

Spirit Alive! 101

Discover Your Place in Christ and His Church

You are members of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian. Ephesians 2:19 (LB)

INTRODUCTION

We are thrilled you have chosen to find out more about Grace Chapel. It is our desire to support you in your attempts to serve Jesus. Grace Chapel is a wonderful church of people discovering what it means to walk with Jesus in simple ways day by day, applying His instructions to the life situations each of us faces daily.

This seminar is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have people from many different church backgrounds, this seminar was designed to clearly explain who and what our church is.

The basis for this seminar:

...You are a member of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian. Ephesians 2:19 (LB)

Key Truths:

1. The Church is a **family**.
2. God expects you to be **part** of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is a **contradiction**.

OUR PROMISE

Salvation - "What God has done for us."

For now we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and we who have been baptized into union with Christ are enveloped by Him. We are no longer Jews or Gentiles, or slaves or free men, or even merely men or women, but we are all the same - we are Christians; we are one in Jesus Christ! Galations 3:26-28 (LB)

What Does it Mean to be a Christian?

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing "Why?" They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God's purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, "What is the meaning of my life?"

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways:

- ◆ Some look for happiness by acquiring **possessions**.
- ◆ Some look for happiness by experiencing **pleasure**.
- ◆ Some look for happiness by gaining **prestige** and **power**.

But real happiness comes from understanding my **purpose for life**.

I. Why Am I Here?

1. God made me so that He could LOVE me.

God says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love!" Jeremiah 31:3

Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ...because of His LOVE, God had already decided that through Jesus Christ He would make us His children - this was God's pleasure and purpose. Ephesians 1:4-5

2. We were created to have an enjoy a personal relationship with God and to manage all of the rest of God’s creation! This makes us special!

So God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said...”live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge.” Genesis 1:27-28 (LB)

Jesus said, “I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness!” John 10:10

3. When we know and love God, and live in harmony with His purpose for our lives, it produces tremendous benefits in our life.

*Clear Conscience
Romans 8:1*

*Life & Peace
Romans 8:6*

*Help with Weakness
Romans 8:26*

*Purpose
Romans 8:28*

*Confidence
Romans 8:31*

*Security
Romans 8:39*

*Power & Strength
Philippians 4:13*

*Fulfillment
Philippians 4:19*

*Freedom
John 8:32, 36*

This is the kind of life-style God intends for us to live.

Why then aren’t most people really happy?

II. What’s the problem?

1. Man has a natural desire to BE SELFISH and to ignore God’s principles for living.

- ◆ “Look out for #1. Do your own thing.”
- ◆ “If it feels good, do it - regardless of what God says about it.”
- ◆ “It’s my life and I’ll do what I want to!”

2. The Bible calls this attitude SIN.

All of us, like sheep have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way. Isaiah 53:6

If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth. 1 John 1:8

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.

The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God. Isaiah 59:2 (LB)

All have sinned and fallen short of God's glorious ideal. Romans 3:23

- 3. When our relationship to God is not right, it causes problems in every area of our lives - marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.**

When people have problems, they often try many different ways of coping before turning to God.

There are ways that seem right to man, but they only end in death. Proverbs 16:25

- 4. Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:**

- ◆ “My mother was a Christian so...” **Heritage**
- ◆ “It doesn’t matter what you believe, just be sincere.” **Sincerity**
- ◆ “I’ll give up all my bad habits.” **Subtraction**
- ◆ “I’ll be religious and go to church.” **Identification**

III. What’s the solution?

Jesus Christ said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me!” John 14:6

- 1. God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself.** If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way is a Person!

2. **Jesus has already taken care of your sin problem!**
The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23

3. **God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.**
God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind. 1 Timothy 2:5

4. **God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him.**
He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us.

IV. What does God want me to do?

1. **ADMIT that God has not been first place in your life.**
All have sinned and fallen short of God's glorious ideals. Romans 3:22

2. **BELIEVE that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that He rose again, and is alive today.**
If you confess that Jesus is your Lord, and you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

3. **ACCEPT God's free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it.**
For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Romans 6:23

For it is by grace you are saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us!

4. **INVITE Jesus Christ to come into your life, forgive your sin, and be the director “Lord” of your life.**

To all who receive Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who believe this are reborn! - not a physical rebirth ... but from the will of God! John 1:12-13

Jesus says, “Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...” Rev. 3:20

*Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.
Romans 10:13*

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BAPTIZED

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the Church two visible symbols (called “ordinances”) as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are: Water Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Why Should I Be Baptized?

1. **To follow the example set by Jesus.**

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river. Mark 1:9

2. **Because Christ commanded it.**

*Jesus said, “Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and then teach them to obey everything I commanded you.”
Matthew 28:19-20*

3. **It demonstrates that I really am a believer.**

*...Many of the people who heard Him believed and were baptized.
Acts 18:8*

*We know that we have come to know Him, if we obey His commands.
1 John 2:3*

What Is The Meaning of Baptism?

1. **It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.**
Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He rose again. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
2. **It illustrates my NEW LIFE as a Christian.**
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Baptism does not make you a believer - it shows that you already are a believer. Baptism does not "save you", only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring - it's the outward symbol of the commitment you've made in your heart.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8

Why Be Baptized By Immersion?

1. **Because JESUS was baptized that way.**
2. **Every baptism in the BIBLE was by immersion.**
(Example) ...then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water... Acts 6:38-39
3. **The word "baptize" means to "DIP UNDER" water.**
4. **It best symbolizes a BURIAL and RESURRECTIONION .**
We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:4

Who Should Be Baptized?

