

# How We Do Ministry at CFBC

## CFBC Philosophy of Ministry

### Introduction

A biblical philosophy of ministry helps lay a solid foundation for what a local church is seeking to accomplish, give clear direction for how it is to be accomplished, and ensure a proper motivation for why it is to be accomplished. This document looks to articulate the purpose of the local church in order to then determine the practice of the local church. It will:

- Allow for a biblical standard by which to evaluate existing ministries.
- Enable a framework by which to evaluate prospective ministry.
- Keep ministry work balanced and focused.
- Facilitate the ability of members to understand their role in the work of the whole.

In a world of finite resources and limited time, the church cannot do everything. CFBC will not be effective in our mission if everything is mission. Likewise, we will not deliver on our mission if we are not sure what it is.

### Exalt God

The chief end of God is to preserve and display His infinite and awesome greatness, namely, His glory (Isa. 48:11). God created all things and all things exist through Him and for Him (Rom. 11:36). God's supreme purpose is to manifest His glory. The Scriptures teach us that God alone is to be the object of our worship. This demands that we have a high view of God; one which views Him as holy, righteous, and true.

At CFBC, the glory of God is both the motivation and goal of our ministry. When contemplating any aspect of ministry, the most pressing question must be, "Will this glorify God?" His glory will be the deciding factor for which ministry activities and programs are done and how they are done. This is our definition of a God-centered local church ministry (Psa. 95:6-7).

### The Glory of God

In the Scriptures, God has revealed Himself as one, true, eternal God. He has also revealed Himself as three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our worship is a response to this revelation. The Trinity distinguishes Christian worship from all major religions of the world.

God is Spirit, infinite in His being, glory, blessedness, and perfection. He is most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful, and most gracious. He is all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

The word “glory” carries the idea of “weightiness, gravity, or greatness”. God’s glory is His infinite worth put on infinite display. God created and redeemed man to glorify Him (Psa. 29:2). The ultimate goal of creation, man, salvation, the church, all biblical ministry, and the eternal state is the glory of God.

At CFBC, we seek to preach and teach the biblical gospel, which seeks to glorify God as its chief end and goal. Furthermore, we glorify Him in our worship (Rom. 12:1-2), our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20), in the church (Eph. 3:10), and in everything we do (1 Cor. 10:31).

### **The Sovereignty of God in Creation**

God created everything. Therefore, everything belongs to Him and is designed to give Him praise (Psa. 148). The ultimate purpose of creation is for the glory of God. God created the world not because He was needy or lonely, but to put His glory on display (Psa. 104:31). God gives us the gift of His creation for our enjoyment and worship of Him (1 Tim. 6:17).

At CFBC, we believe that we are not independent and autonomous beings without moral accountability. We are dependent creatures who are sustained by the hand of God. Therefore, we give praise and thanks to God in our worship, obey Him, and wisely steward the resources He has given us for His glory (Heb. 9:27).

### **Preeminence, Person, and Substitutionary Work of the Son**

We believe in the supremacy of Jesus Christ because He is the creator, sustainer, and redeemer of mankind. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, by whom all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions—all things were created through him and for him (Co1. 1:15-16).

Truly God, the Word of God became a man, two natures, in one person, born of the Virgin Mary, lived among us, was crucified, dead, and buried, he rose again, ascended to heaven, and will come again in glory and judgment.

For us, Jesus kept and fulfilled the law (Matt. 5:17-18), died as a substitutionary sacrifice to atone for our sins and satisfy God’s wrath (Rom. 3:21-26), imputing to us His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21), giving life everlasting to all who repent and believe (Jn. 3:16).

After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs (Phil. 2: 5-11; Heb. 1:3-4). Christ is our final prophet, priest, and king. As Head, He is building His Church, interceding, reigning, and ruling as Lord.

At CFBC, we will seek to exalt Him, proclaim Him, and be conformed to Him until He returns to judge the living and the dead (Col. 1:28-29).

