



FRIENDS
COMMUNITY CHURCH

**CONNECTING WITH
FRIENDS**

Class 101



WHAT MAKES FRIENDS A FAMILY?

Four things unite us

- * Our Salvation (What God has done for us)
- * Our Statement (Why we exist as a church)
- * Our Strategy (How we fulfill our purpose)
- * Our Structure (When & where we fulfill our purpose)

SEMINAR OUTLINE

SEGMENT ONE: OUR SALVATION

- * What it Means to be a Christian
- * The symbols of Salvation: Baptism & Communion

SEGMENT TWO: OUR STATEMENTS

- * Our Purpose Statement
- * Our Faith Statement
- * Our Doctrinal Statement
- * Our Lifestyle Statement

SEGMENT THREE: OUR STRATEGY

- * Our Core Values – Friends Church Vision & Values
- * Who We are Trying to Reach (Target)
- * Circles of Commitment/ 4 Covenants
- * The Friends Church Strategy

SEGMENT FOUR: OUR STRUCTURE

- * How Our Church is Structured
- * What it Means to be a Member
- * What Now? - The C.L.A.S.S. Program

WELCOME TO Connecting with Friends

We're glad you've chosen to find out more about Friends Church! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members from many different church backgrounds, this class was designed to clearly explain who and what our church is.

THE BASIS FOR THIS CLASS:

“...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 A MEMBER of a church family.**
- 3. A Christian without a church family is AN ORPHAN .**

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS:

...That I will commit myself to CHRIST and to the FAMILY AT FRIENDS.

SEGMENT ONE

OUR SALVATION

“For we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and we who have 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.”

Galatians 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 & power.

But real happiness comes from understanding my PURPOSE IN LIFE .

I. WHY AM I HERE?

1. GOD MADE ME TO 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 (GN)

2. WE WERE CREATED TO 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)

“God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”

I Timothy 6:17

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 lifestyle God intends for us to live. Why then aren't most people really happy?

II. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Man has a natural desire to BE THE BOSS 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 please!"

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." I 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 fall short of God’s glorious ideal.”
Romans 3:23

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

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...”
“It doesn’t matter what you believe, just be sincere.”
“I’ll give up all my bad habits.”
“I’ll work real hard and earn it.”
“I’ll be religious and go to church.”

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

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!

JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEMS!

“The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
Romans 6:23

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

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” I Timothy 2:5

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 AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE YOUR SINS.

“If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from every wrong.” I John 1:9

2. BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED TO PAY FOR YOUR SINS AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN ON EASTER, 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

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name (Jesus) by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

3. ACCEPT GOD’S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION. DON’T TRY TO EARN IT.

“For 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 on what Jesus already did for us!

4. INVITE JESUS CHRIST TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE 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...’”

Revelation 3:20

YOU CAN TAKE THESE STEPS BY PRAYING A SIMPLE PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO GOD:

“Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I’ve ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I’m sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian.”

“Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:13

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BAPTIZED

I. 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 COMMANDS 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 have commanded you.’” Matthew 28:19-20

3. IT DEMONSTRATES THAT I REALLY AM A BELIEVER.

“...Many of the people who heard Him believe and were baptized.” Acts 18:8

“We know that we have come to know Him, if we obey His commands.” I John 2:3

II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

1. IT ILLUSTRATES CHRIST’S DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

“Christ died for our sins... He was buried... and He rose again.” I Corinthians 15:3-4

“For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ.” Colossians 2:12

2. IT ILLUSTRATES MY NEW LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN.

“When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!”
II Corinthians 5:17

“By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead... so also we may live a new life!”
Romans 6:4

Baptism doesn't make you a believer – it shows that you already believe. 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 make in your heart.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith... it is the gift of God – not of works, so that no one can boast.”
Ephesians 2:8,9

III. WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

BECAUSE JESUS WAS BAPTIZED THAT WAY.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water.”
Matthew 3:16

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 8:38-39

THE WORD *BAPTIZE* MEANS “TO DIP UNDER WATER.”

