

Lesson 1 - The Meaning of Church Membership

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Matthew 16:18

INTRODUCTION

What is the Church?

The church is an organized body of baptized believers, that equals in rank and privileges, which exists to reflect God's character. It administers its affairs under the headship of Christ. The church is united in the belief of what He has taught, covenanted together to do what He has commanded, and co-operating with other like bodies in Kingdom movements.

The church is the greatest institution in the world. Christ established it during his personal ministry, and he is its Head (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23; Col 1:18). He promised the world to be with it through the ages and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18; 28:20). He gave the church the Great Commission and the ordinances, and for it he went to the cross (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Eph. 5:25). He loved the church. He wants his churches to honor and glorify him as his representatives on the earth (Eph. 3:21; 5:25-27).

The church has the greatest task ever assigned to any individual or group in the world's history - carrying the glorious gospel of Christ to every nation and tongue. The church has done more for the world than the Government, all the other institutions ever established, or all the armies ever assembled.

Church Membership

In a day when commitment is a rare commodity, it should come as no surprise that church membership is such a low priority to so many believers. Sadly, it is not uncommon for Christians to move from church to church, never submitting themselves to the care of elders and never committing themselves to a group of fellow believers.

To neglect—or to refuse—to join a church as a formal member, however, reflects a misunderstanding of the believer's responsibility to the body of Christ. It also cuts one off from the many blessings and opportunities that flow from this commitment. It is essential for every Christian to understand what church membership is and why it matters.

The Definition of Church Membership

When one is saved, they become members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). They are qualified to become members of that body because they are united under Christ and to the other members of the body. To become a member of Providence they must also:

- a. Confess a salvation experience through Christ
- b. Be baptized in the name of Jesus (1Cor. 12:13) or if already baptized
- c. Be accepted by Christian experience, or if a student or in temporary status,
- d. Be accepted under Watch Care, and
- e. Complete the New Members Orientation Class

To become a member of a church is to formally commit oneself to an identifiable, local body of believers who joined together for specific, divinely ordained purposes. These purposes include:

- a. Receiving instruction from God's Word (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2),
- b. Serving and edifying one another through the proper use of spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11),
- c. Participating in the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and
- d. Proclaiming the gospel to those who are lost (Matt. 28:18-20).

In addition, when one becomes a member of a church, one submits to the care and the authority of the biblically qualified elders that God has placed in that assembly.

The Basis for Church Membership

Church membership is a legitimate biblical concept. The Scriptures teach us the local church has as an identifiable and specifically accountable membership. Membership in a local church is important for a number of biblical reasons.

1. Authors of the New Testament identify churches by their location as well as by their number.
 - a. In Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14, a church beginning at 120 persons grew to 3,000 in one day, then later to 5,000 persons! Souls saved and new converts joining the church were counted and added to daily (Acts 2:47)!
 - b. Paul the Apostle identifies members in local churches by their location in most of his epistles. He also addresses his letters to the many house churches outside of certain cities (Rom. 16:5; 1 Corinth. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2). Members in these churches are counted and located.
2. Leaders are identified in churches where members have submitted themselves under their authority (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17).

- a. Leaders of a local church are expected to identify those to whom they must give an account (Acts. 20:28-30; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
 - b. This means that the sheep should know their shepherd and that the shepherd must know his sheep. How can a pastor be responsible for sheep he/she cannot identify as his own?
3. Our Savior commissioned His church to administer the rite of *water baptism*, a visible symbol of Spirit baptism (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-17; 1 Cor. 12:12-13). This is not only baptism into one universal body, but also into one particular local body - such as the “church in Corinth.”
4. Likewise our Savior instructed His Local church to remember His death until His second coming by partaking together in the *Lord’s Table* (1 Corinth. 11:23-34). This instruction is clearly to people of a specific local fellowship, and the admonition is to be bound together by doing this symbolic and significant ordinance together.
5. Also, our Savior instructs His church in the proper way to *discipline* and *restore* wayward brethren, and even in the case of a disobedient and uncooperative member being removed by the local church united (excommunication - Matt. 18:15-20). By reasonable deduction, one cannot be *excommunicated* from those with which one has not previously *communicated*. If a person is now *out*, he once must certainly to have been *in*.
6. The local body and its leadership is where one is to go to submit requests for specific *benevolent needs*, and has the authority to accept or deny such requests based on discernment of need (1 Tim. 5:3-8; 2 Thess. 3:10-15; Acts 4:32-35). The church is clearly obligated to meet the specific needs of her members only.
7. Specific *leaders* of local churches are to be *supported* by that local assembly. It is the church’s responsibility to provide for their pastor in a material way (1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). Can a person be obedient to God’s Word if that person has no obligation to help with the support of God’s servant sent to watch over his/her soul (Heb. 13:17)?
8. The local church is the place where we should focus the majority of our *gracious Christian giving* (1 Corinth. 16:1-2; 2 Corinth. 8:1-5; 9:6-15), with expectation that our God both can and will supply all our needs (Phil. 4:19). Without being members of a local body how do we do this type of giving or be legitimate recipients of such Divine benevolence?
9. The *discernment* and *authority* of the local church would take the place of the legal counsel and unjust judges of our secular world (1 Corinth. 6:1-8). Christ’s church is the vehicle He ordained to make decisions in the present age (Matt. 16:16-19; Matt. 18:17-20). Note that Christ considers His local church of such importance that they are given

the power to bind certain things in heaven as well as on earth (Matt. 18:18-20). If not bound to the authority of a specific local church, how can one gain the blessings associated with such a community?

