represents ecumenical charismatic doctrine or it presents a vague message that lacks doctrinal clarity and strength.

God’s people must weigh every song and hymn by the absolute standard of God’s Word. Just because a song is in a good hymnbook doesn’t mean that it is sound theologically. Just because it has a pleasant tune and people like it doesn’t mean that it is acceptable.

We want more than just theological soundness, we want theological depth. We want richness of truth that will edify deeply and broadly. The lyrics must be examined carefully to make sure that we are not singing heresy and also that we are not singing vapid, emotional, sweet nothings. This is why we avoid shallow Southern Gospel songs such as “I’ll Fly Away,” “Just a Little Talk with Jesus,” “Step into the Water,” “There’s a Rainbow,” and “My God Is Real.” The Stamps-Baxter hymns were typically characterized by biblical shallowness, if not outright heresy. This is also why we don’t want only a diet of revivalist songs. These were geared for a mixed-multitude evangelistic forum, such as those written by Ira Sankey for D.L. Moody crusades, and therefore lack depth. “Sankey’s songs were simple and direct, appealing to the heart and leading to a decision.” Examples are “Tell Me the Old Old Story,” “There’ll Be No Dark Valley,” “Throw out the Life Line,” “Wonderful Words of Life,” “I Need Thee Every Hour,” “The Cleansing Fountain,” “Faith Is the Victory,” and “Trusting Jesus.” The *Sword of the Lord’s Soul Stirring Songs and Hymns* is in the Sankey revivalist tradition. These are all good hymns and have their place, but there is also a need for hymns of greater spiritual and doctrinal depth to challenge the people and better educate them and to build them up to a higher level.

“Godly music is word-enriched and loaded with sound doctrine. Godly music packages Bible doctrines in memorable format” (Chris Starr).

The music must emphasize “melody” (Eph. 5:19).

Melody is the simplest part of music. It is the basic tune. It is the part that can be sung and hummed and whistled.

A good melody reinforces the words and helps God’s people remember the words and edify themselves with the words all during their days.

By emphasizing melody, God’s Word is teaching us to keep the music simple so that it doesn’t distract from the message of the words. There should be a good singable melody and the rest of the music

should never overwhelm the melody. The music must never become so complicated or harmonic or loud that it drowns out the simple melody. In sacred music, a simple musical arrangement is superior to an overly complicated one.

The music must be spiritual and non-worldly in sound (Ro. 12:2; Eph. 4:17-19; 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 4:4; 1 Pe. 2:11; 1 Jo. 2:15-16).

“Spiritual” means set apart for God, different from the world. Spiritual is that which is under the control of the Spirit of God, as explained in the verse previous to Ephesians 5:19. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” Spiritual is the opposite of carnal, fleshly. “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.” Spiritual is the opposite of the unfruitful works of darkness that are mentioned in Ephesians 5:11. Spiritual is the opposite of worldliness.

Paul is saying that God’s people are to sing songs that are holy, that are sacred, that are set apart for God, that are not carnal and fleshly, that are different in quality from the songs of the world, that are morally pure, that are of a heavenly flavor rather than a worldly.

The church’s music will not sound like the world’s pop music and the music that the world uses for dancing and drinking and partying. The music of a holy God should contain no aspect of the world’s sensual ways.

Some styles of music that we purposefully avoid are dance syncopation (e.g., the backbeat, beat anticipation), honky-tonk styles (ragtime, boogie woogie, etc., that are popular in Southern Gospel), sensual vocal styles (e.g., scooping, sliding, breathiness, vocal fry), soft, overly emotional styles that are created by the wrong use of chords (e.g., unresolving chord cadences). The “soft sound” that weakens the power, dynamism, majesty, spiritual conviction, and militarism of sacred music.

We avoid the use of drums and electric guitars, because they are so totally identified with rock music and so easily used in a pop music fashion. (An exception is the use of drums in a timpani section of an orchestra.) (We must realize, of course, that rock can be played easily on a piano or an acoustic guitar.)

See “The Language of Music Styles” for a basic education on how to judge styles of music. This is one segment of *The Satanic Attack on Sacred Music*, a video series available at www.wayoflife.org.

The music must edify (1 Co. 14:26).

“Edify” means to build up in the faith by means of hearing and understanding the truth of God’s Word.

All things being done unto edification means that sacred music must emphasize the message. The message must be clear so that it speaks to the people’s minds and hearts and thus edifies. Nothing must be allowed to detract from this. The musical instruments can be too loud and drown out the message. The music can also be so complex that it hinders the message. If the harmonies, for example, are so complex that the message is not clear, that is not good sacred music.

All things being done unto edification means there is no place for entertainment in sacred music. We want to purposefully and emphatically avoid anything that speaks of entertainment. This is why we do not applaud special music. This is why we don’t use sensual vocal techniques that draw attention to the singer (scooping, sliding, breathiness, vocal fry). This is why we don’t use video cameras to spotlight the singers and musicians and highlight them on video screens. These things are the way of performance and entertainment, not the way of true worship. It is carnally distracting.

All things being done unto edification means that each song should be selected because of its message. If the message is theologically wrong (e.g., “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”) or weak (e.g., “Church in the Wildwood”), there is no edification.

The music must not produce a charismatic style mystical experience (“be sober,” 1 Peter 1:13; 5:8).

Contemporary worship music is designed to create an emotional experience, a sensual experience, as opposed to a sacred music style that edifies through the understanding. Toward this end, contemporary musicians use music with sensual dance rhythms, non-resolving chord cadences, repetition, electronic modulation, and other elements so that people will get carried away emotionally.

We reject any church music that is designed to create a highly emotional state or that produces any sort of hypnotic effect.

The music must not borrow from and thus build bridges to the world of contemporary Christian music (Ro. 16:17-18; 1 Co. 10:21; 15:33; 2 Co. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 Ti. 3:5; Re. 18:4).

Contemporary Christian Music is a major element of building the apostate one-world church and represents this world with all of its doctrinal, spiritual, and moral dangers.

In former times, God’s people were not in much danger of being influenced by the authors of songs and hymns. But the internet has changed that dramatically. Now if a song is sung in a church, the people can go online and find the author and communicate quite intimately with him or her and his associates and his “world.”

We reject any music that is written by contemporary musicians in order to avoid building bridges to these people and to their associates and to the dangerous ecumenical world that they represent.

The music must aim for excellence (Php. 1:10; 1 Co. 10:31).

Everything about the church’s music must be done on purpose, with biblical and spiritual wisdom, always aiming for the very best, the very highest, never satisfied with mediocrity, progressing in excellence. This is not for the glory of man, but for the glory of God.

We will aim for excellence in the standards for singers and musicians, in the selection of every song and hymn, in the conducting of every aspect of the song service, and in the quality of the singing and playing.

The music must be unquestionably right and safe (1 Th. 5:21-22).

To hold fast only that which is good, avoiding even the very appearance of evil is the highest possible standard for music. The standard is not just the bare minimum, not mediocrity, not borderline, not questionable in any way.

This is one reason why we avoid the use of drums and electric guitars. Even if they are used to play the right kind of sound, they are too intimately identified with rock music, and we want to avoid all such identity.

This is our fundamental music standard. If a song or hymn is questionable, we want to avoid it. If we aren’t sure if it is right, sound, and healthy, we want to avoid it. There is a wealth of unquestionably sound, doctrinally correct, spiritual, non-worldly, non-charismatic music. To avoid a piece of questionable music never harms a church, but using questionable music can definitely bring harm.

This is the standard of wisdom and safety.

The music must avoid incrementalism (1 Co. 5:6; Gal. 5:9).

When it comes to church music, little can be big. The wrong music usually enters a church gradually, not overnight. One way it enters is through specials, choruses, and youth ministries. When this happens, the church is doomed to continue moving away from spiritual and toward contemporary unless there is a dramatic move to stop the progression, which rarely happens.

The music must be overseen by the pastors (Ac. 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pe. 5:2).

The pastors will oversee the music themselves and/or they will appoint the *right people* to be in charge of the church's music. They will approve all special music.