IT BEST SYMBOLIZED A BURIAL AND RESURRECTION!

The founders of denominations agree:

Martin Luther... “I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the work imports and the mystery signifies.”

John Calvin... “The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

John Wesley... “Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”

IV. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

EVERY PERSON WHO HAS BELIEVED IN CHRIST.

“Those who believe and accepted His message were baptized...”
Acts 2:41

“Simon himself believed and was baptized...” Acts 8:13

“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 Friends, 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 child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his 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 is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ. At Friends, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though many of us were “confirmed” as children.

V. WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

AS SOON AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED!

“Those who believe... were baptized... that day!” Acts 2:41

“Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, ‘Look, here is water! Why shouldn’t I be baptized right now?’ Philip said, ‘If you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So they went down into the water and Philip baptized him.” Acts 8:35-38

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are “perfect”, you’ll never feel “good enough”!

Can my family be baptized together?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment. Young children who wish to be baptized are asked to meet with our Minister of Children for a pre-baptism conversation.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts an undue pressure on them, and delays your obedience.

What should I wear when I am baptized?

Women should wear shorts and a top or a “muumuu” style dress rather than a swimsuit. Men may wear a swimsuit. Bring a change of clothes, a towel, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. We provide changing rooms.

Will I have to say anything?

No. At the beginning of the service, Pastor will briefly explain the meaning of baptism. You will wait at the edge of the pool for your turn to be baptized. Pastor or another Elder will introduce you, briefly lower you just under the water, and then you can leave the pool, dry off, and watch the others. We encourage you to invite all your relatives and friends to attend your baptism.

Special needs?

All of our Pastors can perform a private baptism in special circumstances.

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus never asked for 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: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

I. WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER? (I Corinthians 11:23-26)

1. IT IS A SIMPLE ACT.

"The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread..."
(vs. 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 it in remembrance of me.'" (vs. 24)

3. IT IS A SYMBOL.

"In the same way, He took the cup, saying, 'This is my body, which is for you; eat it in remembrance of me.'" (vs. 24)

4. IT IS A STATEMENT OF FAITH.

"For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes back." (vs. 26)

II. WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

Only those who are already **BELIEVERS** .

Mark 14:22-26

“For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment upon himself.”

II Corinthians 11:29

III. HOW DO I PREPARE MYSELF FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER?

“Therefore whoever eats and 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.”

I Corinthians 11:27-28

By...

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Self – Examination
I Corinthians 11:27 | 2. Confessing my sins
I John 1:9 |
| 3. Recommitment
Romans 12:1 | 3. Restoring Relationships
Matthew 5:23-24 |

IV. WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe The Lord's Supper. He instituted it on a Thursday night. Since it is a 'supper', it may seem more appropriate to observe it at an evening service.

Since our Sunday morning service is designed so you can bring your non-believing friends, we only take the Lord's Supper the first Sunday of every month. We also encourage you to take Communion at home.

SEGMENT TWO

THE FRIENDS STATEMENTS

“Let there be real harmony among you so there won’t be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.”

I Corinthians 1:10 (LB)

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT **Why We Exist As A Church**

The purpose of our church is summarized in a single sentence based on two key scriptures:

**“WE BELIEVE A GREAT COMMITMENT TO THE GREAT
COMMANDMENT AND THE GREAT COMMISSION
WILL GROW A GREAT CHURCH!”**

The Great Commandment: “Jesus said, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart... soul... and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments.’” Matthew 22:36-40

The Great Commission: “Jesus said, ‘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.’” Matthew 28:19-20

- * To “Love God with all your heart” is “**WORSHIP.**”
- * To “Love your neighbor as yourself” is “**MINISTRY.**”
- * To “Go... make disciples” is “**EVANGELISM.**”
- * To “baptize..” is to “**INCORPORATE INTO FELLOWSHIP.**”
- * To “Teach them... all things” is “**DISCIPLESHIP.**”