Membership brings privilege, opportunities, and obligation

It is a great privilege to be a member of Providence Baptists Church. Providence had a glorious beginning, a bold history, an illustrious present, and a bright future steeped in the promises of God. Providence held true to God's Word through trials and tribulation and the members are numbered among the faithful. We are rapidly growing in number and spiritually as we carry the true gospel message to a lost world. Truly it is a privilege to be a member of Providence.

Membership also brings great opportunities. Providence offers opportunities for fellowship with great people, Christian growth, development and training through various department and ministries of the church. We offer opportunities for Christian service to those within and outside the wall of the church. Providence is a wonderful place to find opportunities to live for God and our neighbor.

Membership brings inescapable obligation to make the church and its work first in our lives. We are obligated to use our time and our talents for the glory of God. We are obligated to support the work with our presence, our influence, and our means. Providence is not stronger than the membership; and a membership of worldly, careless, negligent, stunted Christians will prevent a church from accomplishing much for the Lord. Every member must be consecrated, trained, and enlisted in active service. We are obligated to be the very best members possible under the leading of the Lord.

Conclusion

Living out a commitment to a local church involves many responsibilities: exemplifying a godly lifestyle in the community, exercising one's spiritual gifts in diligent service, contributing financially to the work of the ministry, giving and receiving admonishment with meekness and in love, and faithfully participating in corporate worship. Much is expected, but much is at stake. For only when every believer is faithful to this kind of commitment is the church able to live up to her calling as Christ's representative here on earth. To put it simply, membership matters.

We see that membership is a privilege and an opportunity that entails great obligations. Unfortunately, some church members have not learned these things. These conditions must be changed! Will you help change it by making your membership count for Jesus?

Discussion Questions

Are you prepared to consent to bind in covenant with Providence?

Review

- The church is an organized body of baptized believers, that equals in rank and privileges, which exists to reflect God’ character.
- To neglect—or to refuse—to join a church as a formal member, however, reflects a misunderstanding of the believer’s responsibility to the body of Christ.
- To become a member of a church is to formally commit oneself to an identifiable, local body of believers who joined together for specific, divinely ordained purposes.

Meditation for the Week

Monday: Matt. 16:1-5
Tuesday: Matt. 16:6-10
Wednesday: Matt. 16:11-15
Thursday: Matt. 16:16-20
Friday: Matt. 16:21-28

NOTES

Lesson 2 - What We Believe

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

II Timothy 3:16-17

INTRODUCTION

Baptists first hold to the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith. All true Christian denominations hold to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Baptists believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, The deity of Christ, The Trinity, God's Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, etc. All true Baptists must adhere to the following.

B Biblical Authority

- 1) The Bible is inspired by God which makes it Holy and without error. Biblical inerrancy gives us the foundation for the Bible's Authority, since it came directly from God and is without error. God uses the Bible to reveal His Word to us. II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:21, Rev. 14:13: The word translated inspiration is the Greek word, "Theopneustos", Theo is God, and pneustos means breathed. The Holy Spirit is translated from the word Pneuma, which means breath or wind. So the Bible is literally God breathed.
- 2) Since, the Bible is literally God breathed it is without error. This doctrine is Biblical inerrancy. Biblical inerrancy is one of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Hebrews 6:18 states, It is impossible for God to lie. Since, the Bible is true, without error, God breathed, and then it must be Holy. God is Holy and thus His Word is Holy.
- 3) The Word of God is dynamite (power)!
 - a) Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The word translated power is the Greek word, "dunamis" or "dynamis" and comes from our word dynamite. It means power/ability.
 - b) Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a

discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” The word translated powerful is the Greek word, “energes”, which comes from our word energy.

- 4) The Bible is our final authority for all matters of faith and practice. When we want to know if something is true, we compare what is preached with the Word of God. We take the Bible over everything else.

A Autonomy of the Local Church

Matthew 18:15-18 - Autonomy means self governing. The church governs itself and its members. There are at least 3 main styles of self rule; Shepherd led, Board led, and Congregational led. Shepherd led is where the Pastor leads the congregation and makes the majority of the decisions. Board led is where the Deacons, Elders, and Trustees, with or sometimes without the Pastor make the majority of the decisions. The third style is the Congregational led; the members of the church vote and make the majority of the decisions. Some churches use a combination of these styles or sometimes allow an Administrator to make some decisions. Providence style is Elder led. In all cases, the local church governs itself.

The local church is not governed by a Convention, Presbytery, Synod, Council, Etc. Some churches voluntarily join a convention that doesn't rule them, but helps support them such as the National Baptist Convention, Progressive National Convention, etc., while they retain their independence.

