

# Foundations of Grace Bible Church of Rancho Cucamonga

## Our Mission

For the glory of God, Grace Bible Church exists to make faithful followers of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Faithful followers of Christ will glorify God by knowing His unique greatness, valuing this above all else, and living to make His greatness known to others.

In other words, we are “*Living for the fame of the true God.*”

## Our Ministry Priorities

These priorities direct *how* Grace Bible Church makes faithful followers of Christ (Matt. 28:19).

Grace Bible Church exists to make faithful followers of Christ by...

- *encouraging corporate worship:*
  - through vocal and instrumental music to God and about God
  - through verbal praise to God (prayer) and about God (testifying)
  - through submission to God by giving and responding to His Word
  
- *encouraging corporate prayer*
  
- *faithfully teaching the Bible:*
  - through public teaching of the Word by the elders and other faithful men who are gifted to teach
  - through small group teaching by elders and others in the church who are spiritually mature and gifted to teach
  - through individual interaction that provides opportunities for exhortation and training
  
- *encouraging evangelism:*
  - by equipping the saints to share the Gospel

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<sup>1</sup> I Cor. 10:31; Eph. 3:21; Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8

- by provoking one another to faithful evangelism
- by sending, supporting, praying for, and communicating with church planting efforts locally and around the world
- *diligently **shepherding** the flock with exemplary church leadership*
- *building **edifying relationships***
  - by providing opportunities for enjoying our unity in Christ
  - by providing opportunities for encouraging one another
  - by providing opportunities for exhorting one another

### **Our Ministry Values**

These values are designed to provide direction for the ministry, prevent misunderstanding on common issues, and define some of the key distinctives which mark Grace Bible Church.

#### ***Foundational Values***

- We value Scripture as inerrant, sufficient, and potent in its nature and central in its role in the church. Proclaiming, explaining, applying, and obeying Scripture is the central focus of Grace Bible Church.<sup>2</sup>
- We value the local church as the primary platform for God’s work in the world today.<sup>3</sup>
- We value repentance as an essential but often-neglected element of a biblically faithful proclamation of the gospel.<sup>4</sup>
- We value the Holy Spirit as the source of God’s enablement for ministry.<sup>5</sup>

#### ***Distinctive Values***

- We value the authoritative preaching and teaching of the Word of God for the edification of the believer.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> II Tim. 3:16-17; II Cor. 3:18

<sup>3</sup> The New Testament emphasizes the importance of corporate Christianity (not merely individual Christianity) for both evangelism and edification: Eph. 2:11-22, 4:16; Gal. 3:28; John 17:23, 13:34-35; I Tim. 3:15.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30, 20:21

<sup>5</sup> Acts 1:8

- We value the eager pursuit of unity with faithful brethren in the body of Christ<sup>7</sup> while obeying biblical commands to separate from the world, false teachers, and clearly disobedient brethren.<sup>8</sup> We will not endorse ecumenism, contemporary Christian music, the charismatic movement, the church growth movement, or any other unbiblical philosophy or methodology.
- We value the growth and reproduction of churches as the primary God-given strategy for obeying the Great Commission.<sup>9</sup> We prioritize “community church” over “clubhouse church” (prioritizing the community around the church rather than all those within driving distance); saturation church planting rather than mega-church planting; and multiplying churches rather than growing *a* church.
- We value an evangelistic strategy that prioritizes “going” (interacting with people where they are, Matt. 28:19) and prioritizes the networks of relationships that Christians already have.<sup>10</sup>
- We value edification as an appropriate priority for the church; it is improper to over-emphasize either evangelism or edification at the expense of the other.<sup>11</sup> In conjunction with this, we value the role of individual Christians in assisting one another in becoming faithful followers of Christ.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Acts 2:42; 18:11; Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:28; II Tim. 3:16-4:4

<sup>7</sup> I Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3; Phil. 2:2

<sup>8</sup> I John 2:15-17; II Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 1:8-9; Rom. 16:17-18; I Tim. 1:20, 5:20; II Thes. 3:6, 14-15

<sup>9</sup> The entire book of Acts provides the biblical support for this priority. The early church understood the Great Commission to mean church planting, not merely individual evangelism and edification.