FRIENDS CHURCH EXISTS:

1. To CELEBRATE GOD’S PRESENCE (worship)
2. To DEMONSTRATE GOD’S LOVE (ministry)
3. To COMMUNICATE GOD’S WORD (evangelism)
4. To ASSIMILATE GOD’S FAMILY (fellowship)
5. To EDUCATE GOD’S PEOPLE (discipleship)

I. WE EXIST TO CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE

WORSHIP:

“Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”
Matthew 4:10

“... The Father seeks worshippers... and His worshippers
must
worship Him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:23-24

Expressions of Worship

Singing (Eph. 5:19)
Commitment (Romans 12:1-2)
Praying (Ps. 95:6)
Hearing the Word (John 17:17)
Giving (I Cor. 16:1-2)
Baptism (Romans 6:3-4)
Meditating (Ps. 48:9)
Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:23-26)

Friends Worship Style

“Celebration” Psalm 122:1	“Inspiration” Isaiah 40:31	“Preparation” Ephesians 4:11-12
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II. WE EXIST TO COMMUNICATE GOD'S WORD

EVANGELISM:

“His intent was that through the church, the manifold
wisdom of God should be made known...”
Ephesians 3:10

“Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
But who can ask them to save them unless they believe in
Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have never
heard about Him? And can they hear about Him unless
someone tells him?” Romans 10:13-14
(LB)

Why Our Church Must Never Stop Growing

1. BECAUSE GOD LOVES PEOPLE

“The Lord... is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but wants everyone to come to repentance.” II Peter 3:9

II Cor. 5:14, Luke 15:3-10, Matt. 9:12-13

2. BECAUSE GOD COMMANDS US TO REACH OUT

“Go out into the country... and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full.” Luke 14:23 (LB)

“...you will be my witnesses...” Acts 1:8

3. BECAUSE GROWTH IS GOD’S WILL

“Under Christ’s control, the whole Body is nourished... and grows and God wants it to grow,” Col. 2:19 (GN)

“(Jesus) I will build my church.” Matthew 16:18

Unbiblical excuses for not growing:

- * “God isn’t interested in numbers”
- * “Our church wants quality not quantity”
- * “Large churches are impersonal”

We believe our church must grow LARGER and SMALLER at the same time.

“And the Good News of the Kingdom will be preached to the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and THEN the end will come.” Matthew 24:14

III. WE EXIST TO EDUCATE GOD'S PEOPLE

DISCIPLESHIP:

“Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity...” Hebrews 6:1

“Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” II Peter 3:18

“(God has given)... 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 until we all... become mature... like Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13

The C.L.A.S.S. Institute & Discovering Spiritual Maturity #201

IV. WE EXIST TO DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE

MINISTRY:

“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples – that you have love for one another.” John 13:35

I John 3:16-17, Matt. 25:34-40, Heb. 13:16, Rom. 12:13

**The heartbeat of Friends is our SMALL
GROUPS. Every member needs to be a part of one.**

“Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities... and there are different kinds of services to God (ministry)... All of you together form the one body of Christ and each of you is a separate and necessary part of it.” I Corinthians 12:4-5, 27 (LB)

AT FRIENDS

**Every member is a: ”10”IN SOME AREA
Every task is: IMPORTANT!**

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

What we believe

*** In essential beliefs – we have unity.**

“There is one body and one Spirit... there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all...”

Ephesians 4:4-6

*** In non-essential beliefs – we have liberty.**

“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls... so then each of us will give an account of himself to God... so whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.”

Romans 14:1, 4, 12, 22

*** In all our beliefs – we show charity.**

“...If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains – but have no love, I amount to nothing at all.”

I Corinthians 13:2 (PH)

OUR LIFESTYLE STATEMENT

What we practice

Beliefs are not worth much unless they are translated into actions. Based on what the bible teaches, we feel very strongly about the following seven practices:

Bible as our sole authority.

“The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us to do what is right.”