## **Regenerating and Sanctifying Work of the Spirit**

God the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, is a divine person possessing all attributes of personality and deity. He brings the believer into union and communion with God the Son to the glory of God the Father.

The Spirit's ministry is to glorify Christ (Jn. 16:14), inspire prophets and apostles with divine revelation given to us in the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17), indwell believers (1 Cor. 12:13), pledge the future believer's inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14), convict the sinner (Jn. 16:8-10), regenerate (Jn. 3:5-6), sanctify (Tit. 3:5), instruct (Jn. 14:26), intercede (Rom. 8:26-27), illumine (Jn. 16:13), empower Christian witness and service (1 Cor. 12:4-11), and complete the work of salvation through glorification (2 Cor. 3:18).

At CFBC, we teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural, sovereign, and ultimate agent in regeneration, baptizing believers into the Body of Christ, the Church (1 Cor. 12:13). The Spirit of God indwells every believer from the moment of salvation and it is the duty of believers to be regularly filled with the Spirit of God through the preaching of God's Word, singing psalms and hymns, prayer, observing the ordinances, and fellowship (Eph. 5:18).

We teach that the Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes spiritual gifts to His church for the purpose of building up His body (1 Cor. 12:4-11). The aim of spiritual gifts is always for the edification of the saints (1 Pet. 4:10) and their use should be done in an intelligible and orderly way (1 Cor. 14:6-33).

We teach that speaking in tongues, working of miraculous signs, and the gift of prophecy were uniquely given to the apostles of the risen Christ in the early church for the purpose of confirming and authenticating the message of the gospel (Heb. 1:1-4). Because the Scriptures are now complete and sufficient, we believe those unique sign gifts given to the apostles have ceased. Therefore, the believer must examine and test everything according to Holy Scripture (1 Thess. 5:19-21).

## **The Scriptures**

The Bible is the very word of God and is therefore without error, without fault in all its teaching, and completely trustworthy in all that it asserts (2 Tim 3:16-17). God has the right to establish and command the standard for belief and practice. Therefore, His word is the infallible authority in all matters it touches. Moreover, all truth claims and ethical standards must be tested by God's final Word, which is Scripture alone.

We need the Bible to know God. The only sure, saving, final, and perfect revelation of God is found in Scripture. General revelation is not enough to save us (Rom. 10:14-15). It is in the Scripture that God addresses our judicial standing before Him and the nature of a saving relationship with Him. God's word is clear enough that ordinary people using ordinary means can accurately understand what's necessary for salvation and faithful living.

Furthermore, the Bible offers sufficient teaching, either in prescription or principle, to know all that God has desired us to know, do all that God has desired for us to do, and be all that God has desired us to be (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As the foundation upon which the church is built, Scripture gives us both the content of the church's message and the church's methods. Every decision and aspect of ministry must be in agreement with the Bible.

At CFBC, the sufficiency of Scripture extends to all areas of ministry, including preaching, teaching, and counseling believers unto godliness. Because we are devoted to and trusting in the Word of God, church ministries will seek to bring the Bible to bear on the lives of the congregation.

### **Regulative Principle of Worship**

The corporate worship of God is to be founded upon specific directions of Scripture. Scripture rejects worship offered in accordance with worldly values or directions (Col. 2:16-23). Thus, when the church gathers together for worship, its worship is to be in accordance with Scripture.

There are particular elements of worship that are to highlight the gathering of the saints: reading the Bible (1 Tim. 4:13); preaching the Bible (2 Tim. 4:2); singing (Eph. 5:19); praying (Matt. 21:13); and the exercise of the two ordinances (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Col. 2:11-12). While the regulative principle protects the congregation from impropriety, it does not demand liturgical sameness across all local churches. Rather, it seeks to provide biblical justification for any aspect of public worship.

### **Literal, Grammatical, Historical Interpretation**

While there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, we believe there is only one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical, historical method of exegesis under the illumination of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:6-16). It is the responsibility of believers, especially preachers and teachers, to rightly interpret the Word (2 Tim. 2:15), carefully discerning its original meaning, true intent, and fitting application.