<sup>10</sup> Mark 5:19; John 1:41-49; 4:25-30; Acts 16:34. What we are referring to is commonly called “incarnational evangelism.” This term effectively communicates the concept that as Christ left glory and became a man to reach mankind, so Christians need to leave their comfort and reorient their lives as necessary to reach the lost. In another sense, however, it is a severe misnomer, because Christ’s incarnation is infinitely greater and infinitely different than anything we could ever do.

<sup>11</sup> Eph. 4:11-16; Matt. 28:20

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 15:14; Gal. 6:1-2; Col. 3:16; I Thes. 5:11, 14; II Tim. 2:2; Titus 2:3-4; Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25; James 5:19-20

- We value assimilation (careful attention, teaching, and relationship building to assist a new convert in adjusting to Christian living and the body of believers).<sup>13</sup>
- We value families, as a biblical priority for evangelism and discipleship.<sup>14</sup>
- We value patience, faithfulness, and long-term ministry.<sup>15</sup>
- We value suffering.<sup>16</sup>
- We value the ministry of mercy between believers first and then extending to others that God brings across our paths.<sup>17</sup>
- We value tradition (the heritage and wisdom of godly men who have gone before us) while valuing flexibility and freshness within biblical limits for ministry.<sup>18</sup>
- We value team ministry as a New Testament priority, and as a logical consequence of valuing church (corporate Christianity).<sup>19</sup>
- We value large and strategic cities because they were a priority in Paul's church planting;<sup>20</sup> because they are centers of power that impact entire regions;<sup>21</sup> and because their instability brings unique opportunities for the gospel.
- We value "indigenous" leadership and leadership training.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Acts 2:41-42; 14:22; I Thes. 3:2 (*sterizo* = make stable, place firmly), 5:14

<sup>14</sup> Acts 16:14-15, 31; 18:8; I Pet. 3:1-6; Eph. 5:25-6:4; Deut. 6:4-9

<sup>15</sup> I Cor. 3:6-7; Hebrews 12:1; II Cor. 6:4

<sup>16</sup> Mark 10:29-30; Acts 14:22; Philippians 1:29; 4:12-13

<sup>17</sup> Galatians 6:10; James 1:27; Acts 6:1-6; Luke 10:25-37

<sup>18</sup> Lev. 19:32; I Peter 5:5; I Cor. 9:19-22

<sup>19</sup> Acts 13:2, 5; 15:36-41; 16:1-3, 6-10; 18:18; 19:22, 29; 20:4

<sup>20</sup> Syrian Antioch, Salamis, Paphos, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, Perga, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome were all either large or strategic cities

<sup>21</sup> see Rom. 15:19 with Acts 13:49, 19:10; Rom. 1:8; I Thess. 1:7-8

<sup>22</sup> II Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:5-9

- We value the faithful, sacrificial, and honest stewardship of the material resources that God provides.<sup>23</sup>
- We value the Word of God above any theological system or denominational label. While understanding that we must define and explain our positions, we are not eager to define ourselves by labels, lists, or systems (such as “Baptist,” “Calvinist,” or “Reformed”). We agree that “if we insist on devising a complete answer to every question and fitting every verse into a system that we find logically comfortable and easily explicable, the impasse [i.e., the unresolvable conflict between those choosing different labels or systems] will always remain. Our only choice will be to side with one view or another – accepting all the strengths and rationalizing all the weaknesses of whatever position we choose. But there is another startlingly uncomplicated alternative .... Let the Bible say what it says – plainly, unadorned by logic and rationalization, without removing its teeth, without tinkering with the terminology – even if you cannot fully understand or explain it.”<sup>24</sup> Much damage has been done to the unity of the body of Christ by arguing and separating over labels we have chosen rather than the Word of God. We will discuss, fight for, and separate over the clear truths of Scripture. But these discussions should be about Scripture, not systems or labels.
- We value any Bible translation which faithfully, reverently, and skillfully renders the words of the original languages into another language.

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<sup>23</sup> I Timothy 3:3; Luke 16:10-13

<sup>24</sup> Layton Talbert, *Not By Chance* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2001), 250.

## **Ministry Priorities Expanded: Evangelism**

Grace Bible Church exists to make faithful followers of Christ by...

*encouraging evangelism:*

- through equipping the saints to share the Gospel
- through provoking one another to faithful evangelism
- through sending, supporting, praying for, and communicating with church planting efforts locally and around the world

Evangelism is central to the ministry of the church because it is central to the Great Commission. “Making disciples” must begin with calling people to repentance and faith in Christ. Jesus used the metaphor of fishing to make it clear that Christians must aggressively pursue evangelism (Mark 1:17). Only moments after the church was born, they were already preaching the gospel (Acts 2:14). The rest of the book of Acts shows us that the early church undertook aggressive church planting as the primary method of spreading the Gospel.