II Timothy 3:15

Since God’s Word is the only completely reliable and truthful authority, we accept the Bible as our manual for living. Our first question when faced with a decision is “What does the Bible say?” We practice daily Bible reading, bible study, and Bible memorization. The Bible is the basis for all we believe.

Autonomy of each local church.

“Christ is the head of His body, the church. He is the source of the Body’s life

Colossians 1:18 (GN)

Christ is the recognized head of our church, not any person, group, or religious organization. While recognizing the value of associating our cooperating with other groups of Christians, we believe every local church should be self-governing and independent from any denominational control.

Priesthood of every believer

“Christ loves us, and by his death he has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests to serve God...”

Revelation 1:6 (GN)

“You are... the King’s priests... God’s own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God.”

II Peter 2:9 (GN)

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to “full time” Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every member to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading.

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Tithing

“A tithe of everything you produce belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.” Leviticus 26:30

At Friends we practice tithing for the support of Christ’s Body, the church and it’s ministry to those around us. We recognize that giving 10% of our income is the biblical standard of giving.

Immersion

“For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ...” Colossians 2:12

We practice baptism by immersion under water – the way Jesus was baptized, and the way the Bible commands.

Spirit – led living

(Jesus said) “I am the Vine, you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; but apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

We believe the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God’s power within us. So we seek to practice a daily dependence on God’s Spirit to enable us to do what is right
(Philippians 2:13, Ephesians 5:18)

Telling others about Christ

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” I Peter 3:15

It is the responsibility of every Christian to share the Good News with those God brings us into contact with. We practice personal sharing about Christ and inviting friends to church.

SEGMENT THREE:

THE FRIENDS CHURCH STRATEGY

(Paul) “I have been all things to all sorts of people that by every possible means I might win some to God. I do all of this for the sake of the good News.”

I Corinthians 9:22-23 (Ph)

WHO ARE WE TRYING TO REACH?

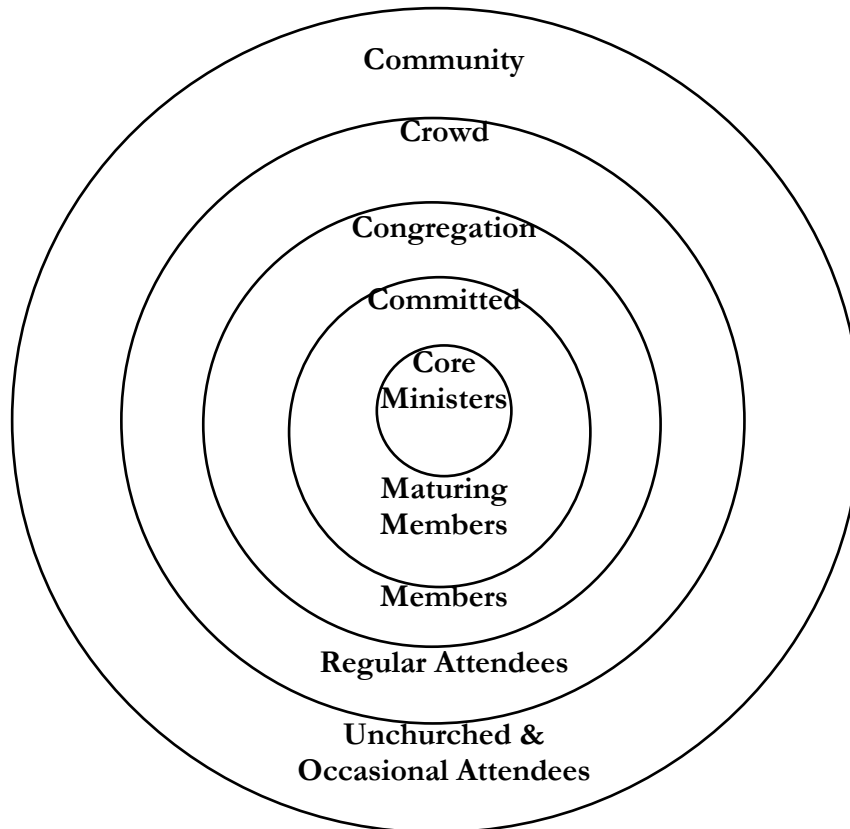
“... Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.” I Corinthians 9:22 (LB)