P Priesthood of the Believer

- 1) Background: The Priesthood of the Believer is what sets the Baptists and all true Christians apart from the Catholics. The way to salvation and forgiveness of sin is through Jesus Christ and not through a pope or priest. The way to prayer is not through formality and tradition, but through the Blood of Jesus Christ.
- 2) In the Old Testament times, people had to go the priest in order to sacrifice. The sacrifice was for the forgiveness of sin. The person would put their hand on the head of the animal and confess their sins, thus transferring their sins to the animal. The animal would then be sacrificed as a picture of what Jesus Christ would do on the cross for our sins. The only way to God was through the priest who would enter the Holy of Holies on behalf of the individual.

- 3) In the Gospels, Jesus died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice. Jesus is both God and man incarnate in One Flesh. He paid for our sins in His own body on the cross of Calvary. When He died on the cross the veil in the temple was torn in two by God from top to bottom. Now there was no longer a need to confess your sins to the priest who would in turn intercede to God for you. Now when you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have direct access to God through prayer.

- 4) We have access into the throne room of heaven. Only born again Christians have access into the throne room of heaven, because Jesus washed their sins away. Sin prevents us from fellowship with God the Father.
 - I. The privilege of the Priesthood of the Believer is that we can pray to God and have our prayers heard. We can confess our sins I John 1:9 and God will forgive us of our sins.
 - II. When we sin, we do not lose our salvation, but we do lose the joy of our salvation. Once you are born again you can never become unborn.
 - a. John 3:16 - Teaches everlasting life. Everlasting lasts forever.
 - b. Ephesians 1:13 - When we are saved we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise. Our salvation hinges on what Jesus Christ has done and not our works.
 - c. Ephesians 2:8, 9 - We are sealed in Christ Jesus and nothing can pluck us out of His hand. John 10:28, 29 Since we are secure in Christ Jesus we have the bold access into the throne room of heaven through the Blood of Christ.
 - d. Hebrews 10:19 - Prayer is the privilege of being in Christ Jesus.

- 5) Each day we are to live our lives for Jesus Christ. Our lives are our sacrifice to God. We must die to self each day and live for Him Who gave Himself for us!

- 6) All those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their own personal Lord and Savior are the true priests of today!

T Two Ordinances

- 1) Baptism - Baptism is the first step of obedience as a Christian. It is symbolic of the death burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We show the world we have died to sin and have risen to a new life in Christ Jesus. We symbolically show what the Holy Spirit did for us at

salvation. Through Baptism we proclaim to the world our Lord Jesus Christ and prove ourselves to be obedient to Him.

- a) Romans 6:1-7 - We believe in full immersion Baptism. Since, we are dead to sin; we are to be fully immersed. We believe full immersion symbolizes our death to sin. (side note, this is what makes the Baptists distinct from the Methodists and Presbyterians who sprinkle)
- 2) Communion - The second ordinance we observe is called communion. Communion comes from the Greek word Koinonia, which means to fellowship without reservation with a Godly love. We fellowship with God at communion, surrender our hearts to Him, and thank Him for what He did for us at Calvary. Communion also called the Lord's Supper has at least two purposes; first, to be a reminder of what sin cost our Savior on Calvary, and second, to get us to ask God for forgiveness of our unconfessed sins.
- a) Communion is called the Lord's Supper, because He gave us the example before He went to the cross of Calvary. (Matthew 26:17-30.)
 - b) I Corinthians 11:23-34. The Lord's Supper is symbolic of what Jesus Christ did on the Cross of Calvary.

I Individual Soul Liberty

Each one of us will have to give an account of ourselves to God. However, we can and should correct someone if they are in outright sin. We need to correct our brothers/sisters in a loving manner. We need to speak the truth in love by going to that brother/sister in private. We need to pray first, to make sure that we ourselves aren't the one in the wrong. Be careful not to judge, but also not to allow sin in the camp. We need not impede each other's soul liberty.

S Saved Church Membership

Before anyone can be a member of a Baptist church, they first must be saved. Acts 2:47

T Two Officers

Pastor is the same as the overseer or bishop. He is the Chief Elder and leader of the church. I Timothy 5:17, I Thessalonians 5:12 A Pastor is worthy of respect and deserves to be paid for the work he does. The Pastor is the servant of God who is entrusted with the awesome responsibility of accurately handling the Word of God. He must have the ability to teach and preach.

Deacons are men who exhibit signs of spiritual leadership. The deacons are servants to the Pastors. Acts 6:1-7 - The purpose of a deacon is to

relieve the burden on the pastor, so the Pastor can devote his time to prayer and ministry of the word.

S Separation of Church and State

Matthew 22:21 - We believe that church and the government are to be separate entities. We should both pay our tithes and our taxes. God takes precedence over the government.

The Sovereignty of God.