Church Finances

Miscellaneous Lessons

The following are some important lessons from the Bible about the church's finances:

1. The church's work should be supported by the tithes and offerings of the members and not by worldly means such as investments or operating businesses (Mal. 3:10; 1 Co. 16:1-2). Tithing was practiced by Abraham before the law (Ge. 14:20). God has promised to bless those who give (Lu. 6:38; 2 Co. 9:6-8).
2. The tithes and offerings belong to the Lord (Mal. 3:10). This means that when people give to the church, they are not giving to men but to God. Church members must not think that the church money is their own money; it is the Lord's. The finances must be used prayerfully and wisely according to God's will. No one can borrow from the church money, because the money is only for the Lord's business and should never be used for private purposes.
3. The church should not seek help from the unsaved for the Lord's work (3 Jo. 7; Ge. 14:21-23; 2 Ki. 5:15-16).
4. Our church has two offering boxes for the church members to use. This way we do not have to take up offerings during the regular services when visitors are present. Also, we want each church member to plan his giving and to give to the Lord purposefully instead of merely giving something as the offering is passed.
5. Only men with a good Christian reputation should handle the money ("honest report" Acts 6:3; 2 Co. 8:18-19).
6. The money must be handled in a careful and honest manner (2 Co. 8:20-21). This means that everything must be done openly and honestly. The counting of the money must be done by at least two men. Good records must be kept. Regular reports must be given to the church members so everyone understands how the money is being used. If a question is raised by a church member about the use of the finances, the leaders must give an answer.
7. Major decisions about finances should be made by the elders and church members working together (Ac. 6:1-6). This is the example we see when the first deacons were selected. The elders gave the instructions and set the standards (vv. 3-4); the church made the selection (v. 5); then the elders conducted the ordination (v. 6). This is a good example for how major decisions can be made in a church. (See the section on "Church Business Meetings.")
8. The leaders cannot spend more than Rs. 10,000 without a church vote.
9. The leaders are stewards and will give an account unto God; they must therefore be very careful about how the money is handled (1 Co. 3:9-15; 4:1-2; Jas. 3:1; 1 Pe. 5:1-5).
10. The church should support elders that labor in the Word and doctrine (1 Co. 9:13-14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Ti. 5:17-18). It should not support lazy men or men who spend much of their time in secular business.
11. The main work of the church is to fulfill the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20; Mr. 16:15; Ac. 1:8). This means the main use of the church money is for preaching the gospel, teaching the Bible, and planting new churches. The church should support church planters and preachers (Php. 4:15-19; Tit. 3:12-13; 3 Jo. 5-8). When Paul said he was "brought on the way" by the churches, he was saying that they helped him (Ro. 15:24; 1 Co. 16:5-6; 2 Co. 1:16).

12. The church finance secretary and helpers will be chosen by the leaders and approved by church vote.

13. Three church men will be signers on the church bank accounts. They will be chosen by the leaders and approved by church vote.

14. Every individual who handles the church finances must have a reputation of being faithful, diligent, and honest. See 2 Corinthians 8:18-22.

15. Every individual who handles the church finances must sign the “Church Finance Worker’s Agreement.”

Church Finance Worker’s Agreement

I recognize that I am handling the Lord’s money which has been given to Sangati Church which is under the leadership of Brother Cloud, the church’s founder under God.

I will fulfill my duties in an honest way before God and man according to 2 Corinthians 8:21. “Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

I will conduct my business in handling the church finances in harmony with the church leaders.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Church Business Meetings

Normally, the church business meetings will be held during the monthly Lord's Supper.

The meeting will be brought to order by a church leader and begin with prayer.

The business of the meeting will be recorded by a person appointed by the church.

New items of business will be proposed by the leaders.

If a church member wants to propose an item of business, he must present it to the leaders beforehand for their approval.

All items of business must be in accordance with God's Word.

Opportunity for discussion will be given for each item of business. The women can participate in the discussion, either by speaking or by writing a note that the leaders will read for them. This is spiritual business, and we want to conduct it in a spiritual way. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31). If an individual acts in a carnal, angry, divisive way, he will not be allowed to participate in the church business.

Voting on items of business will occur at the next business meeting to give people an opportunity for prayer and further consideration. If the leaders consider the matter to be urgent, they can call for an earlier vote, depending on the situation and the need. Normally, though, we want to give the people opportunity to prayerfully consider each matter.

Voting will be by paper ballot. Each member will write "yes" or "no" on a piece of paper. If the individual cannot write, he can write an X for no or ✓ (tick mark) for yes.

To pass a vote, a quorum of 75% of the voting members must be present. And at least 75% of those present must approve the matter.

Church Discipline

Bible discipline is training and chastening with the goal of conforming the church and its individual members to the will of God. It involves teaching, encouragement, correction and reproof, punishment when required, and restoration. Church discipline involves everything necessary to keep a church pure before God (1 Co. 5:7-8). Discipline is a matter of love—love for God, love for holiness, love for the truth, love for Christ's testimony in the church, love for the brethren, and love for the unsaved who are observing the church's testimony.

The Goals of Church Discipline

1. To protect the purity of the church, to keep it from being permeated with sin and false doctrine (1 Co. 5:6-8). The passover pictured salvation through faith in Christ's blood, and the feast of unleavened bread pictured putting sin out of the Christian life.

Both of these passages are written in the context of church discipline. In fact, the very epistles themselves (1 Corinthians and Galatians) are examples of the process of church discipline. The apostle was writing to correct sin and error; he was teaching, pleading, rebuking, warning. All of these things are involved in church discipline. Sin and false teaching are called "leaven," because if moral and doctrinal impurities are not corrected and removed from the assembly, they will permeate the body and destroy the church. Unrepentant sin and false teaching cannot be ignored in the vain hope that the problem will somehow disappear on its own. It must be dealt with in a biblical fashion.

2. To maintain a good testimony before the unbelieving community (Php. 2:14-15; 1 Pe. 2:9-12).

3. To keep the church ready for Christ's return (Tit. 2:11-15). We are warned that those who do not remain pure and ready for Christ's appearing will be ashamed when He comes (1 Joh. 2:28).

4. To please and glorify the Lord. In Tit. 2:14 we learn that a pure church pleases the Lord because this was His purpose in our redemption. In 1 Peter 2:9, 11-12 we see that a pure church is a praise and glory to the Lord.

5. To restore erring church members (1 Co. 5:5; 2 Co. 2:6-8). As we exercise church discipline, we must ever keep in mind that our goal is not to harm people, but to help them. Even when a member must be expelled from the assembly, the ultimate goal is to see that one restored.

6. To restrain sin (De. 13:11; 17:12-13; 19:18-20; Ac. 5:1-11; 1 Ti. 5:20). "It would be ideal if men could be encouraged to live godly lives without any warning of judgment upon ungodliness. But to suppose they will do so is idealistic and contrary to all observation, as well as to Scripture. God warns of impending judgment and says, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Heb. 10:31). 'Because there is wrath, beware...' (Job 36:18). If sin goes unjudged in a church, we are thereby inviting others to become self-indulgent. It will not do to plead 'love' as a basis for neglect. ... God does not put love and punishment in opposition to each other. He says, 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...' (Heb. 12:5-11). The church has a solemn responsibility to restrain sin by proper discipline. If we do not exercise the judgment, the Lord will (1 Co. 11:31-32)" (Paul R. Jackson, *The Doctrine and Administration of the Church*).

The Right Attitude of Discipline

God's people must be careful to maintain the proper attitude when dealing with sinning Christians and not to give place to the devil.

1. The attitude of humility (Gal. 6:1)
2. The attitude of impartiality (De. 1:17; 1 Ti. 5:21)
3. The attitude of compassion (2 Co. 7:12)
4. The attitude of mourning (2 Co. 2:4)
5. The attitude of firmness of purpose (1 Co. 5:3-5, 13)

The Patience and Wisdom for Discipline

Church discipline requires patience and much godly wisdom. Each situation is different. There are general biblical principles, as we will see, but the application of these principles requires the Lord's wisdom. He alone knows the hearts. The church and all of its members belong to Him. The under-shepherds must constantly obtain wisdom from the Great Shepherd. If they are ready to receive, He is ready to give, and each situation will have the necessary wisdom and power and blessing.

“Discipline calls for discernment. Paul writes, ‘Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*’ (1 Th. 5:14). We should not encourage the unruly, but admonish them. We should not admonish the fainthearted or weak, but encourage and help them. Sometimes, a newer believer is in sin due to ignorance of God's Word. He is weak. But, if he continues defiantly in the sin after you show him what the Word says, he then becomes unruly. I find the analogy of child rearing helpful here. If my three-year-old was acting like a three-year-old, I tried to help him learn how to behave in a more mature manner. But I didn't discipline him for being three. But when your three-year-old is defiant, you must deal with his rebellion. If a believer is overcome by a sin, but is repentant and wants help, you help him. But if he says, ‘I have a right to do as I please,’ he is defiant and needs discipline” (Steven Cole, “Dealing with Sinning Christians,” Aug. 13, 2006, Bible.org).