### **Prayer**

Prayer is indispensable to the Christian life. God commanded us to "devote yourselves to prayer" (Col. 4:2). Jesus was devoted to prayer (Mk. 1:35). Prayer shows our dependence on God. It honors Him as the source of all blessing and it reminds us that salvation and spiritual maturity are His work, not ours (1 Cor. 2:14-16).

The Apostles knew that faithful ministry is committed to prayer (Acts 2:42). Religious work or service that is devoid of prayer risks being nothing more than human endeavor or work done in the flesh without eternal significance. Therefore, each aspect of ministry ought to be bathed in

prayer. Corporately, CFBC wants prayer to be modeled in our ministries. Furthermore, as individual Christians, we must continually be in prayer ourselves (1 Thess. 5:17).

At CFBC, we strive to be a praying community of believers because apart from Christ, we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5).

## **Edify the Saints**

Believers are called to edify one another (Jude 1:20). "To edify" means "to encourage" and/or "to build up". Therefore, our local church ministry will have an eye toward building up the believer in the Christian faith (Col. 1:28-29). Love, unity, and maturity within the body of Christ are practically manifested through the obedience of the "one another" commands found in the New Testament.

We encourage church members to actively pursue Christ, His Word, and the fellowship of the saints. Church leadership has the responsibility of equipping members of the congregation to discover and utilize their spiritual gifts for the mutual building up of one another (Eph. 4:11-16). Our prayer is for CFBC to be a community of believers where each individual member faithfully contributes to building up the whole body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:26-30).

## **The Purpose of the Local Church**

The ultimate purpose of the local church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:10). The word "church" means "assembly." Therefore, the church is the assembly of God's chosen and redeemed people who exist to display His glory. God has saved sinners from every nation so that they may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called them out of darkness and into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9).

## **The Priority of the Local Church**

The local church is the primary place where the gospel is preached, protected, and passed on from generation to generation (2 Tim. 2:2). The clear task given to the church is to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). Thus, the local church is where a believer is instructed in God's Word, encouraged, held accountable to their profession by other believers and godly oversight, and trained to disciple and evangelize the world with God's truth.

## **The Ordinances**

The two signs or symbols of the gospel are baptism and communion. God has given the ordinances of baptism and communion to the church to identify and affirm a believer's profession of faith. Baptism is the initiating sign of the New Covenant which identifies a believer with the Triune God and the fellowship of believers where the commands of Christ are to be taught and obeyed. Communion is the renewing sign of the New Covenant which signifies the ongoing familial fellowship of believers.

## **Church Membership**

God has always marked off his chosen people from the world. Whether that was Adam and Eve in the Garden, or Israel in Egypt, or believing exiles in Babylon, or Christians in the world, the Lord makes a distinction between his holy people and the world. Christ gave authority to the church to affirm true gospel confessors and reject false gospel professors (Matt. 16:18-19). In other words, the church is to be composed of born-again believers (1 Cor. 12:12-13). Because of this, we at CFBC engage in the practice of church membership.

Classes will be held to help membership candidates understand what we believe, how we behave, and how to get involved in our mission to glorify God and reach the lost. Furthermore, church elders will conduct membership interviews to examine whether a candidate understands the basics of the gospel, has truly repented and trusted in Christ, and understands their commitment to the local church. While such a process doesn't guarantee salvation, it is our aim to do what we can to substantiate each church member's profession of faith.

## **Church Discipline**

Church discipline is necessary to protect the corporate holiness and testimony of the church. Although some may view "church discipline" negatively, church discipline is part of the discipleship process. Discipline is both formative (e.g. preaching, teaching, discipling, gathering) and corrective (e.g. private rebuke, correction, admonition, and public excommunication).

At CFBC, we aim to apply church discipline as described in Matthew 18. Unrepentant church members who harbor sins that are serious and public may need to undergo formal church discipline processes as outlined in the CFBC Constitution. As a last resort, excommunication, the corporate act of the church in which the unrepentant individual is removed from church membership, may be required.