We believe that God is an absolute sovereign (Psalms 115:3), having mercy on whom He will and hardening whom he will (Romans 9:15-18), doing according to His will or purpose in the heaven and earth (Daniel 4:35), working all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11), efficiently causing all good and wisely and holy permitting all evil that comes to pass for reasons known fully to Himself only and overruling it for His own glory and the good of the redeemed (Romans 8:28; Proverbs 16:4).

God's Will of Purpose

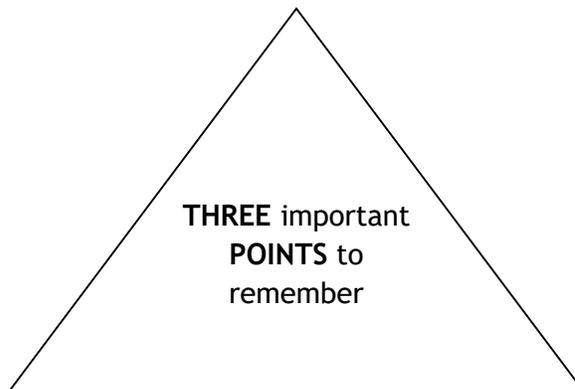
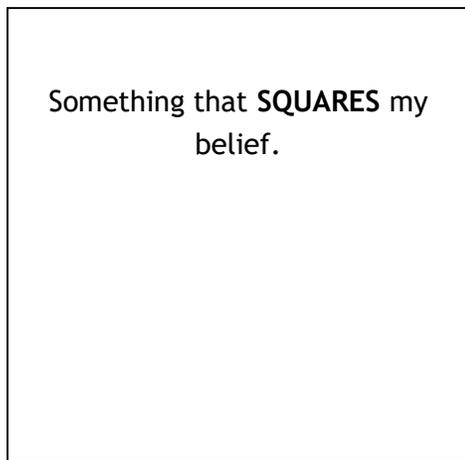
We believe that whereas God's will of purpose is accomplished infallibly and cannot be prevented, hindered, or delayed in the least by men, devils, or impersonal forces (Isaiah 14:24, 27).

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy spirit is a divine personality and not a mere emanation, influence or force (John 14:26; 16:13); equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same essence and nature (II Corinthians 13:14); that He was active in creation (Genesis 1:2); restrains that wicked one until God's purpose is fulfilled (II Thess. 2:7), and convicts of sin (Acts 2:37). He is the agent of God in the new birth (John 3:6; 6:63); He comes into the heart in regeneration there to dwell continuously, sealing (Eph. 1:13), witnessing (Romans 8:16), counseling (I John 16:13), and sanctifying (I Cor. 6:11). The believer, therefore, is not to pray or seek for the Holy Spirit, but to surrender to Him so as to be filled with Him (I Thess. 5:19; Eph. 5:18).

Activity - Summarize by listing the concept or idea learned which squares your belief, listing a question that is going around in their head and by listing three important points to remember about the lesson taught.

Summary Shape Up



Review

- Baptists first hold to the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith. All true Christian denominations hold to the fundamentals of the Christian faith.
- Since, the Bible is true, without error, God breathed, and then it must be Holy. God is Holy and thus His Word is Holy.
- We have access into the throne room of heaven. Only born again Christians have access into the throne room of heaven, because Jesus washed their sins away. Sin prevents us from fellowship with God the Father.

Meditation for the Week

Monday: 2 Timothy 3: 1-3
Tuesday: 2 Timothy 3: 4-6
Wednesday: 2 Timothy 3: 7-9
Thursday: 2 Timothy 3: 10-12
Friday: 2 Timothy 3: 13-17

NOTES

Lesson 3 - The Church Covenant

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

John 1:11-12

INTRODUCTION

What is the Church Covenant?

The Church covenant is an agreement between members of Providence Baptist Church and God whereby they promise to conduct their lives in a way that glorifies God and promotes Providence. The covenant outlines the obligations of Providence membership. We should study it, refer to it often, and seek to live by it.

COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to work together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our

The Basis of the Church Covenant

The covenant outlines church obligations, is based on Scripture, and studied as follows:

1. Salvation
 - a. John 1:11-12, “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”.
 - b. In Acts 16:30-31, THE Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas:”...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ and they said, ‘believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved....”
 - c. 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - d. Romans 10:9, If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
2. Baptism: Matt. 28:19-20 - “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.”
3. Duties to the Church
 - a. To walk together in Christian love Christian
 - i. To walk together in Christian love within this context means we are all going in the same direction, we have the same purpose, we are doing the same thing in terms of we are doing our part although we serve in different capacities.
 - ii. Walking together means each person doing his/her work; especially as proof of ability. (for example - Choir - all sing, but have different parts of the harmony.
 - iii. Walking together means to walk in harmony, in unity, and also circumspectly (accurately and carefully). It means to watch on all sides. Walking together in Christian love will settle many conflicts that hurt churches and saints today. Christian love brings this to pass and this is the duty of each member, one toward the other.
 - iv. We are commanded to walk **not at odds** with one another, but in Christian love.
 1. John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. In a sense, it was an old command. In Lev 19 the Lord said to Moses to speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them various laws. One of which is found in verse 18 which reads, “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of

your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

2. The words, “I am the Lord” is important because it tells the people of Israel who is giving the command. The one giving the command is the one who is in charge, the one who has the authority to command, His name is the authority that stands behind his instructions.
3. They had the command for a long time, but the practice was new. It was a new command for the disciples, because it marked their special bond, created by Christ’s great love for them. The love which had Christ’s heart as the standard was new.
4. The command is love one another. This is written in the present tense, which means keep on loving. Love one another continuously. 1 John 4:7 reads in part, “...let us love one another, for love comes from God.” ...God is love...
5. The verse goes on to read, “As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” This is the standard for love. As I have loved you!
6. God’s standard is found in 1 John 4:9 - “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.
7. Jesus standard is found in 1 John 3:16 - “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

How do we show our love for Christ?