The Authority for Discipline

See 1 Corinthians 5:4 and Matthew 18:18-19. Dismissing someone from the church is not an easy matter. There are often many doubts and fears. Will it hurt the church? Has everything possible been done to correct the problem in other ways? Do we have the right attitude? Will some protest and sympathize with the offender? How will the erring one(s) react? How will his or her friends or relatives react?

I know of a church that had to discipline a member for marrying an unsaved man; and the offending party's mother and sister sided with her and all of them left the church. This is very common. The power of God is needed in exercising church discipline, and the Bible promises that His power and blessing will be available when His people are earnestly trying to walk in obedience to Him.

Discipline of Interpersonal Problems

The discipline of problems between church members is dealt with very clearly in Matthew 5 and 18.

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Mt. 5:23-24).

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt. 18:15-18).

“There are two commands of Christ, which, if faithfully obeyed, would in almost every instance prevent personal offences from assuming such form and magnitude as to require church action” (J.M. Pendleton, *Church Manual Designed for the Use of Baptist Churches*, 1867).

Note that God is very concerned about interpersonal relationships. Maintaining right relationships lies at the heart of loving my neighbor as myself, which is the second great commandment (Mt. 22:36-40). This is so important to God that He commands His people to put it before worship (Mt. 5:23-24).

The objective is to clear up problems and achieve reconciliation and spiritual harmony - “first be reconciled to thy brother” (Mt. 5:24), “if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Mt. 18:15). “If this is not his purpose, he violated the spirit of Christ’s law though he may obey it in the letter” (Pendleton).

Following are the practical steps in dealing with interpersonal problems in the church:

First, the matter should be discussed privately between the two church members (“go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone,” Mt. 18:15).

- The Scripture puts the responsibility of reconciliation equally upon both parties. In Matthew 5, the case is when a brother realizes that another brother has something against him, whether legitimate or not. In Matthew 18, the case is when a brother has trespassed against me. “The offended brother is not to wait till the offender goes to him and seeks reconciliation” (Pendleton).
- The individual who takes the initiative should go not only to confront the other person but also to listen. Oftentimes the problem lies in misunderstanding and lack of information.
- The individual who takes the initiative should go personally to the other person rather than writing a note or sending a text. A face to face interview is what is needed.

Second, if this doesn’t solve the problem, the injured brother should take one or two others (Mt. 18:16). These witnesses should be wise and spiritual people, not just people who are close friends of the brother.

Third, if that doesn’t solve the problem, the matter should be brought before the church (Mt. 18:17). Even here, there is still opportunity for reconciliation.

Fourth, if the trespasser refuses to hear the church, he is to be disciplined (Mt. 18:17).

What does it mean “let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican”?

It doesn’t mean never to speak with him or to forbid him to attend church. The unsaved are not forbidden to do such things.

- It means that the church member that is under discipline is not allowed to serve in a church ministry or to participate in church business and ordinances (such as taking the Lord’s Supper). The heathen or unsaved are not allowed to do these things.
- It means that the offender is not to be allowed to participate in the close fellowship that is normal between church members. This is for the purpose of making the offender ashamed. “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed” (2 Th. 3:14)

“If individual members act contrary to this rule, and carry on freely toward an offender, as if nothing had taken place, it will render the censure of the church of none effect. Those persons also who behave in this manner will be considered by the party as his friends, and others who stand aloof as his enemies, or at least as being unreasonably severe; which will work confusion, and render void the best and most wholesome discipline. We must act in concert, or we may as well do nothing. Members who violate this rule are

partakers of other men's sins, and deserve the rebukes of the church for counteracting its measures" (Andrew Fuller, *Works*, vol. III, pp. 334-335).

The seriousness of church business is seen here (Mt. 18:18). Men often take the church and its business lightly, but God doesn't. Compare 1 Co. 3:17; Heb. 10:25 and 13:17.

The "binding" does not pertain to a person's eternal destiny but to his earthly life.

Discipline of Disorderly Conduct

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 calls for separation from a church member that seems to fall short of excluding. One difference is that the 2 Thessalonians 3 offender is not turned over to the devil as in 1 Corinthians 5.

The context of 2 Thessalonians 3 is a church member who is engaged in disorderly conduct such as refusing to work and being a busybody in the affairs of others (1 Th. 3:6-15).

We believe this principle applies to other cases of refusing to obey the Word of God that fall short of 1 Corinthians 5 discipline. It would seem preposterous to think that churches are to discipline members who refuse to work while ignoring other types of cases. Another example is a young widow who is idle and a busybody (1 Ti. 5:11-14).

The old Baptists called this type of discipline "suspension." It entails removing the individual from the fellowship and not allowing him to partake of the Lord's Supper or participate in church ministry or business until he repents.

Discipline of Public and Grave Offenses

Excommunication is required for certain types of sins, particularly those of a public and grave nature. This is dealt with in 1 Corinthians 5:11.

The nature of the sin that calls for this type of church discipline is as follows:

It is public sin (1 Co. 5:1 -- "it is commonly reported").

It is grave sin (1 Co. 5:11). The six categories of sins are immorality, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, and extortion.

Fornication. This is a broad term for sexual sins. It refers to fornication outside out of marriage (1 Co. 7:2); adultery within marriage (Mt. 5:32). It is likened to "concupiscence" in 1 Th. 4:3-5, which refers more particularly to the lusting aspect of sexual impurity. A believer would be a fornicator, therefore, who engages in such things as homosexuality, incest, rape, bestiality, and the use of pornography.

Covetousness.

Covetousness is to be greedy. Covetousness is to desire that which is not mine, to desire that which is forbidden (Ex. 20:17; De. 5:21; Achan, Jos. 7:21).

Covetousness is to obtain things by oppressing others; cheating, stealing, borrowing and not paying back (Pr. 28:16; Mic. 2:2). Government officials and legal officials cheat because they are covetous. Covetousness is to love and pursue money instead of pursuing the will of God (1 Ti. 6:6-11). It is to make money and possessions the focus of one's life (Lu. 12:15-21). The person who borrows money and does not pay back is covetous. The man who puts his business before God is covetous.

Idolatry. This refers to worshipping idols or to putting some material possession or pleasure in the place of God and to bestow upon it the love and devotion that belongs to God alone. The first law is to love God with all the heart, soul, and strength (De. 6:5).

Railing. This means to heap abuse upon another, to revile. The same Greek word (*loidoros*) is translated “reviler” in 1 Co. 6:10. Calling people names like fool, pig, dog. Christ wants His people to love one another, so He hates this type of thing and will not allow it in His kingdom (Mt. 5:21-26).

Drunkenness. To be intoxicated with foreign substances, either by alcohol or drugs. We believe that this sin also involves selling liquor, because he contributes to and is a party to drunkenness (Hab. 2:15).

Extortion. This is the act of taking things from others by means of force. It refers to cheating, blackmailing, kidnapping, requiring bribes, unjust or unauthorized taxation (e.g., the publicans). See Ps. 109:11; Eze. 22:12. The person who works in government or police or courts in a corrupt nation is particularly tempted to commit this sin.

It is sin that would destroy the church if ignored (1 Co. 5:6). There will always be sin of one sort or another in a church that is populated by sinners, but there are some sins that have the ability to destroy the church if left alone.

If such a sin becomes known to the leaders, it is important that they investigate the matter thoroughly and not act on partial facts and hearsay. The leaders can appoint mature deacons or other mature church members to help conduct the investigation.

When the church is satisfied that it has all of the relevant facts, it can take one of several actions.

- First, they can find the accused innocent and dismiss the charges.
- Second, they can rebuke the offender, receive his confession of repentance, and forgive him without further action.
- Third, they can give the individual time to reflect on his sin and give the church time to pray for him.
- Fourth, they can decide to put the offender under discipline according to 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5, 13. This is called exclusion.

Exclusion means the following:

1. The excluded one is turned over to Satan (1 Co. 5:5). This refers to turning the unrepentant offender over to Satan’s domain, the world, and over to Satan’s power for chastisement. Compare Lu. 22:31-32; 13:16.
2. The excluded person cannot hold a ministry or participate in church business.
3. The members should not have close fellowship with the excluded person so that he will be ashamed and brought to repentance (1 Co. 5:11; 2 Th. 3:14).
4. The offender is not allowed to partake in the Lord’s Supper (1 Co. 5:11). The eating in this verse probably refers both to personal social eating and to eating the Lord’s Supper (1 Co. 11:26, 29).
5. The members should pray much for the individual that he will repent and should take every opportunity to exhort him to do this.