The aim of discipline is always repentance and restoration for the glory of God. When a believer genuinely repents, they are to be forgiven and received eagerly again into the fellowship lest they are overwhelmed by excessive sorrow over their sin (2 Cor 2:6-11).

## **Discipleship Culture**

Every Christian is a disciple and is called to disciple others (Matt. 28:19-20). A disciple is a pupil or learner of Jesus Christ, while discipling means you are helping others study and obey Jesus Christ by deliberately doing spiritual good to others through the Scriptures and prayer in the local church.

We desire that biblical brotherhood be developed through discipleship at CFBC. Discipleship is not a one-time event nor twelve-week program that changes a Christian immediately. Rather, discipleship is a long, persevering process of growth in Christ through biblical instruction, godly examples, and meaningful relationships (2 Tim. 3:14-17). We desire a network of mutual loving relationships centered upon the Scriptures. Each member in the local church should seek to do spiritual good to other members in the local church for the glory of God. This mind-set focuses on nurturing, training, and growing people. Every program of the church should be evaluated on

whether it is nurturing and growing people in Christ. Ultimately, the aim of discipleship is spiritual maturity and Christ-likeness (Col 1:28-29).

### **Biblical Counseling**

Because we believe that the Scriptures are sufficient for life and godliness, we believe the Scriptures are sufficient to counsel believers through life's most difficult issues. Biblical counseling is distinctly Christian and uses the Scriptures to speak into a believer's life.

Biblical counseling seeks to focus on heart and sin issues, rather than circumstantial or therapeutic issues. Biblical counseling also requires wisdom, patience, and loving relationships. We believe that a healthy church should be the normative and primary place of Christian counseling.

### **Spiritual Disciplines and Personal Holiness**

Christians should strive to be holy because God is Holy (1 Pet. 1:15). When God saves a sinner by His grace, he also sanctifies him by His grace (Tit. 2:11-14). Anyone who gives themselves over to sin habitually, impenitently, and without repentance is not a true believer, for without holiness no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:13). True Christians believe in Christ as both Savior and Lord. Scripture teaches that to know Christ is to obey Christ (Jn. 14:15).

The pursuit of holiness requires grace-driven effort (Phil. 2:12-13). At CFBC, we strive to put sin to death because we have been crucified with Christ and raised in newness of life with Christ (Col. 3:1-17). We aim to exercise self-control and be an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity (1 Tim. 4:12). Regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, service, evangelism, giving, and church attendance are some of the means that God uses in the pursuit of holiness. Holiness marks out the Christian from the world and makes the church distinct from the world.

### **The Role of Biblical Leadership**

The two biblical offices concerning leadership in the local church are elders and deacons. The Scriptures provide a clear description of the qualifications for both elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5. Both offices are needed to ensure the spread of the gospel, maintain the unity and growth of the church.

In the New Testament, the words elder, overseer, and pastor all refer to the same office (Acts 20:17-28). A local church is to be led by a plurality of godly men (Acts 14:23). Only men who meet the biblical qualifications are to be nominated and elected to serve as Christ's under-shepherds, to whom they must give an account (Heb. 13:37). Therefore, the office of elder is reserved for men as part of God's design and function (1 Tim. 2:12).

Deacons are qualified and godly examples to the flock who help maintain the unity of the church by their godly example, meeting tangible needs, and assisting the elders in various ways in order that the elders may continue to prioritize prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). While elders exercise spiritual oversight over the congregation through preaching and teaching, deacons assist the elders in the physical and administrative needs of the congregation (Acts 6:1-7).

## **EVANGELIZE THE LOST**

Every believer is to bear witness concerning the salvation that can only be found in Christ. The proclamation of the Gospel is fundamental to the salvation of the lost (Rom. 10:14). Therefore, the local church should look to ensure that the Gospel is faithfully communicated to the unconverted in an effort to make disciples of the nations (Matt. 28:19-20).

