

Basic Church: Community

God exists as community: _____, _____ and _____ .

And so...

- God invites us into community with himself
- God sustains healthy community: God ↔ People, People ↔ People
- Being made in God's image, human beings need community to live healthy lives

What is the relationship between worship and membership?



We are a local community of worshippers – *a people*, God's people gathered in a local place.

Notes:

1 Peter 2

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- In community we worship, we are built up and we witness to the world.
- Worship holds us together.
- The Bible simply assumes a worshipping community with mutual obligations and promises.
- Membership gives our community and contours and boundaries that are based on promises and mutual obligations; membership makes a community of worshippers work by getting us all "on the same page."

God's people are called to live their faith within a local community to worship God, grow in holiness, spread the Gospel, and make disciples.

Membership Question 5:

Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and to the spiritual oversight of this Church Session, and do you promote the unity, purity and peace of the Church?

A. Who are Presbyterians?

Two words can be used to characterize Presbyterians.

_____ in faith, and

_____ in government.

Several Flavors of Presbyterian: PCUSA, PCA, OPC, EPC, etc. etc.

EPC distinctives:

1. *In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.*
2. Balance of power between pastors and lay leaders.
3. We're sort of known as the friendly, laid back bunch (more or less!)

"Presbyterian" Means: _____

B. Reformed in Faith:

"Reformed" in faith means we are _____ and _____ by the Bible.

Reformed also means we generally follow a line of thinking we think starts with the Bible, follows _____ and continued through _____. It is expressed in our confessional standard the _____.

C. How does government work at CCE?

Teaching Elder:

Ruling Elder:

Deacons:

Presbytery (Regional):

General Assembly (National / International):

D. The “Purity and Peace” of the Church

1. Purity in doctrine, the things you believe.

In order to join CCE you should believe the **Essentials of the Faith**. These Essentials include the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scripture, the deity and resurrection of Christ, the sinfulness of man and salvation through faith in Christ alone.

To join CCE, you do **not** have to believe in or adhere to the Reformed ideas described above, or the Westminster Confession.

2. Purity in the way you live. What is meant by purity in the way you live?

It is expected that every church member, no matter the depth of spiritual maturity, is seeking to live a life of obedience to Christ free from gross sin which, if known, would bring disrepute to God.

Every member of the church is a sinner saved by grace.

3. Peaceful relationships within the church.

Scripture provides guidelines for relationships between members.

Your relationship with others is one of encouragement, help, honesty, and that of a peacemaker (I Corinthians 13:4-7; Colossians 3:12-17).

Beware of the temptation to gossip (James 1:26)

You should go directly to those with whom you have a problem (Matthew 18:15) and to those who have a problem with you (Matthew 5:23,24).

E. What is church discipline? (aka: “relational strategy,” aka “the love of Jesus, skillfully applied.”)

Discipline may be informal or formal.

Purpose:

- To support, guide and encourage growth in holiness.
- To remove scandal from the church
- To keep or reclaim a disobedient member.
- To keep the church pure.
- To maintain God’s reputation and glory.

The process: (Matthew 18)

- First, person to person.
- Second, call one or more witnesses.
- Third, the church Session will act, using admonition, suspension and finally excommunication.