Restoration

When the excluded individual seeks restoration, the church tries to determine whether the repentance is sincere. They look for ready, hearty, and full admission of guilt. They look for admission of and naming of the specific sins they committed, as opposed to merely saying, “I’m sorry,” or, “I’m sorry for what I did.” If the individual is blaming others and otherwise making excuse for his sin, this is not true repentance. See 2 Corinthians 7:11 for a description of true repentance.

See also David’s repentance in Psalm 51:3-6.

Those who show genuine repentance should be forgiven and restored (2 Co. 2:7).

Sometimes it is wise to put the individual on probation. During probation the individual is required to show repentance for a determined period of time. Old Baptist churches expected a longer period of probation for “sins that were especially grave or involved deceit.”

Forgiveness and restoration to church membership does not mean there are no abiding consequences to sin and that things can necessarily return to the way they were before the sin. If a pastor commits adultery, for example, we believe that he should never again hold the office of a pastor. If a girl runs off with a boy and commits fornication, she can never regain her virginity. There are many consequences to sin in this present life. We think of David. Though he repented deeply of his sin as recorded in Psalm 51 and was forgiven, he suffered consequences for the rest of his life.

Discipline of False Teachers

The apostle Paul warned the leaders at the church in Ephesus that false teaching would come from without and from within (Ac. 20:20-21). This is even more applicable in these closing days of the church age, days of great apostasy and of serious compromise even among those who claim to be Bible-believers. We must be constantly alert to this danger and deal with every false doctrine which reveals itself within the assembly (Ep. 4:11-14).

The discipline of heretics (those who have chosen to cleave to a false teaching) is described in Tit. 3:9-11.

The terms “heretic” and “heresy” refer to the willful choice of false doctrine, a willful alignment with error.

A heretic is not a person who is merely ignorant of sound doctrine. If the heresy is a matter of ignorance on the part of a true believer, the individual will respond to the truth and turn from it. I know a pastor who was saved out of a hippie lifestyle and went to Bible college only a few months after he was saved. Soon after arriving he saw a book in the bookstore entitled “Was Jesus God?” and in his mind he said, “Of course, Jesus wasn’t God!” But this great heresy was only an ignorance problem, and as soon as he was taught about Christ’s deity he readily accepted it.

The heretic is to be admonished two times (Tit. 3:10). An effort is to be made to reclaim the heretic from his error. It is possible that he is not truly a heretic but that he is only teaching out of ignorance.

But the heretic is to be admonished *only* two times (Tit. 3:10). We are not instructed to get involved in endless efforts to win heretics to the truth. When it is obvious that a person is set in his false ways, he must be rejected and put out of the assembly.

The heretic condemns himself by his self-willed commitment to error (Tit. 3:11). There is something wrong in the heretic’s heart. “Subverted” is from the Greek word “ekstrepho,” which means to be twisted or turned inside out. Something has perverted the person’s heart so that he is not willing to hear the truth.

Discipline of Church Leaders

1 Timothy 5:19-22

Pastors/elders are members of the church body, and they should be subject to discipline just as other members are. In addition to the things we have stated above about discipline, which would apply to any

church member including a pastor, there are some important lessons in 1 Timothy 5:19-22 about the discipline of church leaders in particular:

1. It is essential that the church be very cautious about selecting and ordaining pastors (1 Ti. 5:22). This is the first step in keeping the church pure. Haste and carelessness in ordaining pastors will result in injury to the work of God. If the church is careful to ordain only godly, scripturally qualified men who have proven themselves, it will rarely need to go through the heartache of trying to discipline an erring pastor.
2. Accusations must not be received against a pastor unless they can be substantiated by two or three witnesses (1 Ti. 5:19). This principle was a part of the law of Moses (De. 19:15). See also Mt. 18:16 and 2 Co. 13:1. This protects the elder from false accusations by disgruntled people who want to hurt him and/or the church.
3. Pastors that sin in such a manner that requires discipline should be rebuked publicly (1 Ti. 5:20). This action would be occasioned by the type of sins listed in 1 Co. 5:11.
4. God's people are charged not to show partiality in these things (1 Ti. 5:21).

Inactive Membership

According to Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Hebrews 10:25, God requires that church members be faithful to the services, and that is what our church requires. The church's job is to build up and protect every one of the members (Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:28), but this is not possible if the members aren't faithful. The church is a body and each member has an important part in the body (1 Co. 12:27), and it is impossible to carry on the Lord's business unless the members are present. Therefore, members must faithfully attend the services, including the men's meeting on Saturday and the mid-week prayer meetings.

If an individual ceases to be faithful, the church leaders or those appointed by the leaders will meet with him and try to restore him. Each case will be dealt with individually, and the leaders will consider such things as the person's health, age, distance from the meeting places, and family situation (for example, a young person with unbelieving parents or a wife with an unbelieving husband). Exceptions will be made for those who are truly unable to attend all of the services. The leaders will try to determine the state of the individual's spiritual life and whether or not his heart is right in this matter. They want to see whether the individual desires to be faithful but is hindered in some justifiable way or whether the individual simply *refuses* to be faithful. The process of dealing with those who aren't completely faithful will take as long as the leaders deem necessary.

If an individual continues to be unfaithful in a willful manner without a proper excuse, he will be put on the inactive membership roll and cannot participate in the Lord's Supper and business meetings. For another four months, the church leaders will continue to try to restore the individual to faithfulness. If that is unsuccessful, he or she will be removed from the membership.

If a member goes overseas without permission from the leaders, he will be automatically put out of the membership. (See the report "Going Overseas to Work.")

To be restored to membership, the individual must confess his sin of unfaithfulness before the church and show true repentance. He must prove his faithfulness for some time before he is re-admitted to membership.

Inactive Membership Letter

Date _____

Name _____

This is to inform you that you have been placed on Inactive Membership status.

This is because of your failure to be faithful as you promised when you joined the church.

While on Inactive Membership status, you cannot participate in the Lord's Supper or in church business.

We urge you to repent of your unfaithfulness and to return to faithful church attendance. We are praying for that and longing for that.

If you do not change your ways within the next four months, your name will be removed from the membership of Sangati Baptist Church. You will be welcome to re-apply for membership when you meet the biblical standards of Acts 2:41-42; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, etc.

Love in Christ,

Leaders of Sangati Baptist Church

Review Questions on the Church Covenant

1. What year did Fellowship Baptist Church start?
2. Who were the founders of the church?
3. What verse says that the church should be perfectly joined together in the same mind?
4. What are the five goals of this church?
5. The people that Jesus described in Matthew 7:21-23 do many works, but what is missing in their lives?
6. John 2:23-25 says some people “believed” in Jesus, but He did not commit Himself to them, meaning they were not saved. What were they believing?
7. In Acts 8, Simon “believed” in Jesus but he was not saved. What was his motive in “believing”?
8. In what book and chapter of the Bible do we find the first church members?
9. What two things were required for membership in the first church?
10. What produces repentance?
11. In what book and chapter did Christ preach “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”?
12. In what verse did Paul preach repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ?
13. What are the two examples of repentance that we give in the church covenant?
14. In John 6:69, what testimony did Peter give about Jesus?
15. In Acts 8:38-39, what did Philip tell the Ethiopian that he must do before he could be baptized?
16. Romans 10:9 says that to be saved I must confess with the mouth what and believe in the heart what?
17. In Acts 2, what evidence do we see that the people who believed on Christ were saved?
18. What Bible course is required for every new church member?
19. If a person under age 18 is baptized, what kind of church member does he become?
20. At age 18, he must do what?
21. God’s standards for church leaders are found in what two chapters of the Bible?
22. God’s standards for deacons are found in what chapter?
23. What verse contains the standards for the wife of a church leader or deacon?
24. What are the eight standards that this church requires for workers in general?
25. What verse says it is required in stewards that a man must be found faithful?
26. What verse says that confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth?
27. What verse says “not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together”?
28. 1 John 2:16 describes the world in what three ways?
29. What verse says “be not conformed to this world”?
30. In your own words, what does this mean?
31. What verse says “whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”?
32. In your own words, what does this mean?
33. What book and chapter instructs the woman to wear modest apparel?
34. According to this passage, what two words describe the character of the modest Christian woman?
35. What book and chapter says that the church members are to esteem the leaders very highly in love for their work’s sake?
36. What book and chapter instructs the church members to obey them that have the rule over them?
37. What are the four standards for church music in our covenant?
38. What verse says “Give, and it shall be given unto you”?
39. What book and chapter describes the requirement that men who handle the finances have an “honest report”?
40. What book and chapter says the church should provide for honest things in the sight of men?
41. What are the six goals of church discipline?
42. In 1 Corinthians 5:11, what are six types of people who are to be disciplined by the church?
43. In Matthew 18:15-20, what are the two next steps that are to be taken if a brother trespasses against you and refuses to hear you?
44. In Matthew 18:15-20, what is to be done if the trespasser refuses to hear the church?