Tanana Valley Tim

The likely Mr. Tanana Valley



**SEGMENT THREE:
THE FRIENDS STRATEGY
5 CIRCLES OF COMMITMENT**



Friends objective is to keep moving people toward the center by encouraging personal spiritual commitments. Specifically, we call people to four basic commitments:

THE FOUR FRIENDS COVENANTS

1. THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT...

Is a commitment to CHRIST and FRIENDS 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)

“We are all parts of Christ’s Body, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other and need all the others.”

Romans 12:4-5 (LB)

2. THE MATURITY COVENANT...

Is a commitment to the HABBITS necessary for spiritual growth.

“Continue to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

II Peter 3:18

“Take the time and trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit.”

I Timothy 4:7 (LB)

3. THE MINISTRY COVENANT...

Is a commitment to discovering and using my God-given gifts and abilities in SERVING God and others.

“God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other...”

I Peter 4:10 (LB)

“There are different kinds of service to God... together you form the Body of Christ and each one of you is a necessary part of it.”

I Corinthians 12:5, 27 (LB)

4. THE MISSION COVENANT...

Is a commitment to SHARE the good News with others.

“...you will be my witnesses for me... to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 (GN)

“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...”

I Peter 3:15

Why Do We Have These Covenants?

WE BECOME WHAT WE ARE

SEGMENT FOUR:

THE FRIENDS STRUCTURE

“For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace...
Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”
I 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 ITS STRUCTURE

I. THE CHURCH IS A FELLOWSHIP .

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

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 (PH)

ANY attitude that causes disunity is sin.

Col. 3:7-15, I Cor. 1:10, II Tim. 2:14, Pr. 17:14, II Cor. 13:11, Phil 1:27, 2:1-3, Col. 2:2, Phil. 4:2, I Peter 3:8, I Cor. 14:33, John 13:34-35, II Tim. 2:23, Rom. 15:5-6, Rom. 12:16-18, Col. 3:13-14, Ps. 133:1

IMPLICATION: A GOOD STRUCTURE PROMOTES UNITY AND DOWNPLAYS DIFFERENCES .

“(Often)... your meeting do more harm than good because I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you...” I Corinthians 11:17-18

“Voting” tends to CREATE LOSERS / CONFLICT .

At Friends the Elder Board votes on the following

- * Annual budget & legal trustees
- * Purchase of land or building
- * Calling the senior pastor
- * Changes in the church constitution

II. THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY .

“You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.?”

I Peter 3:8 (LB)

Galatians 6:10, Hebrews 2:10-12, I Peter 4:17

**SO WE OPERATE ON THE BASIS OF RELATIONSHIPS
NOT RULES .**

“Don’t reprimand a senior member of the church, appeal to him as a father. Treat the young men as brothers, and the older women as mothers. Treat the younger women as sisters.”

I Timothy 5:1-2

(PH)

“A Pastor must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his family, how can he take care of God’s church?”

I Timothy 3:4-

5

III. THE CHURCH IS A BODY .

I Cor. 12:27, Eph. 5:23, Eph. 1:22-23 Col. 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 GIFTS
NOT ELECTED OFFICES .**

“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 an organism “ministry” is the focus.**

**AT FRIENDS WE HAVE A SIMPLE STRUCTURE SO WE CAN
MAXIMIZE MINISTRY AND MINIMIZE MAINTENANCE.**

OUR STRUCTURE

* The People are the MINISTERS

* The Pastors are the EQUIPPERS

Currently there are DOZENS of different ministries in our church begun and operated by members.

IV. THE CHURCH IS A FLOCK .

(Jesus' favorite description of the Church)

John 10:1-30, Matt. 26:31, Matt 25:33

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”:

“PRESBUTEROS”:

“EPISCOPOS”:

“To the elders I say. Be shepherds of God’s flock, serving as overseers...”