God's purpose in the salvation of each believer is so that they might be to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:5-6). While recognizing that unbelievers cannot be saved apart from receiving the Gospel in faith, Scripture also emphasizes that believers are to live holy and godly lives before an unbelieving world (1 Pet. 2:11-12).

### **The Sovereignty of God in Salvation**

The Bible describes man's condition in his fallen state as utterly helpless and hopeless (Eph. 2:1-3). Apart from divine grace, we would not seek God because of our blindness and sinfulness (Rom. 3:9-20).

Because man is spiritually dead, God must grant new life (Jn. 3:3, Eph. 2:4-5). He grants new birth by His own mercy and initiative in His own timing (Jn. 3:6). Salvation is monergistic, meaning God is the decisive and ultimate reason in creating new spiritual life where there once was no spiritual life. The sovereignty of God salvation means that God decides to save those whom He effectually called according to His own mercy and sovereign initiative in His time (Rom. 8:29).

Therefore, we do not manipulate God's word to appease the sinner. All Christians must faithfully plant and water with the word in ministry, but the decisive and ultimate cause of each conversion is God alone (1 Cor. 3:6).

Our understanding of God's sovereignty in salvation should humble us in worship. We are to pray for God's Spirit to open hearts because the new birth is a miracle of God (Acts 16:14). The responsibility of the Christian is to be faithful to proclaim the Gospel, while God's responsibility is to bring about conversions and saving faith in His own sovereign, merciful, and mysterious timing.

### **Evangelism**

Evangelism is the proclamation of the Gospel in dependence upon the Holy Spirit for the purpose of calling people to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Jn. 3:4-8). Each believer is to bear witness concerning the salvation that only Christ offers. We must be prepared to give a clear and accurate explanation of the Gospel when a suitable occasion arises (1 Pet. 3:15). It is the greatest good a Christian can do for an unbelieving friend or stranger.

Through living holy lives in a godless age and building relationships with those who do not know Christ, believers serve as powerful witnesses to the Gospel. Their sacrifice for others,



commitment to integrity, meeting of needs, hatred of sin, and love for God provide affirming testimony of the saving power of God.

We believe that all members of CFBC comprise a kingdom of priests, ambassadors of Christ, and are those given by God the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19-20). To neglect this stewardship is to refuse to join with Christ in His purpose of coming to earth (Lk. 19:10).

At CFBC, we seek to encourage our body of believers to accept our responsibility to evangelize the lost and to conduct our lives in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27).

## **Missions**

CFBC defines missions as the task of taking the Gospel beyond the immediate influence of the sending church in order to evangelize and to instruct in the Word of God those who have little or no opportunity to hear the gospel. The planting and strengthening local congregations is a natural goal of missions. Through missions, CFBC participates in God's plan on a worldwide scale.

A missionary is a servant of Christ called to proclaim the Gospel, often across geographical and cultural boundaries, in obedience to the Great Commission (Lk. 24:45-47). Missionaries are set apart by the Holy Spirit for service (Acts 13:2). A godly character, faithful service in a local church, and an accurate and thorough knowledge of Scripture are key qualifications of a missionary. Furthermore, those who are sent out as pastors to establish and to lead churches are to meet the biblical qualifications for an elder (1 Tim. 3:1-7).

The church has a responsibility to pray for, identify, train, and send only those who are qualified to be missionaries (3 Jn. 6). A missionary is ultimately accountable to the sending church and serves under the authority of the church (Acts 14:26-27). Since they go forth as God's representatives, the church is to send them in a way that will honor God, and in so doing, the church has the privilege of being a partner with the missionary in spreading the truth (3 Jn. 8).

A para-church ministry is a Christian ministry that operates independently of a local church in its governance and funding. Para-church organizations can be useful and helpful partners in protecting the aims and goals of the local church, but must never be considered a substitute for the local church. At CFBC, partnership with such ministries for the purpose of missions must be predicated on like-minded theology. Furthermore, partnership must not distract the local church from its priority and purpose.