By loving one another. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you and do good to them. Jesus said in John 14 if you love me then keep my commandments. Love worketh no ill to his/her neighbor

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen

- b. To strive for the advancement of the church and promote its prosperity and spirituality.
 - i. Phil 1:27
 - ii. 2 Timothy 2:15
 - iii. 2 Cor 7:1
 - iv. 2 Peter 3:11
- c. To sustain it worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine
 - i. Hebrews 10:25
 - ii. Matt 28:19
 - iii. 1 Cor 11:23-26
 - iv. Jude 3

- d. To give it pre-eminence in my life
 - i. Matt 6:33
 - e. To contribute cheerfully and regularly
 - i. 1 Cor 16:2
 - ii. 2 Cor 8:6-7
 - f. To carry my membership when I move and be active in church work wherever I live.
 - i. Acts 11:19-21; 18:24-28
4. Duties to Personal Christian Living
- a. To maintain family and secret devotions
 - i. 1 Thess 5:17-18
 - ii. Acts 17:11
 - b. To religiously educate the children
 - i. 1 Tim 3:15
 - ii. Deut 6:4-7
 - c. To seek the salvation of the lost
 - i. Acts 1:8
 - ii. Matt 4:19
 - iii. Psalm 126:5-6
 - iv. Proverbs 11:30
 - d. To walk circumspectly (cautiously) in the world, and to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary (excellent) in our deportment (behavior)
 - i. Ephesians 5:15
 - ii. Phil 2:14-15
 - iii. 1 Peter 2:11-12
 - e. To avoid gossip and excessive anger
 - i. Ephesians 5:18
 - ii. Hab 2:15
 - iii. To be zealous (enthusiastic) in our efforts for Christ - Titus 2:14
5. Duties to Fellow Members
- a. To watch over one another in love - 1 Peter 1:22
 - b. To pray for one another - James 5:16
 - c. To cultivate sympathy and courtesy - 1 Peter 3:8
 - d. To be slow to take offense, always ready for reconciliation - Ephesians 4:30-32.

It may seem like we have a lot of obligations as a church member. You may be thinking to yourself that you cannot do all of this. However, remember the opening statement of the covenant, which states in part, "Having been led...by the Spirit of God..."

Review

- The Church covenant is an agreement between members of Providence Baptist Church and God whereby they promise to conduct their lives in a way that glorifies God and promotes Providence.
- The covenant outlines church obligations, is based on scripture.
- It may seem like we have a lot of obligations as a church member. You may be thinking to yourself that you cannot do all of this. However, remember the opening statement of the covenant, which states in part, “Having been led...by the Spirit of God...”

Meditation for the Week

Monday: John 1: 1-3
Tuesday: John 1: 4-6
Wednesday: John 1: 7-9
Thursday: John 1: 10-12
Friday: John 1: 13-15

NOTES

Lesson 4 - Christian Growth

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

2 Peter 3:18

INTRODUCTION

Every child of God is commanded to grow spiritually. When we are saved, we do not immediately become full-grown Christians, but are only “babes in Christ”. As “babes” we are commanded to grow. Only by growing spiritually can we please God and glorify him in our lives.

1. 2 Peter 3:18 tells us to “grow in grace”.

Christian growth begs the question, how can a Christian grow in grace? In order to realize that one has grown, one must have a starting point, a point of comparison. We are admonished to build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. With Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, Christ and the apostles taught to adhere to the physical requirements, while adding to that knowledge a spiritual dimension. Furthermore, we should drink in God’s Word - a necessary requirement on the path to salvation. “As newly born babies crave milk, we should crave pure spiritual milk so that we may be enabled by it to grow till we attain Salvation”

1. (Eph. 2:19-22).
2. (1 Pet. 2:2).

2 Peter prescribes specific indications of how to grow. It reads in part, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ“(2 Pet. 1:4-8).

This is a clear description of what it means to grow. And to be “neither barren nor unfruitful” means that one is bearing fruit and growing! With these gifts you can share in being like God and the world will not ruin you with its evil desires.

Because you have these blessings, do your best to add these things to your lives: to your faith, add goodness; and to your goodness, add knowledge; and to your knowledge, add self-control; and to your self-control, add patience; and to your patience, add service for God; and to your service for God, add kindness for your

brothers and sisters in Christ; and to this kindness, add love. If all these things are in you and are growing, then you are growing.