Christ gives gifted men to the church to equip the saints for the job of service (Eph. 4:11-12). One key area of service is sharing the Gospel. Therefore, the church must be equipping the individual members, providing them with knowledge, ideas, practice, materials, and opportunities for evangelism.

Paul reminded Timothy to be “an example ... in conduct,” and charged him to “do the work of an evangelist” (I Tim. 4:12; II Tim. 4:5). Church leadership should not only equip the people for evangelism but also set the proper example of evangelistic zeal.

Heb. 10:24 challenges believers “to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.” Believers should be challenging, helping, and encouraging one another in evangelism.

Because the book of Acts demonstrates a pattern of churches planting churches, each local church should also be involved in pooling resources to plant churches locally and around the world. The church should support global church planting by sending (Acts 13:1-4, Rom. 10:15), supporting (III John 5-8, Phil. 4:15-16), communicating (Acts 14:26-27), and praying (Matt. 9:36-38; II Thes. 3:1-2).

## **Ministry Priorities Expanded: Prayer**

Grace Bible Church exists to make faithful followers of Christ by...

*encouraging corporate prayer*

Corporate prayer was central in the church immediately after its inception. (Acts 2:42) There are several examples of corporate prayer in the life of the early church:

- Acts 4:23-31 (for boldness in witnessing)
- 12:5, 12 (for Peter's deliverance from prison)
- 13:3 (for blessing on missionaries being sent out)
- 6:6 (for blessing on new deacons)

Paul urged the church to corporate prayer for all men, for authorities, and especially for the unsaved. (I Tim. 2:1-4, 8)

### **Ministry Priorities Expanded: Edifying Relationships**

Grace Bible Church exists to make faithful followers of Christ by...

*building edifying relationships:*

- by enjoying our unity in Christ
- by encouraging one another
- by exhorting one another

### **Enjoying**

The first church was from the very beginning "continually devoting themselves to ... fellowship," regularly meeting together (Acts 2:42,46). Hebrews 10:25 warns against "forsaking" that kind of regular "assembling together." It is not surprising that Christians should desire to be together, since we are one in Christ, and have a living connection with one another (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:25; John 17:11). We should demonstrate a common mind, love, spirit, and purpose (Phil. 2:1-2). We have a brotherly love for one another (Rom. 12:10). There should be "no division in the body" (I Cor. 12:25) and no envy or strife (Gal. 5:26). Instead, we treat one another with great patience, humility, and love (Eph. 4:2). Living out this unity is part of our testimony to the world (John 17:21, 23).

The Lord's Supper gives us a special opportunity to enjoy our unity, as we all partake of the physical reminders that we are partakers of Christ together (I Cor. 10:16-17).

### **Encouraging**

We are specifically told to come together to “encourage one another” (Heb. 10:25; I Thes. 5:14). We can do this by providing for the needs of one another and serving one another (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 11:27-30; Rom. 12:13; 15:26; Gal. 5:13). It is also very important that we “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep,” sharing in life's victories and struggles with one another (Rom. 12:15; I Cor. 12:26; Gal. 6:2). Sometimes we need to comfort one another with the promises of Scripture (I Thes. 4:18; 5:11).

### **Exhorting**

Heb. 3:13 commands us to exhort one another daily because we are all prone to be deceived and hardened by sin. Sometimes we must try to turn one of our brothers back to the way of truth, or restore one who has been overtaken by sin (James 5:19-20; Gal. 6:1). We are to admonish those who step away from biblical living (I Thes. 5:14). We need to confess our faults to one another and pray for one another (James 5:16).

Believers ought to mature to the point where we are all “teachers” of one another, admonishing one another, and “stimulating one another to love and good deeds” (Heb. 5:12; Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:24).

Proper fellowship demands a balanced mix of these three types.

## **Ministry Priorities Expanded: Shepherding**

Grace Bible Church exists to make faithful followers of Christ by...

*the diligent shepherding of the flock by exemplary church leadership*

Christ is the Head of the church, and He is the only ultimate authority for the church (Eph. 5:23, Col. 1:18). Those in church leadership under Him exist to do His bidding, to follow His will, and to exalt His kingdom and work. All of their biblically ordained ministries converge in the Great Commission goal of “making disciples” of Christ. They are merely servants of Christ leading people to Christ. These men follow the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2, 15:28, etc.) as they lead under the authority of Christ.