I Peter 5:1-2

“Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived he said to them... Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be pastors of the church of God...”

Acts 20:17-18,28

See also Titus 1:5-7, I Timothy 5:17

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER

The difference between “attendees” and “members” can be summed up in one word: **COMMITMENT!**

At Friends we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for 4 reasons:

A Biblical Reason: Christ is committed to the church.

“..Christ loved the church, and he gave his life for it.”

Ephesians5:25

A Cultural Reason: It is an antidote to our society.

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 & hoppers”. Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer religion.” It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

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.

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’re not committed to any specific church family.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MEMBER?

At Friends we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Covenant.

THE FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with Friends statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Friends church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

- * By acting in love toward other members
- * By refusing to gossip and resolving conflicts using Matt. 18 15-17
- * By following the leaders

“So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together.”

Romans 15:19 (PH)

“Live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ toward each other.” Romans 15:5 (LB)

“Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts.” I Peter 1:22 (GN)

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...” Ephesians 4:29

“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you.” Hebrews 13:17

2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

- * By praying for its growth
- * By inviting the un-churched to attend
- * By warmly welcoming those who visit

“To the church... we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly.” I Thessalonians 1:2

“Go out into the country... and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full.” Luke 14:23 (LB)

“So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified.”

Romans 15:7

(LB)

3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

- * By discovering my gifts and talents
- * By being equipped to serve by my pastors
- * By developing a servant's heart

“Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you...”
I Peter 4:10 (PH)

“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

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ... who took on the very nature of a servant...”
Philippians 2:3-4,7

4. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

- * By attending faithfully
- * By living a growing and Godly life
- * By giving regularly

“Let us not give up the habit of meeting together... but let us encourage one another.”
Hebrews 10:25

“But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ.”
Philippians 1:27 (PH)

“Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering.”
I Corinthians 16:2

“A tenth of all your produce is the Lord's, and it is holy.”
Leviticus

27:30

CORE VALUES

A value is why you do something or what motivates you to act in a certain way.

I. “All people matter to God and to Us”

- * The Great Commission
- * A Person's Value Precedes their Performance
Rom.5:8 “God demonstrates His love in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”
- * People Before Projects
- * It's Not About the Vase, it's About the Flower

II. “We believe in a Passionate Christian Life”

- * The Great Commandment
- * Passionate Love Relationship with God
- * Passion for People in the Family
- * Passion for the World
- * Living Every Moment
- * Living Real
- * Living in God's Power
- * Pursuing Truth and Excellence

ETHOS: Atmosphere, Environment ***A Loving Family***

The Scripture teaches that God's plan has always been to have a loving family and that we are to love that spiritual family following Christ's example of serving one another. At Friends, we believe the “family reunion” has already started and the atmosphere of this family is Love!

“FRIENDS – YOU CAN FEEL IT!”

MISSION

LOVE GOD -- LOVE ONE ANOTHER -- LOVE THE WORLD

LOVE IS AT THE CENTER OF FRIENDS COMMUNITY CHURCH

The Great Commandment: Matthew 22:36-39 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, '**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.** This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it. **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**" (NKJ)

The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations,** baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' **Amen.**" (NKJ)

THE FIVE PURPOSES

1. **MAGNIFICATION:** To Celebrate God's presence; Worship: Passionately expressing my love and devotion to God. "**Love God**"
2. **MEMBERSHIP:** Fellowship; Community; To assimilate into God's Family; Belonging. "**No one stands alone**"
3. **MATURITY:** Helping Believers Grow Spiritually; Discipleship: to educate God's people. "**Growing stronger every day**"
4. **MINISTRY:** To Demonstrate God's Love; Shape to serve; meeting people's needs with God's Love. "**Love People**"
5. **MISSION:** To Communicate God's Word; Evangelism: Sharing the Good News. "**Come as you are**"