It is important for us to understand that we cannot grow spiritually on our own - we need the help of the Holy Spirit. Remember the opening statement in the covenant, "Having been led...by the Spirit of God..."

2. Is there anything we can do to ensure that we continue to grow spiritually?
YES
 - a. Cultivate your devotional life through Bible Study and prayer.
 - I. The Bible is God's Word to us. Read it daily. Read it thoroughly. Read it by books and by subjects. The more you read it, the more it will mean to you. You will be better equipped for service to the Lord.
 - II. Prayer is when you communicate with God. Communication with God is when you talk to Him and you allow Him to talk to you. I Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing." Pray daily. Pray about everything. Pray as you work. Have a secret place of prayer. Establish a family altar in your home - a time when all the family can gather together for Bible reading and prayer. We cannot grow spiritually if we do not develop the devotional life.
 - III. Make sure you participate in Christian fellowship. We invite you to make your closest friends members of Providence and other Christians. Visit their homes and invite them to your home. Such fellowship is rich and blessed and will be a great strength for you in resisting temptation and growing spiritually.
 - IV. Use and cultivate your talents for the Lord. We all have abilities we can use for God. The church needs abilities which each member can do. If your ability is in speaking, singing, handling business, bringing joy to needy hearts, teaching, organizing, etc.; the church can use whatever your skills may be.
 - V. Exercise self control. Satan is always seeking to hinder our Christian lives and the Lord's work by bringing jealousy, ill-temper, and selfishness into our hearts. Church work is often hindered by some Christian who seeks to be "bossy" or non-co-operative. If this spirit appears in your life, destroy it with Bible study and prayer.

Discussion Questions

1. What does “to grow spiritually” mean to you?
2. Discuss how one grows spiritually?
3. How can we ensure that we continue to grow?

Activity - Summarize the lesson by listing **3** ideas that summarize what has been taught, listing **2** ideas that match your own views or values and listing **1** idea that you already use or plan to use in daily living.

3-2-1 Review Processing Activity

3 ideas that summarize what you were taught or what you learned:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



2 ideas that match my views or values:

1. _____

2. _____



1 idea I already use or plan to use:



1. _____

Review

- Every child of God is commanded to grow spiritually.
- It is important for us to understand that we cannot grow spiritually on our own - we need the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Communication with God is when you talk to Him and you allow Him to talk to you.

Meditation for the Week

Monday: 2 Peter 3: 1-4
Tuesday: 2 Peter 3: 5-8
Wednesday: 2 Peter 3: 9-12
Thursday: 2 Peter 3: 13-15
Friday: 2 Peter 3: 16-18

NOTES

Lesson 5 - Baptist History and Doctrine

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Matthew 16:18

INTRODUCTION

Baptist History

Baptist churches follow the pattern of Christ's church in the New Testament. Therefore we believe our history started with Christ and the apostles. We believe that both the Bible and history support its truth.

1. Christ established his church during his personal ministry here on earth.
 - a. Upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18).
2. The first members of the church were the apostles (1 Cor 12:28). Jesus used these men who were baptized by John the Baptist, and formed them into his church. Before Christ left the earth, his church had 120 membership (acts 1:15), an organization, the ordinances, a commission, and treasurer. On Pentecost the 3000 saved and baptized were added to the church. This church was a local, visible body.
3. Christ promised that the church would not cease to exist.
 - a. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against" his church (Matt 16:18)
 - b. It would be in the world to the end of the age (Matt 28:20)

Baptist Doctrine

1. The Church
 - a. Christ established the church during his ministry; he was the head and he promised perpetuity (eternity) and blessing.
 - i. Matt: 16:19; 18:17; 28:20;
 - ii. 1 Cor. 12:28;
 - iii. Eph 5:23;
 - iv. Col.1:18
 - b. The church is a local body of baptized believers
 - i. John 4:1

- ii. Matt 28:19
 - iii. Acts 2:47; 5:14; 14:23; 15:41
 - iv. Romans 16:16
 - v. Revelation 1:4
 - c. Each church governs its own affairs under the leadership of the Spirit; it receives members, withdraws fellowship from the disorderly, and restores to fellowship those who repent.
 - i. Matt 18:17;
 - ii. 1 Cor 5:3-5
 - iii. Acts 15:22
 - iv. 2 Cor 8:19
 - v. Romans 14:1-2
 - vi. Thess. 3:6
 - vii. Gal 6:1
 - d. Christ gave ordinances and the Great Commission, and through it he is to be glorified.
2. Salvation
- a. Salvation is given by God in grace, apart from human works or merit.
 - i. Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:8-9
 - ii. 2 Timothy 1:9
 - iii. Romans 3:24; 5:20-21
 - iv. Titus 2:11; 3:5-7
 - b. Salvation is received through repentance and faith.
 - i. Repentance is absolutely necessary
 - 1. Matt 3:2; 4:17
 - 2. Mark 6:12
 - 3. Luke 13:3; 15:7
 - ii. Faith is absolutely necessary
 - 1. John 1:11-13; 3:16-18:36; 6:28-29
 - 2. Acts 10:43
 - 3. Romans 5:1; 10:9-15
3. This is not just an agreement of the mind but must be from the heart. Repentance and faith are used together in several Scriptures
- a. Acts 20:21
 - b. Mark 1:15
 - c. Hebrews 6:1
 - d. Matt 21:32