Several terms are used in Scripture to describe the primary leaders in the church: *elder*, *overseer*, and *shepherd*. The New Testament is full of words and phrases that help to describe the activity of these men. For example, they are responsible to oversee the believers (the “flock” Acts 20:18; I Pet. 5:2) in a local church (Phil. 1:1; I Pet. 5:1-3). They “rule,” which means to be responsible for, take charge, care for (I Tim. 5:17). They “take care of the church of God” and are leaders for the church (I Tim. 3:5; Heb. 13:7, 17; Rom. 12:8). They provide leadership in doctrinal issues, supervise the use of finances, and communicate and assist in church planting efforts (Acts 15; 11:30; 21:17-19). They work hard at preaching and teaching to feed the flock (I Tim. 5:17; see I Cor. 3:1-2 and Heb. 5:12-14 for the “feeding” metaphor). They are shepherds for God’s flock (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28; John 21:15-17; I Pet. 2:25). They pray for the sick and anoint them with oil (James 5:14). They warn, admonish, and encourage the flock (II Tim. 2:24-26; 4:2; II Thes. 5:14; Col. 1:28; I Thes. 5:12; while this is clearly a key part of the elder’s role, note that passages like II Thes. 5:14, Gal. 6:1-5, and Hebrews 3:12-13 make clear that the whole church should be doing this). They equip the saints to do the kind of serving that leads to the strengthening of the body of Christ; to equip the saints so that “the whole body ... causes the growth of the body” (Eph. 4:11-16). They also guard the flock from false teaching (Titus 2:1; I Tim. 1:3-4; etc.). They insure the loving but firm exercise of church discipline for the purity of the church and restoration of the believer (Matt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5:1-5, 9-13). They diligently pray for the flock (Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:4; II Thes. 1:11), and prepare leaders for the church (II Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:5).

Scripture also gives several necessary characteristics of these men. They must lead with their godly example (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; I Peter 5:3; I Tim. 5:20). They must lead diligently (Rom. 12:8). They must be watchful, paying close attention to the needs of the flock (Acts 20:28, 31). They labour to the point of weariness (I Thes. 5:12). They understand that godly leadership comes from a heart of humble service (Matt. 20:26-28).

## Ministry Priorities Expanded: Teaching\*

Grace Bible Church exists to make faithful followers of Christ by...

*teaching...*

- through public teaching of the Word by the elders and other faithful men who are gifted to teach
- through small group teaching by elders and others in the church who are spiritually mature and gifted to teach
- through individual interaction that provides opportunities for exhortation and training

Teaching is at the very heart of the Great Commission; passing along “all things” that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:20). From the first days of the early church, one of the essentials that they “devoted themselves to” was the teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42). The word “prescribe” in I Timothy 4:11 (joined with “teach”) makes clear the basic reality of teaching: passing along God’s message to men. Teaching is simply communicating the instructions of the commander to the subordinates. Col. 1:28 reveals both the content and goal of teaching. The content of our teaching is Christ and Christlikeness as seen in the Word; the goal of our teaching is to develop every man to a mature Christlikeness (also Eph. 4:13-15).

The ability to teach is required of all elders in the church, and this constitutes one of the primary responsibilities of an elder (I Tim. 3:2; II Tim. 2:24; Eph. 4:11; note that this one qualification is *the* primary difference between elders and deacons in the Pastoral Epistles). Elders must also be able to expose the error of those who contradict the truth (Titus 1:9). Paul explained to Timothy that since the Word is the all-sufficient tool for the pastor (II Tim. 3:16-17), therefore he just needs to proclaim it (4:2)! It is fitting for elders to labor in the Word and teaching, for these elders are worthy of double honor (I Tim. 4:17). Elders must handle the word with great care (II Tim. 2:15), and strive to feed the people with a balanced “diet” utilizing all of God’s revelation (Acts 20:27).