1. **Every person who has BELIEVED in Christ.**
Those who believed and accepted his message were baptized... Acts 2:41

But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News...and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12

At Grace Chapel, we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

Some churches practice a “baptism of confirmation” for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on the behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their children in the faith until the child is old enough to make their own personal confession of Christ. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed.

This is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose of baptism is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ. Therefore we encourage everyone at Grace Chapel, to be baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though many of you may have been “confirmed” as a child.

Please feel free to pick up a complimentary CD or DVD on the “Significance of Water Baptism” for a more detailed explanation of Water Baptism’s importance in your life.

The Meaning Of The Lord’s Supper

What is the Lord’s Supper? *(1 Corinthians 11:23-36)*

1. **It is a simple act, not an elaborate ceremony.**
The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread... Verse 23
2. **It is a reminder.**
...And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; eat in remembrance of me.” Verse 25
3. **It is a symbol.**
In the same way, He took the cup saying, “This cup is the New Covenant in my blood; drink it to remember me.” Verse 25
4. **It is a statement of your faith.**
For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes back. Verse 26

How Do I Prepare Myself for the Lord's Supper?

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A person ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 1 Corinthians 11:27-28

Prepare by....

- Self-examination (*Verse 27*)
- Confessing my sins (*1 John 1:9*)
- Recommitment of my life (*Romans 12:1*)
- Restoring relationships (*Matthew 5:23*)

When and How Often Should We Observe the Communion?

1. Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe it, he only told us how.
2. Here at Grace Chapel, we typically celebrate it a few times each month or between message series.

FOUR GOALS OF AN EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN:

1. The Mark toward Membership

This is a commitment to **Christ** and **Grace Chapel Family**.

You are members of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian. Ephesians 2:19 (LB)

2. The Pursuit of Maturity

This is a commitment to the **habit** necessary for **spiritual growth**.

Continue to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18 - Take the time and trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit. 1 Timothy 4:7 (PH)

3. The Response to Ministry

This is a commitment to **discovering** and using my God-given gifts and abilities in **servicing** God and others.

God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other. 1 Peter 4:10 (LB)

4. The Call to Mission

This is a commitment to **sharing** the Good News with others and extending invitation.

...You will be my witnesses for me...to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do it with gentleness and respect... 1 Peter 3:15

Why Do We Have These Goals?

Because we will become what we are committed to.

Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them and so will all who trust in them. Psalm 115:3-8 NIV

DOING CHURCH AS A TEAM

For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace... Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. 1 Corinthians 14:33,40

How Our Church Is Structured

The structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions.

The Nature of the Church Determines It's Structure.

1. The Church is a FELLOWSHIP.

They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles, and joined in the fellowship... Acts 2:42 (PH)

2. A top priority in a fellowship is HARMONY and UNITY.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3

So let us concentrate on the things that make for harmony and the growth of our fellowship together. Romans 14:19

A good structure promotes unity and downplays DIFFERENCES.

*Often your meetings do more harm than good because I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you...
1 Corinthians 11:17-18*

3. The Church is like a FAMILY.

(1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 2:19)

We are a Body - not a business! We are an organism - not an organization!

Therefore we function on the basis of **relationships** not **rules**.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We each have different gifts according to the grace given us. Romans 12:4-6

In an organization “maintenance” becomes the focus. But in a organism “ministry” is the focus.

Here at Grace Chapel we have a simple structure so we can maximize ministry and minimize maintenance.

*God gave ...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry so that the Body of Christ may be built up.
Ephesians 4:11-12 - II Corinthians 11:3*

Our Structure:

- **The people are the ministers (players).**
- **The pastors are the equippers (player/coaches).**

4. The most effective design for a church is to do it together as a TEAM.

Eccl. 4:9-12; Ps. 133:1; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pt. 2:4-9.

5. The Church is a FLOCK.

This was Jesus’ favorite description of the church: *John 10:1-30; Matthew 25:31*

Therefore it is cared for and led by **shepherds**.

Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Do you really love me?” ‘Yes Lord,’ said Peter. “Then take care of my sheep.” John 21:16-17

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leaders:

- “Poimen” - Pastor, shepherd
- “Presbuteros” - Elder, Spiritual Maturity
- “Episcopos” - Overseer, Bishop

To the elders I say...Be shepherds of God’s flock, serving as overseers... 1 Peter 5:1-2

Making Grace Chapel Your Home Church:

What is membership mean at Grace Chapel?

Simply stated, it is confirming God’s placement of you in this church for this season of your life. Everybody needs a home church. In your home church you will have much to receive and much to give! You don’t necessarily need to be a member to attend Grace Chapel, but membership takes you to the next step from saying, “I attend Grace Chapel” to “I belong at Grace Chapel.”

It also helps us at to know whom God is putting under our oversight. He’s asked us to be faithful in shepherding those under our care. At Grace Chapel, we can’t do that unless we know who they are!

The difference between “attending” and “becoming part” can be summed up in one word: **COMMITMENT**.

At Grace Chapel we recognize the need to identify with our church family. We believe it’s important to make Grace Chapel your church home for four reasons:

1. **A BIBLICAL reason: Christ is committed to the church.**
...Christ loved the Church, and gave His life for it. Ephesians 5:25

2. **A CULTURAL reason: It is an antidote to our culture.**

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything...a job...a marriage...our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers and hoppers.” Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer religion.” It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

3. **A PRACTICAL reason: It defines who can be counted on.**

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family.

4. **A PERSONAL reason: It produces spiritual growth.**

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you are not committed to any specific church family.