4. Baptism:
 - a. Scriptural baptism is by immersion. The Greek word for “baptize” means immerse and never means sprinkle or pour. Scriptures about baptism make immersion absolutely necessary in the ordinance
 - i. Baptism must be in water (Matt. 3:11, 13; Mark 1:5),
 - ii. Requires much water (John 3:23; Mark 1:9),
 - iii. Requires going down into the water (Acts 8:38),
 - iv. Burial in water (Romans 6:4; Col 2:12),
 - v. Resurrection from the water (Col 2:12); and
 - vi. Coming up out of the water (Acts 8:39; Mark 1:10).
 - b. Four elements are necessary for baptism
 - i. There must be a proper subject, a saved person,
 - ii. The proper authority, a church of the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - iii. The proper purpose, to show salvation, not procure it, and
 - iv. The proper mode, immersion.
 - c. Baptism is symbolic of the burial and resurrection of Christ and shows the individual’s salvation by death to sin and resurrection to new life in Christ (Romans 6:4, 11; (1Peter 3:21); (Gal 3:27), and done in obedience to Christ’s command (Matt 28:19-20).
 - d. Baptism is not essential for salvation. Every Christian should be baptized, not in order to be saved, but because he/she is saved (Acts 10:48; Matt 3:15-17; 28:19; Mark 1:9).
5. The Lord’s Supper: The purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to memorialize the death of Christ (1 Cor 11:24-26).
 - a. It give to the church (Acts 20:7)
 - b. Church members are to partake (Acts 2:41-42; 20:7).
 - c. Providence serves communion on the first Sunday of each month.
6. The Security of the Believer
 - a. God promises and gives eternal life (John 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:47; 1 John 2:25; Titus 1:2).
 - b. The believer has everlasting life (John 3:18; 36; 5:24; 6:47; 1 John 5:13)
 - c. Christians do not keep themselves (1 Peter 1:3-6; Jude 24-25; John 10:28).
 - d. Nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39).

- e. When Christians sin, god chastises them and keeps them (Hebrew 5-11; Psalm 89:30-36).
 - f. Sins of Christians are not charged to them, so they do not have to die for them (Romans 4:7-8).
7. Scripture References on Various Subjects
- a. Bible Study: 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Peter 3:15
 - b. Prayer: 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Like 11:1-13; 18:1; Matthew 18:19-20; 21:22
 - c. Church Attendance: Hebrews 10:24-25; Psalms 96:8-9; 122:1, Acts 2:44-47
 - d. Soul-Winning: Proverbs 11:30; Ezekiel 3:17-19; Daniel 12:3; Matthew 4:19
 - e. Stewardship: 1 Corinthians 4:2, 7; Psalm 24:1; Deuteronomy 8:18; Romans 14:12, Matt 25:14-30.
 - f. Giving: Deuteronomy 8:18; 16:16-17; Leviticus 27:30; Genesis 14:20; 28:22; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 23:23; Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8:7-12
 - g. Missions: Matthew 9:37-38; 28:19-20; Acts 1:8-9; John 20:21; Mark 16:15
 - h. Christian Living: 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; Galatians 2:20; 5:22-26; Ephesians 6:10-18.
 - i. Precious Promises: Isaiah 40:31; 41:10; Psalms 27:14; 34:7-10; Romans 8:28; John 14:1-3; Philippians 4:19
 - j. Death: Psalms 23; 91; 116:15; John 14; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 5:1-10; Revelation 21-22.
 - k. Second Coming: Matthew 24-25; Like 21; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 5:11; Revelation; Acts 1:9-11; John 5:28-29; 14:1-3.

Discussion Questions

1. Name and discuss at least five Baptist doctrines.

Activity - Summarize today's lesson by **Remembering** three facts, **Relating** by identifying with the concept or idea, **Reasoning** by the sharing of how this concept or idea impacts them today and **Reorganizing** your life to fit this concept or idea into daily living.

Four R's Processing Activity

<p style="text-align: center;">Remembering</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Write down three facts.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Relating</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Can you identify with this?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Reasoning</p> <p style="text-align: center;">How does this impact you today?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reorganizing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">How are you going to restructure your life to fit it in?</p>

Review

- Baptist churches follow the pattern of Christ’s church in the New Testament. Therefore we believe our history started with Christ and the apostles.
- Each church governs its own affairs under the leadership of the Spirit; it receives members, withdraws fellowship from the disorderly, and restores to fellowship those who repent.

Meditation for the Week

Monday: Matthew 16: 1-4
Tuesday: Matthew 16: 5-8
Wednesday: Matthew 16: 9-12
Thursday: Matthew 16: 13-16
Friday: Matthew 16: 17-20

NOTES

Lesson 6 - God's Plan of Church Finance

...and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.

