

“Knowing Your Local Church”

New Member's Class – Pt. 1

NEW MEMBER's CLASS Outline ...Getting to Know You

Session 1 - **Knowing Your Local Church** ...Defining the setting and mission; Local church governance and SGC association;

Session 2 - **Knowing what your church believes** – Doctrines, beliefs, teaching emphasis

Session 3 - **Knowing your role in the Local Church** – Church Covenant; Being Disciples and making disciples; Taking ownership of membership

Session 4 - **Knowing How to Connect as a Church Member** – Practical Engagement of the ministries of LCC

INTRO ... “Getting to Know You”

- **Getting to Know us “on Paper”**

- **Statement of Faith** – a brief summary of the core doctrines of the faith
- **Church Covenant** – a series of beliefs and practices that summarize our commitment to Biblical Christianity

1 **Tim 3:14-16** I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth.

1 **Tim 4:6, 11, 13** If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. ...¹¹ Command and teach these things. ... ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

- **Getting to Know us in Person**

- Attend the church long enough to sense the Lord's leading to become a member
- Attend the new member's class
- Participate in a small group

- **Getting to Know You**

- Provide a written testimony of your conversion to Christ and that you've been water baptized since you became a Christian
- Read and sign the LCC Church Covenant (as a statement of your intentions to follow Christ and live a life that is consistent with the teachings of Scripture)
- Meet with one of the pastors

What is the Local Church? ... The Local Church is 2 Things: (1) It is a Relational & Functional Setting ... (2) It is a Missional Setting (we are on a mission together).

(1) A RELATIONAL & FUNCTIONAL SETTING

- **The Local Church as a FLOCK** – a group or segment of the Sheep

¹ Peter 5:1-5 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. ⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

"among you" (critically Important!) ...it gives our lives "Territory" & Familiarity

- **The Local Church as a Family/Household**

Eph 2:18-19 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

...Family relationships and implications (unity, harmony, equal belonging)

¹ Tim 3:14-16 I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth.

...There's a RIGHT WAY to take part in the Church

- **The Local Church as a Body**

¹ Cor 12:12, 14 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ...¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

Eph 4:11-16 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

- **One of the Most Important Strategic DISCIPLESHIP Verses in Scripture!**

(2) A MISSIONAL SETTING

The Tale of 2 Plaques

Matt 11:28-29 ...“Come to me, all who are labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

- **The Local Church as a REFUGE in a Fallen World**
 - Here are the 'elements' of the Fallen World Out there
 - Sin ...Spiritual forces of wickedness ...Temptations ...Suffering
 - *Being a "Community of Healing" in this world takes care, knowledge, expertise, training, skill*—just like a hospital staff. What to say/not to say ...when to push, when to back-off ...how to encourage and not just correct ...
 - **Gospel + Safety + Time = Gospel Culture** —Ray Ortlund

...It Means Learning to Be a Community Where the Weary Find a Welcome! ...And Learning to Be a Community that is Shaped by Biblical Convictions!

Matt 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- **The Local Church is a launching pad of the gospel into our community and into the world**
 - Local/Community Efforts of Outreach
 - ...YOU are the Outreach Epicenters of LCC ...the settings of your Everyday Lives are the Most Important Locations & Structures for meaningful evangelism!!
 - Organizations and Local Ministry Partnerships
 - Global Ministry
 - SGC
 - Regional Support, Care, and Equipping
 - Global Church Planting and Strengthening of Church Leaders & Networks
 - Rancho 3M

Session 2 – Knowing What Your Local Church Believes

INTRO ... “Doctrinally Driven”

- “Doctrine” is simply an identified and defined collection of ideas (The doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the Scriptures, the doctrine of church governance, etc.) ...Since we all live out of our understood and accepted ideas—Doctrine is Important!
- Christianity is based in “Truth” (Jn 17:17 *“Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth.”*), thus it is defined by specific ideas, and it rejects other ideas—thus “doctrine” is important.
- We emphasize teaching a lot

2 Doctrinal Documents (to help you know what we believe)

- SGC Statement of Faith (See Handout) (There are 13 Categories in our Statement of Faith)
- SGC 7 Shared Values (See Addendum)
- Clarifying Issues in Current Church Culture
 - Reformed Theology
 - The Present-Day Ministry of the Holy Spirit
 - Church Leadership/Governance – “Elder Led Churches”
 - Complementarian View of Men & Women

“Reformed Theology” (God-Centered)

“I have put on my blackboard a brief diagram where I distinguish between two approaches to the question of faith. One I call “God-centered,” and the other I call “man-centered.”
R.C. Sproul, *What is Reformed Theology?*

The heart and soul of Reformed theology is the glory of the triune God ([Ps. 96:3](#); [John 17:1](#)). For this reason, it is often called “God-centered” theology. B. B. Warfield said, “The Calvinist, in a word, is the man who sees God. . . God in nature, God in history, God in grace. Everywhere he sees God in His mighty stepping, everywhere he feels the working of His mighty arm, the throbbing of His mighty heart.” The magnificent obsession of Reformed Christianity, and indeed the very purpose for which mankind exists, is “to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever,” as the Westminster Shorter Catechism says. **Joel Beeke & Paul Smalley, *10 Things to Know about Reformed Theology*** (Crossway)

Ephesians 1:3-14 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ **to the praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be **to the praise of his glory**. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, **to the praise of his glory**. (ESV)

Romans 9:10-16 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— ¹² she was told, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³ As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."
¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. (ESV)

John 1:11-13 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (ESV)

Reformed Theology places the emphasis on God and His determined will/purpose—while not ignoring the meaningfulness of human responsibility.