45. According to 1 Timothy 5:19, accusations cannot be brought against an elder without what?
46. What happens to a church members if he stops being faithful to the services?
47. We give 12 reasons why our church members should not go overseas to work. In your opinion, what are the four most important reasons?

Application for Church Membership

It is my desire to be received into membership of Sangati Church. I cheerfully accept and agree with the church's doctrine and covenant.

I am seeking membership of my own free will, and nobody is forcing me or enticing me with gifts.

In assuming this membership, I agree to be loyal to the interests of this church, to seek its purity and prosperity, to be faithful to its services and conferences, to be an obedient, fruitful disciple of Jesus Christ, to do some definite Christian work, to be subject to the discipline of the church, and to contribute to its support as the Lord prospers me.

If at any time I find myself out of harmony with the church doctrines or covenant and if the problem cannot be resolved in conference with the leaders, I hereby authorize the church to drop me from the membership.

Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Why I Want to Be a Member of Sangati Church (in my own words)

Major False Doctrines

Following are some major false doctrines that are dangers to this church. We include this study in our church covenant for three reasons. First, this study is for protection so that false doctrines do not come into the church. Second, this study is for unity. We want to have one mind (1 Corinthians 1:10) and one faith (Jude 1:3). Third, this study is for education. By looking up all of the verses and answering the review questions, the church members will be educated in doctrine.

Bible Facts about False Teachers

The Bible has many warnings about false teachers. It is not a small issue that can be ignored.

1. The Lord Jesus warned about false teachers (Mt. 7:15-17).
2. Paul warned about false teachers (Acts 20:29-30; 2 Co. 11:1-4; 2 Ti. 3:13; 2 Ti. 4:3-4).
3. Peter warned about false teachers and said that many will follow them (2 Pe. 2:1-2).
4. John warned about false teachers (1 Jo. 2:18-20; 2 Jo. 1:7-11).
5. Jude warned about false teachers (Jude 1:3-4).

Bible Facts about the Importance of Sound Doctrine

1. The Bible is given for doctrine (2 Ti. 3:16-17).
2. We are to continue in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42).
3. Preachers are to give themselves to doctrine (1 Ti. 4:13).
4. No false doctrine is to be allowed (1 Ti. 1:3).
5. Our doctrine is to be uncorrupt (Tit. 2:7).
6. We are to separate from false doctrine (Ro. 16:17).

Can We Know Sound Doctrine for Sure?

1. Christ promised that we can know sound doctrine for sure if we continue in the Word and if we are willing to obey (Joh. 7:17; 8:31-32).
2. Paul taught that we can know sound doctrine if we study God's Word diligently and learn to rightly divided it (2 Ti. 2:15).

Common False Doctrines

The false teaching that salvation is by grace plus works (Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Christ, Roman Catholic Church)

Bible Answer:

1. The Bible says salvation is by grace without works and that works follow after salvation (Ro. 4:1-6; Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 3:4-8).
2. The Bible says that grace and works cannot be mixed together (Ro. 11:6).
3. Grace means a free gift. Salvation is called a gift 16 times in the New Testament. If salvation requires some works, then it is not a true gift. The gift of God is free for the sinner because Jesus Christ purchased it at great price with His blood and death on the cross.
4. The purpose of the Old Testament law was to show man that he is a sinner and that he needs the Saviour (Ro. 3:19-24; Gal. 3:24-26).

The false teaching that Jesus is not God (Jehovah's Witnesses)

Bible Answer:

1. The Bible plainly says that Jesus is God

Isaiah called Jesus God (Is. 7:14; 9:6).

Matthew called Jesus God (Mt. 1:23).

Jesus called Himself God (Joh. 5:17-18; 8:58-59; 10:30-33; Re. 1:8).

John called Jesus God (Joh. 1:1; 1 Jo. 3:16; 5:20).

Thomas called Jesus God (Joh. 20:28).

Paul called Jesus God (Php. 2:5-6; Col. 1:15-16; 1 Ti. 3:16; Tit. 2:13).

God the Father called Jesus God (Heb. 1:8-10).

2. In His incarnation the Lord Jesus Christ “made himself of no reputation” and became a lowly servant to God and man (Php. 2:7). The Greek word for “made himself of no reputation” is “kenoo,” meaning “to empty, to abase, to make of none effect” (Strong). Jesus did not cease to be God. Php. 2:6 plainly states that He is God, but the Son of God willingly laid aside His glory for the purpose of redeeming man by the cross.

3. There is an order to the Trinity. God the Son submits to God the Father, even though they are equal (1 Co. 11:3; 15:27-28).

The false teaching that God is not a Trinity (Jehovah’s Witnesses)

Bible Answer:

1. The term “trinity” is not in the Bible, but the doctrine is (Mt. 28:19; Joh. 14:16, 26; 16:7-15; 2 Co. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Joh. 5:7).

2. The O.T. teaches that God is one in a plurality. Though the Old Testament does not fully reveal the doctrine of the Trinity, it does teach us that God is a plurality. It is left for the New Testament to open up this revelation fully.

- Genesis 1:1. The Hebrew word for God here is *elohim*. This is a plural noun, but the verb is singular, teaching that there is one God in a plurality.

- Genesis 11:6-7. Here again God is spoken of in the plural and in the singular at the same time.

- Deuteronomy 6:4. This verse could be translated, “Jehovah our *elohim* is a united Jehovah.” The word “one” refers to a unity. The same word for one is used in Ge. 2:24, speaking of the oneness of a husband and wife. This verse summarizes the Bible’s teaching about God. He is one but exists in three Persons.

- Psalm 45:6-7. According to Heb. 1:8-9, God the Father is speaking in Psalm 45, and He is referring to the Son as God. Sometimes people ask, “If Jesus Himself was God, why did He address the Father as God?” The answer is that Jesus addressed the Father as God for the same reason that the Father addressed the Son as God—because they are both God!

The false teaching that baptism is necessary for salvation (Church of Christ)

Bible Answer:

1. Paul taught that baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Ro. 6:3-4). It is the blood and death of Christ that takes away our sins, not water or religious rituals.

2. Paul says that baptism is not the gospel (1 Co. 1:17). The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for our sins (1 Co. 15:1-4). Baptism only symbolizes the gospel.

3. The book of Acts teaches us that baptism follows salvation (Acts 8:36-38; 16:30-33; 18:8).

4. Acts 2:38 does not teach that baptism is a part of salvation, because Peter later taught that baptism is a symbol (1 Pe. 3:21). Acts 2:38 teaches that we are baptized because we have been forgiven of our sins not in order to be forgiven.

5. Mark 16:15-16 says, “He that believeth [the gospel] and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark plainly states that baptism itself is not part of salvation, because he says it “he that believeth not shall be damned.” The baptism is the evidence testimony of salvation. If someone is saved, he will certainly want to be baptized. We see no exceptions in the New Testament.

The false teachings that the Passover is necessary for salvation (Church of Christ)

They say that since Jesus kept the Passover, the believers, too, should keep it. They say that those who do not keep it are false teachers and they cannot be saved.