Gen 28:22

INTRODUCTION

The following is God's plan for financing Providence Baptist Church. We are not interested in man-made plans. We believe in God's plan in everything and we believe that every member of Providence should be a tither, bringing to the Lord a tenth of his/her income. If we love Jesus, we will keep his commandments.

This plan of finance will meet all of the financial needs of the Providence. If every Providence member were to tithe, our income would total thousands of dollars a year. It would be possible to greatly advance the church in missions, education, and in every area of our work. The personal blessings to the members for their faithfulness as steward of the Lord would be immeasurable.

Passages that teach that this is God's plan for church finance are:

1. Tithing Before the Law of Moses
 - a. "And he gave him tithes of all" (Gen 14:20). In this passage Abraham pays tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of God.
 - b. "Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Gen: 28:22). Jacob promised the Lord he would tithe.
2. Tithing Under the Law
 - a. Tithing was incorporated into the law.
 - i. "The tithe... is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord" (Lev 27:30).
 - ii. The tithe was to be the means of supporting the priests and the worship. The priests were also required to tithe (Numbers 18:24, 26, 28).
 - iii. Tithing was practiced under the law (2 Chronicles 31:5, 6, 12; Nehemiah 10:37-38).
 - iv. Those who failed to tithe were condemned by the Lord as being guilty of sin. Those who did not tithe were called God-robbers (Malachi 3:8-9).
3. Tithing in the New Testament
 - a. Christ taught tithing
 - i. Malachi 3:1-4: This is the prophecy that the Lord will come and teach people how to live, righteously and acceptably. The charge is that Israel robbed God in failing to give the tithe. In Jesus Malachi's prophecy is fulfilled.

Activity - Summarize today's lesson by asking three questions. This activity allows you to write down what you think about the idea, what it feels like and what steps would you take to plan and implement this idea.

Head – Heart – Foot Processing Activity

What do you think about this idea?



What does it feel like?



What steps would you take to plan and implement this idea?



Review

- We believe in God’s plan in everything and we believe that every member of Providence should be a tither, bringing to the Lord a tenth of his/her income.

Meditation for the Week

Monday: Gen 28: 1-5
Tuesday: Gen 28: 6-10
Wednesday: Gen 28: 11-15
Thursday: Gen 28: 16-20
Friday: Gen 28: 21-22

NOTES

Lesson 7 - Providence at Work

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.

1 Tim 3

INTRODUCTION

Providence Baptist Church is simple in its organization. It is a self-governing body whose members have equal rights, privileges, and duties.

1. Officers:

- a. The pastor is the chief officer and elder. He is called by God to preach the gospel, ordained to the work of the ministry, and called by a Providence to serve as its leader.
 - i. He is of the highest-type of Christian character (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)
 - ii. He is the leader of the church and has oversight of the work (1 Peter 5:1-2, 1 Timothy 6:12, 13, 17; Hebrews 13:7, 17).
 - iii. He studies, preaches, teaches, leads, exhorts and reproves (2 Timothy 2:15; 4:1-5).
 - iv. He will one day answer to God for the way he did his work (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:4).
 - v. He leads the church in accordance with the teaching of God's Word and des his best for the Lord, the church, and for every member.
- b. The office of deacon is usually traced to the first church at Jerusalem. Seven men were chosen by the church to assist the apostles. Deacons at Providence are servants of the church.
 - i. They are men of proved character and spiritual interest (Acts 6:3-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13)
 - ii. They contribute in strengthening the spiritual ministry of the church.
- c. Elders:
- d. Other officers include the church clerk, who keeps the church records; the treasurer, who handles the church funds; and the trustees, who hold title to the property in accordance with requirements of the law.

Activity - Summarize a concept or idea taken from the lesson by first giving the student time to answer and reflect upon interview questions that are to be answered. After answering these questions, the student is to interview another student, compare and discuss answers.

Roving Reporter

Interviewee

One thing I remember about

_____.
My response:

I agree with this point because

My response:

I relate with this point because

My response:

Interview Response

Review

- Providence Baptist Church is simple in its organization. It is a self-governing body whose members have equal rights, privileges, and duties.
- Your attendance and participation will promote Christian growth, give training in Christian work, and open doors of opportunity for service.

Meditation for the Week

Monday: 1 Timothy 3: 1-3
Tuesday: 1 Timothy 3: 4-6
Wednesday: 1 Timothy 3: 7-9
Thursday: 1 Timothy 3: 10-12
Friday: 1 Timothy 3: 12-16

NOTES

Lesson 8 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 9 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

1)

2)

3)

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5)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 10 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

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4)

5)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 11 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

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4)

5)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 12 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

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3)

4)

5)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 13 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

1)

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Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 14 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

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3)

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Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 15 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

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4)

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Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 16 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

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Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 17 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

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3)

4)

5)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 18 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

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2)

3)

4)

5)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 19 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

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3)

4)

5)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 20 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

1)

2)

3)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES

Lesson 21 - Truth

Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Activity -

Review

- Review

Meditation for the Week

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

NOTES