...to read the Scriptures and the bold statements found there, we must be prepared to accept some level of mystery, lest we force the Scriptures to one side of the Bible over the other. The Scriptures clearly speak of Divine Sovereignty AND Human Responsibility. One's doctrine (collected ideas from Scripture) should not eliminate either—ie, we don't reduce God's Sovereignty & Providence by elevating "human free will" to be the dominant factor that controls the outcome of the universe and man; nor do we treat human responsibility as inconsequential and ignore the mysterious role God has assigned to human activities like obedience, prayer, evangelism, etc.

"An antimony exists when a pair of principles stand side by side, seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable. There are cogent reasons for believing each of them; each rests on clear and solid evidence; but it is a mystery to you how they can be squared with each other. You see that each must be true on its own, but you do not see how they can both be true together. ...What should one do, then, with an antimony? Accept it for what it is and learn to live with it. Refuse to regard the apparent inconsistency as real; put down the semblance of contradiction to the deficiency of your own understanding; think of the two principles as not rival alternatives but, in some way that at present you do not grasp, complementary to each other. Be careful, therefore, not to set them at loggerheads, nor to make deductions from either that would cut across the other. Use each within the limits of its own sphere of reference." **J.I. Packer**, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, p. 25-29

Reformed (God-Centered) Theologians: John Calvin, John Owen, John Knox, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Hodge, Charles Spurgeon, J.C. Ryle, B.B. Warfield, J.I. Packer, John Stott, R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, John Piper, D.A. Carson,

Statement of Faith #3 ... "God's Sovereign Purposes"

Ordains All Things for His Glory

From all eternity, God sovereignly ordained all that exists and all that occurs in his creation,[1] in order to display the fullness of his glory.[2] God's plans are efficacious, always coming to pass,[3] and they are universal, encompassing all the affairs of nature,[4] history,[5] and individual lives.[6] These decrees are an exercise of his free,[7] unchangeable,[8] wise,[9] and holy will.[10] Yet God, in his foreordination, is not the author of sin,[11] nor do his decrees negate the will of his creatures, who act with the power of willing choice in accord with their nature.[12] His ordaining and governing all things is compatible with his creatures' moral accountability[13] such that God never condemns a person unjustly.[14] Therefore, all persons are responsible for their actions, which have real and eternal consequences.[15]

Statement of Faith #5 ... Man's Sin and Its Effects

The Effects of Sin

From the inherited corruption of humanity[13] arise all the sins that we commit.[14] All people are now by nature enemies of God,[15] living under the power of Satan,[16] subject to the curse of the law,[17] and deserving of eternal punishment.[18] Moreover, the whole nature of man has been corrupted by the fall, and no part of man is untainted by sin.[19] Although fallen people remain in the image of God[20] and manifest the virtues of common grace, they are incapable of pleasing God,[21] meriting his favor,[22] or freeing themselves from their bondage to sin.[23] Their hearts are hardened,[24] their understanding is darkened,[25] their consciences are corrupted,[26] their spiritual sight is blinded,[27] and their deeds are evil.[28] Therefore, all people are dead in sin and without hope apart from salvation in Jesus Christ.[29]

- Without a correct understanding of man's TRUE CONDITION, we cannot properly understand the True nature of our need for salvation, the critical necessity of the Person and Work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation.
- An "elevated" view of man (one that the Bible does not have), tends to make one's doctrine tilt toward being more "man-centered" than "God-centered".

The Present-Day Ministry of the Holy Spirit

(Today's vernacular – Cessationism vs Continuationism ...Charismatic/Non-Charismatic ...Pentecostal)

What do we believe the Scriptures teach about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our day?

3. Continuationist Pneumatology (From the SGC 7 Shared Values)

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God's purpose to dwell among His people entered a new era (Exodus 33:14–16; Leviticus 26:12; John 14:16–17; Acts 2:14–21). We believe the Holy Spirit desires to continually fill each believer with increased power for Christian life and witness, including the giving of His supernatural gifts for the building up of the church and for various works of ministry in the world (Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16–18; 1 Corinthians 12:4–7). We are eager to pursue God's active presence in all its breadth, that Christ may be magnified in our lives, in the church, and among the nations (Psalm 105:4; 1 Corinthians 14:1; Ephesians 2:22).