Bible Answer:

1. The Passover was for the Jews (Ex. 12:43-45). The church is not the Jews (1 Co. 10:32).
2. The Passover was part of the Old Covenant of the law of Moses, but Christians live under the New Covenant (2 Co. 3:6-18). In this passage, the Old Covenant is called “the ministration of death” and “the ministration of condemnation” because it demanded perfect obedience and punishment for every disobedience. Twice Paul says the Old Covenant is “done away” and “abolished.”
3. Paul taught that the holy days and the sabbath days were shadows that are done away in Christ (Col. 2:14-17).
4. The Bible says that salvation is by grace and not by works or law (Ro. 3:19-24; 4:4-8; Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:3-8).
5. The Passover required many things (taking a lamb or goat for every family, keeping it from the 10th day to the 14th day of the month, killing the lamb on the evening of the 14th day, putting the blood on the door posts, roasting the lamb and eating it that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, eating the lamb with your staff in your hand). See Exodus 12:3-11. Those who hold this false teaching today and say they are keeping the Passover, don’t keep the Passover in the way that God commanded.
6. Jesus gave His disciples the Lord’s Supper instead of the Passover (Lu. 22:20). The apostles never taught the churches to keep the Passover. Instead, they taught the churches to keep the Lord’s Supper (1 Co. 11:23-32).
7. Paul taught that the churches are free to keep the Lord’s Supper as often as they want (1 Co. 11:26). There is no law about how often we should keep it.

The false teaching that infants should be baptized (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist)

Bible Answer:

1. Baptism is only for those who believe (Mr. 16:15; Acts 8:36-38). When a child is old enough to believe on Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, then he can be baptized. But an infant cannot do this.
2. No infants were baptized in the New Testament. Some say that there must have been infants baptized in the case of Cornelius since his kinsmen and friends were present (Acts 10:24, 47). Contrariwise, Acts 11:17 says that those who were saved and baptized with Cornelius were those “who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Obviously these were not infants. What about the case of Lydia and her household (Acts 16:14-15)? Nothing is said about infants in this passage, and it is highly unlikely that this busy merchant woman would have had babies. There is no evidence here whatsoever for the practice of infant baptism. What about the Philippian jailer and his household (Acts 16:30-34)? This passage clearly says that Paul spoke the Word of God to the entire household (v. 32) and that the entire household “believed” (vv. 32-33). This could not be said of infants. What about the household of Crispus (Acts 18:8)? Those who were saved and baptized in this family were all believers, for we are told, “Crispus ... believed on the Lord with all his house...” Obviously they were not infants. What about the household of Stephanas (1 Co. 1:16)? Again nothing is actually said about infants being present or

baptized. In 1 Co. 16:15 we are told that this household addicted themselves to the ministry. This could not be said of infants.

The false teachings of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement (Assemblies of God, etc.)

The false doctrine that tongues speaking is for today

Bible Answer:

1. The Bible says tongues were a real language (Acts 2:3-11).
2. The Bible says tongues were a sign to the unbelieving Jews (1 Co. 14:21-22). It was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 28:11-12. Jews were always present when tongues were spoken in the first churches. After Israel rejected God's sign of tongues and Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70 and the Jews were scattered to the ends of the earth, the need for tongues as a sign was finished. The last time that tongues were spoken in the book of Acts was at Ephesus (Ac. 19:6).
3. Biblical tongues had to be used according to the teaching of the apostles, yet Pentecostals and Charismatics do not submit to these restrictions:
Tongues were to be spoken only by course, one by one (1 Co. 14:27).
No more than three people could speak in tongues (1 Co. 14:27).
Tongues must be interpreted (1 Co. 14:27).
There is to be no confusion (1 Co. 14:33).
Women are not allowed to speak in tongues (1 Co. 14:34).
Everything is to be decent (1 Co. 14:40).
Everything is to be orderly (1 Co. 14:40).
4. Tongues were not spoken by every believer even in the days of the apostles (1 Co. 12:28-30).
5. Biblical tongues were not sought after but were sovereignly given by God (1 Co. 12:11).
6. There is no instruction in the Bible about HOW to speak in tongues. Those who believe in tongues speaking today claim that they can teach people to do it.
7. The Bible says tongues speaking, prophesying, and words of knowledge will pass away (1 Co. 13:8). When the New Testament was completed, there was no further need for these particular gifts.

The false doctrine that healing is promised in the atonement

Bible Answer:

1. The Bible says that not all sicknesses are healed (2 Co. 12:7-10). In this passage, "infirmities" is the Greek word *astheneia*, which is elsewhere translated "sickness" (Joh. 11:4) and "disease" (Ac. 28:9). See also 1 Ti. 5:23; 2 Ti. 4:20, where Timothy and Erastus were not healed.
2. The Bible says that in this present life the believer has sufferings and is waiting for the redemption of the body (Ro. 8:18-25).
3. Peter says that Isaiah 53:5 refers to spiritual healing of the soul (1 Pe. 2:24-25).

The false doctrine that miracles should be sought

Bible Answer:

1. Jesus warned that it is not good to seek miracles (Mt. 12:39).
2. The miracles performed by the apostles were special as signs to prove their apostleship (2 Co. 12:12). Not every Christian could perform miracles in that day. When Dorcas died, the believers could not raise her from the dead. They called Peter, the apostle, and he performed that sign (Ac. 9:36-43).
3. Faith does not come from miracles but from God's Word (Ro. 10:17). Multitudes witnessed Jesus' great miracles, but most did not believe.

The false doctrine that the Holy Spirit baptism follows salvation

Bible Answer:

1. Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit would come in a few days (Acts 1:5). This was fulfilled in Acts 2 at Pentecost.
2. Since then, every believer receives the Holy Spirit when he believes (Eph. 1:12-14).
3. The book of Acts is a transitional book. Not everything that happened then is the pattern for the rest of the church age.
4. In the epistles, the reception of the Holy Spirit is always spoken of in the past tense (Ro. 8:9-10; 1 Co. 12:13; 2 Co. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13).

The false doctrine that we should exalt the Holy Spirit

Bible Answer:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ described what role the Holy Spirit would have in the church age (John 16:13-15). In this passage we learn that the Holy Spirit does not exalt Himself and the Holy Spirit does not draw attention to Himself.
2. There is no example in the N.T. of praying to the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray to the Father, not to the Holy Spirit (Mt. 6:6, 9; Joh. 16:23). The apostle Paul taught us to pray to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit (Ro. 1:8; 7:25).
3. There is no example in the New Testament of inviting the Holy Spirit to work. Neither Jesus nor the apostles did that.

The false doctrine that we should not test the spirits with the Bible

Bible Answer:

1. The Bible warns that there are false spirits and that the devil tries to deceive (2 Co. 11:4; 1 Jo. 4:1). Therefore we must test everything carefully or we will be deceived.
2. The Bible commands us to prove all things (1 Th. 5:21).
3. The Bible commended the Bereans because they tested everything by the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).
4. The Bible warns the believer to be vigilant because the devil walks about seeking whom he may devour (1 Pe. 5:8).

The false doctrine that the believer can be rid of his sin nature

Bible Answer:

1. Paul taught that the believer still has the struggle with sin (Ro. 7:14-21; Gal. 5:16-17).
2. John teaches that the believer still has sin and must confess his sins (1 Jo. 1:8-10).

The false doctrine that victory in the Christian life comes through second “baptisms” and experiences

Bible Answer:

1. The Bible does not exhort the believer to leap or to fly, but to WALK in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and to GROW in Christ (1 Pe. 2:1-2; 2 Pe. 3:18). Walking and growing describe a gradual process.
2. The apostles wrote many epistles instructing believers about how to deal with sin and spiritual problems, but they never instructed the believers to seek a “second baptism” or “second blessing” or other such special experiences.

The false doctrine that visions and prophecies are for today

Bible Answer:

1. The Bible says the faith was completed in the days of the apostles (Jude 3).
2. The Bible says that the Scriptures are able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Ti. 3:16-17). This means that nothing else is needed.
3. The Bible says that Scripture is more sure than visions (2 Pe. 1:16-21).