Paul reminded Timothy to pay close attention to his teaching (I Tim. 4:13, 16; cf. Titus 1:9, 2:1). The church must ensure that teaching is free from any mixture of error (“sound”) and in line with godliness (I Tim. 6:3; Titus 2:7). These precautions are necessary because some will bring doctrines of demons (I Tim. 4:1). Men of corrupt doctrine will try to lead Christians astray (Eph. 4:14), and the church must be grounded so that they are not blown off course by these men (Rev. 2:20, Heb. 13:9, Rom. 16:17-18). Some teachers will even teach what pleases people just for money (Titus 1:11). Sadly, some will reject pure teaching and pursue these men (II Tim. 4:2-3).

While the church must not subtract from the Word to make it more acceptable to the hearers, they must also avoid adding to the Word by exalting man-made teachings to the level of God’s Word (Matt. 15:9). The church must remain faithful to the sound doctrine of Christ – any commander would be furious if he found that his messenger was changing the message before delivering it!

Teaching is a spiritual gift given to some in the church, and some may have this gift though they are not elders (Rom. 12:7; I Cor. 12:28-29; Acts 13:1). Women are not permitted to teach men in the church (I Tim. 2:12).

Beyond the special responsibility of elders, other Christians in the church should mature to the point where they too are teachers (Hebrews 5:12). However, teaching is not something to be undertaken lightly, for teachers will have additional accountability before God (James 3:1). God says that those who are minimizing or ignoring His commandments and teaching others to do the same (or teaching others to obey them while disobeying them yourself) are of no value in His kingdom (Matt. 5:19). Therefore the men that should be entrusted with teaching in the church are those who are trustworthy, men who have shown themselves to be faithful (II Tim. 2:2). Col. 3:16 explains that all Christians can participate in teaching one another through music.

The depth of the teaching should change as the hearers mature: basic “milk” is appropriate for some, but others need challenged with “meat” (Hebrews 5:12). We rely upon the Spirit to assist us in understanding and explaining the things of God through the Word (I Cor. 2:13; John 14:26). We teach gently, like training a young child (II Tim. 2:25).

Those who teach should also regularly utilize the public reading of Scripture (I Tim. 4:13).

\*note: The words *teaching* and *preaching* are nearly synonymous in the New Testament (see Acts 15:35, Col. 1:28, Acts 28:31, etc.). Both words are used for proclaiming the gospel to the unsaved, and both words are used for explaining the Scriptures to Christians. However, the word “teaching” is definitely the word used most when talking about the church, and “preaching” is used most concerning proclaiming

the gospel to unsaved people (there are a few exceptions in both cases, II Tim. 4:2 being the most notable). Because of these things, it is acceptable to refer to the proclamation of the Word in the church as either preaching or teaching, though it is preferable to use the word *teaching* since the NT prefers it.

## **Ministry Priorities Expanded: Worship**

Grace Bible Church exists to make faithful followers of Christ by...

*encouraging corporate worship:*

- Through vocal and instrumental music to God and about God
- Through verbal praise to God (prayer) and about God (testifying)
- Through submission to God by giving and responding to His Word

Worship is an Old Testament command. (I Chron. 16:29) The Psalmist calls God's people to corporate singing to the Lord and thanksgiving. (Ps. 95) The Old Testament commands praising Him with instruments, not just voices. (Ps. 150:3-6) Worship involves corporately "bowing down" and "kneeling" to God in submission to His voice. (Psalm 95:1-11) Worship is something God desires from His people in this age (John 4:20-24; Phil. 3:3), and corporate worship is something we will do in Heaven. (Rev. 4:10-11, 5:8-14, 7:11-12, etc.) Acts 2:46-47 gives us the only clear New Testament example of corporate praise. Colossians 3:16 (and Eph. 5:19-20) exhorts us to corporately "sing with thankfulness in our hearts to the Lord." Our "sacrifice of praise" involves "giving thanks to His name." (Heb. 13:15) Revelation 5:8-14 clarifies different types of worship: it includes praise to God (8-10) and testifying about God (11-14); it involves both singing (9-10) and speaking (11-14).

Submission is clearly an element of worship (Rev. 5:14), but exactly how that happens corporately is not clear biblically. The NT certainly doesn't make an explicit connection between this and preaching; so we do not feel comfortable saying that preaching is an element of worship. However, it logically could be an element. The same thing is true of giving. Giving is definitely worship (Phil. 4:18), but nowhere does the New Testament indicate that giving must be corporate, nor that it is an element of corporate worship; but it is logical that it could be.

As the primary leaders and examples for the church, the elders should lead public worship if possible. They should not personally shun or completely delegate an area that is so crucial to the life of the church.