Statement of Faith #10 ... The Empowering Ministry of the Spirit

The Filling of the Spirit

When Christ ascended, he poured out the Holy Spirit on the church, ushering in a greater experience of God's presence and power among his people.[1] The Spirit transforms hearts by the miracle of regeneration[2] and indwells all believers in abundant, new covenant measure.[3] The Spirit also desires to fill God's people continually with increased power for Christian life and witness.[4] To be filled with the Spirit is to be more fully under his influence,[5] more aware of his presence,[6] and more effective in his service.[7] All Christians, therefore, must continually seek to be filled with the Spirit[8] by living and praying in such a way that invites the Spirit's work among us, actively longing for God to accomplish his gracious purposes in us and through us. The filling of the Spirit brings to God's people a deeper knowledge of Christ,[9] an increased desire for holiness,[10] a stronger commitment to unity and love, a greater fruitfulness in ministry, and a deeper gratitude for our salvation.[11]

The Gifts of the Spirit

Christ loves the church, his body, and provides for its health and growth through the Holy Spirit.[12] In addition to giving new life, the Spirit sovereignly bestows gifts on every believer.[13] Spiritual gifts are those abilities and expressions of God's power given by his grace for the glory of Christ and the building up of the church.[14] The variety of these gifts—some permanent and some occasional, some more natural and some more remarkable—reflects[15] the diversity of the members of Christ's body[16] and

demonstrates our need for one another.[17] The gifts are not to be exercised with apprehension, pride, or disorder, but with faith, love, and order,[18] and always in submission to the authority of Scripture as the final revelation of God.[19] With the exception of those among the apostles who were commissioned as eyewitnesses of Christ and made recipients of normative revelation,[20] the full range of spiritual gifts remain at work in the church and are given for the good of the church and its witness to the world. We are therefore to earnestly desire and practice them until Christ returns.[21]

Church Leadership/Governance – “Elder Led Churches”

5. Elder-Governed & Elder-led Churches (From SGC 7 Shared Values)

Jesus Christ reigns as head over His church, and He gives to His church elders (or pastors) to govern and lead local churches under His authority (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:5). We believe that men, qualified by both character and gifting, are to serve as elders, shepherding God’s people as under-shepherds of Christ (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1–7; 1 Peter 5:1–3). A church’s health is to a great degree dependent on the health of its elders, and so our aim is to strengthen the current elders in our churches while identifying and training new ones (Acts 20:28; 2 Timothy 2:2).

- We believe that elders occupy an office that carries the authority and responsibility to lead, teach, oversee, and care for that particular local church
- We believe it is the call and responsibility of elders to evaluate and identify future elders and to put them in place in the local church. This is done with the input and influence of the membership of the local church, as well as the input and guidance of the SGC Regional Assembly of Elders

Complementarian View of Men & Women

4. Complementarian Leadership in the Home and in the Church (From SGC 7 Shared Values)

We believe it was God’s glorious plan to create men and women in His image, giving them equal dignity and value in His sight, while appointing differing and complementary roles for them within the home and the church ([Genesis 1:26–28](#); [Ephesians 5:22–33](#); [1 Timothy 2:8–15](#)). Because these roles give different expressions to God’s image in humanity, they should be valued and pursued in joy and faith. As the redeemed community of God, the church has a unique opportunity and responsibility to celebrate this complementarity, to contend for it against cultural hostility, and to protect it from sinful distortions.

Lakeview Christian Center

New Member's Class

Pastor Keith Collins

Ephesians 5:22-25 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (ESV)

1 Timothy 2:12-13 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; (ESV)

Statement of Faith #4 ... Creation, Providence, and Man

Marriage, Sexuality, and Singleness

Biblical manhood and womanhood enrich human flourishing in all its dimensions. God instituted marriage as the union of one man and one woman who complement each other in a one-flesh union[26] that ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church.[27] This remains the only normative pattern of sexual relations for humanity. Husbands are to exercise headship sacrificially and with humility,[28] and wives are to serve as helpers to their husbands, willingly supporting and submitting to their leadership.[29] Together these complementary roles bring joy and blessing to each other and display the beauty of God's purposes to the world. Single men and women are no less able to enjoy and honor God and no less important to his purposes. They also are to give expression to God's image in distinct and complementary ways, flourishing as his image bearers and bringing him glory in their singleness.[30]

Complementarian

- Definition
- Understanding "Order & Authority"—Not Just Men & Women
 - Creation is Filled with Order (The Godhead, Angelic Beings, Men/Women, Creation) ...each of these get mentioned in the context of "order and authority"
- Distinctions Assigned by God
 - Creation – Male & Female; Man's dominion over the earth; Angelic beings
 - The Godhead
 - The Family
 - The Body of Christ
- The Doctrine of Complementarianism
 - Valuing Scripture means noticing this consistent presentation from Creation Onward
 - Getting the details right involves recognizing that our views in this area are influenced by our culture, our personal traditions, and the Scriptures. We want to let the clear principles of Scripture define our convictions and boundaries, but we don't want to apply details that the Scriptures may not give or make explicit.