The false teaching that death is a sleep and not a journey (Seventh-day Adventists)

Bible Answer:

1. The Old Testament plainly says that death is a journey (Ge. 25:8; 35:18; Nu. 27:13; 2 Sa. 12:23; 1 Ki. 17:21-22).
2. The New Testament plainly says that death is a journey:
 - Jesus said death is a journey (Lu. 16:19-23; 23:42-43). That Luke 16:19-31 is not a parable is evident by the fact that Jesus named the names of Abraham and Lazarus. He never named names when He was giving parables. Further, even if it were a parable, it would still teach literal truth.
 - Paul taught that death is a journey (2 Co. 5:6-7; Php. 1:23; 2 Ti. 4:6).
 - Peter taught that death is a journey (2 Pe. 1:13-15).
 - The fact that the dead saints return with Christ from heaven at the time of the Rapture shows that dead saints go to heaven at death (1 Th. 4:14).
 - John's heavenly visions show that dead saints are conscious in heaven prior to the resurrection and during the Great Tribulation on earth (Re. 6:9-11).
 - Moses' and Elijah's appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration proves that the dead have conscious existence between death and resurrection. Moses and Elijah, though dead, were allowed by God to appear in time on that mountain and to converse about events which were soon to take place in Jerusalem (Mt. 17:1-3; Lu. 9:30-31).
3. The Bible sometimes speaks of death as a "sleep," but it is the body that sleeps, not the spirit (Jas. 2:26).
4. Ecclesiastes sometimes speaks of death as nothingness (i.e., Ec. 9:5), but this is because Ecclesiastes is written from the perspective of the man "under the sun" (Ec. 1:3, 9, 14, etc.), the perspective of man looking at life the way it appears apart from divine revelation. To the natural man who does not have the revelation of the Scriptures, death appears to be the end of things. But other portions of the Bible tell us that this is not the case. Even the book of Ecclesiastes itself, in its conclusion, says that death is a journey (Ec. 12:7).
5. The Old Testament speaks of the "spirit" as the breath once or twice, but usually the "spirit" of man is that non-material part which is separate from the body and which lives on after death. 1 Th. 5:23 says man has body, soul, and spirit. False teachers make the mistake of refusing to allow the context to define Bible words and instead they put their own preferred definition on the word and force that definition into every context.

The false teaching that hell is not eternal torment (Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists)

Bible Answer:

1. The doctrine of death and hell were not fully revealed in the Old Testament; these were brought to light with the coming of Christ (2 Ti. 1:10).
2. The New Testament plainly teaches that hell and the lake of fire are places of eternal torment:
 - Jesus said hell is a place where the worm does not die (Mark 9:43-44).
 - Jesus said the rich man was in torment in hell (Lu. 16:24). This is not a parable, because Jesus named the names of Lazarus and Abraham.
 - Revelation says those who receive the mark of the antichrist will be tormented forever (Re. 14:10).
 - Revelation says Satan, the Antichrist, and false prophet will be tormented forever (Re. 20:10).
 - Revelation says all the unsaved will be cast into the same lake of fire (Re. 20:15), and since the antichrist and false prophet are not burned up but are tormented forever in the lake of fire, it is obvious that other sinners cast there will have the same experience.
3. The Bible says the punishment of the unsaved will be worse than violent death (Mr. 9:42). This proves the punishment is not annihilation, but is eternal torment. Jesus said it would have been better if Judas had never been born (Mt. 26:24). Jesus' words make no sense if Judas was only going to be annihilated.

The false teaching that Sabbath worship is for the churches today (Seventh-day Adventists)

Bible Answer:

1. The sabbath, though mentioned in Genesis 2:2-3, was not delivered to man until it was given to Israel in the wilderness (Ne. 9:13-14).
2. The sabbath was given, not to mankind in general, but to Israel alone as a special covenant sign between her and God (Ex. 31:13, 17). Since it is a sign with Israel, it could not be for all nations.
3. Jesus kept the sabbath because He was born under the law to fulfill the demands of the law (Gal. 4:4-5).
4. The apostles and early churches met on Sunday.
 - On the first day Jesus rose from the dead and first appeared to His disciples (Mr. 16:9). The sabbath is associated with the old creation; the first day is associated with the new creation.
 - On the first day Jesus met with the disciples at different places and repeatedly (Mr. 16:9-11; Mt. 28:8-10; Lu. 24:34; Mr. 16:12-13; Joh. 20:19-23).
 - On the first day Jesus ascended to heaven, was seated at the right hand of the Father and was made Head of all (Joh. 20:17; Eph. 1:20).
 - On the first day the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 2:1). Pentecost was on the 50th day after the sabbath following the wave offering (Le. 23:15, 16). Thus Pentecost was always on a Sunday.
 - The Christians met to worship on the first day (Ac. 20:6, 7; 1 Co. 16:2).
5. The New Testament plainly teaches that the Christian is not bound to the sabbath law (Col. 2:16-17).

The false teaching that the Prophecies of Matthew 24 and Revelation 6-22 are not for the future but are being fulfilled today (Roman Catholic, most Protestant denominations such as Presbyterian and Lutheran, etc.)

Bible Answer:

1. The timing of the events of Matthew 24 are plainly given:
 - Jesus said that the prophecy of Matthew 24 pertains to the end of the age and to the time of His return (Mt. 24:3-4). This includes the rule of the antichrist (v. 15) and the Great Tribulation (Mt. 24:21).
 - Jesus said the events of Matthew 24 will occur just prior to His return (Mt. 24:29-30).
2. Paul also taught that the antichrist is a real man who will rule the world just prior to Christ's return (2 Th. 2:2-9).
3. The judgments of Revelation are the wrath of God (Re. 6:16; 15:1), whereas Paul said the church-age believers are not appointed to wrath (1 Th. 5:9-10).

The false teaching that God is finished with the nation Israel; that the church has replaced Israel (Roman Catholic, most Protestant denominations such as Presbyterian and Lutheran, etc.)

Bible Answer:

1. God's covenants with Israel are eternal (Jer. 31:31-37).
2. Paul said that Israel has been set aside temporarily, and that God will fulfill His promises to Israel after He completes His plan for the church (Ro. 11:25-29).

The false teaching that God chooses who will be saved and that only those who are chosen can be saved (Calvinism)

Bible Answer:

1. The Bible plainly states that God wants all men to be saved (1 Ti. 2:3-5; 2 Pe. 3:9). This is God's sovereign will.
2. Jesus died for the sins of all men, not just for some (1 Ti. 2:5-6; 1 Jo. 2:1-2).
3. God has ordained that every person who believes on Christ will be saved (Joh. 6:40).
4. The Bible says that God loved the world and sent His only begotten Son "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Joh. 3:16). The "world" never refers to the "elect."
5. The Bible says "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life" (Joh. 3:36).
6. God has commanded that the gospel be preached to every person (Mr. 16:15). He would not do this if only some are chosen to be saved.
7. Christ draws every sinner and gives light to every sinner (Joh. 1:9; 12:32).
8. The Holy Spirit was sent to convict the world of sin in order to prepare men's hearts for salvation, and the world is not the "elect" (Joh. 16:7-11).
9. God's election is based on His foreknowledge (1 Pe. 1:2). This means that God knows who will accept the gospel and who will not. The Bible nowhere teaches that God elects to salvation apart from men's faith in Christ.

The false teaching that the believer can only eat certain things (Seventh-day Adventist)

Bible Answer:

1. Dietary laws in the New Testament are a mark of false teachers and doctrines of devils (1 Ti. 4:1-3).
2. All creatures can be eaten if received with thanksgiving (1 Ti. 4:4-5).
3. The New Testament believer has liberty in such matters (Ro. 14:1-4; Col. 2:16).

The false teaching that there should only be one church in each village and city

Bible Answer:

1. This idea has no support in the Bible. In the very beginning there was naturally only one church in a city because there were only a few believers and no need for more than one church, but nowhere does the New Testament say it is wrong for there to be more than one church in a city or town or village.
2. This idea is contrary to Christ's Great Commission and to the autonomy of the church. Jesus commanded all believers to preach the gospel and baptize every nation and individual (Mt. 28:19-20; Mr. 16:15). This commandment was not given just to one church in each area. Believers do not have to ask other churches for permission to preach the gospel and baptize and establish churches. We have authority from Jesus Christ. When God spoke to the church at Antioch to send out missionaries to

other places to start churches, they didn't have to get permission from any other church. Likewise, we do not have to get permission from other churches in an area before we can preach the gospel and baptize converts and organize them into a church.

3. This idea is contrary to God's command that each church should have one mind and doctrine (1 Co. 1:10). If other Christians and churches in a city have different doctrine, it is not possible for us to join them. We must establish a church that has the doctrine that we believe to be the sound Bible doctrine and have one mind together as a church before the Lord.

4. If this idea about having only one church in each city is true, how can it be accomplished? Such a principle would mean that one church would be able to forbid other churches to preach, but Jesus said we are not to forbid others (Lu. 9:49-50).

5. If there is only one church in each city, what church would it be? Who will have authority to say which church it should be? This is the authority that the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church falsely claim for themselves. They claim to be the only true churches and they try to forbid others to start churches. This is what the Roman Catholic Church did for many centuries. This is what the Russian Orthodox Church does in Russia.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON MAJOR FALSE DOCTRINES

1. How did the Lord Jesus describe false teachers in Matthew 7:15-17?
2. In Acts 20:29-30, who was Paul talking to about false teachers?
3. In this passage, Paul warned that false teachers would come from where?
4. What verse says "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived"?
5. What does this mean in your own words?
6. In what book and chapter did Peter warn about the coming of false teachers?
7. How did Peter describe the size of the crowd who would follow these false teachers?
8. What verse says the first Christians continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine?
9. In what book and chapter did Paul instruct a preacher to allow "no other doctrine"?
10. What verse commands God's people to "mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned"?
11. Titus 2:10 says doctrine must be uncorrupt. What does this mean in your own words?
12. Christ gave promises in two passages about knowing sound doctrine. What are these two passages and what are the two things that are necessary to know sound doctrine?
13. In 2 Timothy 2:15, what are two things that are necessary to know sound doctrine?
14. What are five verses that refute the false doctrine that salvation is by grace plus works?
15. According to Ephesians 2:8-10, what part do good works have in salvation?
16. What verse says if salvation is by works it cannot be by grace?
17. Salvation is called a free gift how many times in the New Testament?
18. How can salvation be a free gift without works?
19. What was the purpose of the law of Moses, the Old Testament law?
20. What are two major passages (book and chapter) that teach the purpose of the law of Moses?
21. Who are seven preachers in the Bible who said that Jesus is God?
22. In Col. 1:15-16; 1 Ti. 3:16; and Tit. 2:13, what did Paul call Jesus?
23. What passage (book and chapter) says Jesus became a servant during His incarnation?
24. This passage says Jesus was in "the form of _____" and "thought it not robbery to be equal with _____".
25. Christ commanded that His disciples be baptized in what name?
26. According to Hebrews 1:8-9, who is speaking in Psalm 45:6-7 and of whom is he speaking?
27. What passage (book and chapter) describes baptism as a "likeness" of Christ's death and resurrection?

28. When Paul said he came not to baptize but to preach the gospel, this means that baptism is not the gospel. In what verse did Paul say this?
29. How did Paul define the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4? Did he mention baptism?
30. When the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip if he could be baptized, what did Philip say?
31. According to Mark 16:15-16, what must the individual do in order to be saved? How do we know that the baptism itself is not part of the salvation?
32. In what verse did Peter teach that baptism is a “figure”?
33. What verse says the Passover was for the Jews?
34. What verse says the church is not the Jews?
35. What passage (book and chapter) says the believer today is under the new testament and that the old testament is “done away” and “abolished”?
36. In this passage, the old testament is called the “ministration of _____” and “the ministration of _____.” Why is it called this?
37. What passage (two verses) says we are saved by grace through faith without works?
38. What is the first passage in the Bible that describes the law of the Passover?
39. Paul taught the churches to keep what ceremony in order to remember Christ’s death and blood?
40. According to Philip’s teaching to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, what is required for baptism?
41. Since baptism is only for those who believe, how is it possible for infants to be baptized?
42. Where does the New Testament clearly describe the baptism of an infant?
43. What is the first passage in the New Testament where tongues were spoken?
44. According to the first mention of tongues speaking, what was this gift?
45. In 1 Corinthians 14:21-22, Paul explains God’s purpose for tongues. What was its purpose?
46. Tongues speaking was a fulfillment of what prophecy?
47. Who was present every time tongues were spoken in Acts?
48. What are seven rules that Paul gave in 1 Corinthians 14 for the exercise of tongues speaking?
49. What passage (book and chapter) says not every believer spoke in tongues?
50. What passage of Scripture teaches the method of how to speak in tongues?
51. What passage (book and chapter) says tongues speaking, prophesying, and words of knowledge will pass away?
52. In what verse did Paul say that he took pleasure in infirmities because “when I am weak, then I am strong”?
53. The Greek word translated “infirmities” in this verse is also translated by what other words?
54. What verse says Timothy was not healed of his many infirmities?
55. What verse says Erastus was not healed by Paul?
56. What passage (book and chapter) says in this present life we have sufferings and are waiting for the redemption of the body?
57. In what passage (book and chapter) does Peter explain that the healing of Isaiah 53:5 refers to spiritual healing?
58. In what verse did Christ teach that an evil generation seeks signs?
59. What verse says the apostles had sign gifts to perform miracles?
60. When Dorcas died, why did the believers call Peter instead of raising her from the dead themselves?
61. What verse says faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God?
62. What passage in the New Testament commands the believer to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
63. In Acts 1:5, Christ promised that the baptism of the Spirit would come when?
64. When was the baptism of the Spirit fulfilled?
65. Ephesians 1:12-14 describes how to receive the Holy Spirit. What is this method?
66. In the New Testament Epistles, the baptism of the Spirit is always spoken of in what tense?
67. In what passage (book and chapter) did Jesus teach that the Holy Spirit does not exalt himself but exalts Christ?
68. In what passage of the New Testament are believers taught to pray to the Holy Spirit?
69. Paul taught believers to pray to _____ through _____ by _____.
70. What verse teaches that we must try the spirits?

71. What verse warns that there is another christ, another gospel, and another spirit?
72. What verse says believers are to “prove all things”?
73. What verse says the believer must be sober and vigilant because of the devil’s activities?
74. What passage (two verses) says the believer can walk in the flesh or in the Spirit?
75. In what verse did Paul say that in his flesh dwells no good thing?
76. In what passage (book and chapter) did an apostle teach that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves?
77. What are two words that describe the spiritual progress of the Christian life?
78. In what passage in the New Testament are believers taught to seek a second baptism or a second blessing or some such thing?
79. What verse says the faith was once delivered to the saints in the days of the apostles?
80. What two verses teach that the Scripture is able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?
81. Since the Scripture is able to make the man of God perfect, what else does he need?
82. What passage (book and chapter) teaches that the Scripture is more sure than visions?
83. What are two verses in the Old Testament that teach that death is a journey, not a sleep?
84. How do we know that the account of the rich man and Lazarus is not a parable?
85. According to this account, what happens at death?
86. What did Jesus promise the thief on the cross who believed in Him?
87. In 2 Timothy 4:6, Paul described death as what?
88. In Philippians 1, Paul described death as what?
89. In 1 Peter, how did Peter describe death?
90. How does the description of the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4 teach that the dead in Christ are in heaven?
91. In what chapter in Revelation are the dead in Christ described as talking to God in heaven before the throne?
92. How does Christ’s transfiguration on the mountain prove that the dead are not sleeping in the grave?
93. What verse says “the body without the spirit is dead”?
94. Why does Ecclesiastes 9:5 say “the dead know not anything”?
95. In the last chapter of Ecclesiastes, what is the teaching about what happens at death?
96. What verse says man has body, soul, and spirit?
97. What verse says those who receive the mark of the antichrist will be tormented forever?
98. What verse says the devil and the antichrist and the false prophet will be tormented forever in the lake of fire?
99. According to Nehemiah 9, when was the sabbath given to men?
100. What passage (book and chapter) teaches that the sabbath is a sign between God and Israel?
101. Why did Jesus keep the sabbath?
102. On what day of the week did Jesus rise from the dead and ascend back to heaven?
103. On what day of the week did the Holy Spirit come from heaven?
104. On what day of the week did the early churches meet?
105. What passage (book and chapter) says the sabbath was a shadow that is done away in Christ for New Testament believers?
106. According to Matthew 24:29-30, the events of Matthew 24 will occur when?
107. What passage (book and chapter) says the church age believers are not appointed to wrath?
108. What passage (book and chapter) says God’s new covenant with Israel is as sure as the sun, moon, and stars?
109. In what book and chapter did Paul teach that after the church is completed “all Israel shall be saved” and God’s covenant with Israel will be fulfilled?
110. What passage (book and chapter) says God would have all men to be saved?
111. What verse says God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance?
112. What passage (two verses) says Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world?
113. What verse says Christ gave himself a ransom for all?

114. What verse commands that the gospel be preached to every person?
115. What verse says God loved the world and sent His only begotten Son “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish”?
116. In what verse did Christ say He gives light to every man?
117. In what verse did Christ say He would draw all men?
118. What passage (book and chapter) teaches that the Holy Spirit came to convict the world of sin?
- 119? What passage (book and chapter) teaches that forbidding meats is a doctrine of devils?
120. What passage (book and chapter) teaches that every creature can be eaten if received with thanksgiving?
121. What is a passage (book and chapter) that says believers must not judge one another in the matter of meat?
122. What church has the authority from Christ to forbid other churches to be established in a city or territory?