

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Old Jonesboro

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

On behalf of the First Baptist Church of Old Jonesboro (FBOJ), I extend to you warm greetings. We are glad that God has added you to our church family. To help you become better acquainted with your church home, we have prepared this Church Member Orientation Manual. There are many wonderful opportunities in and information about our church that we want to share with you to help you begin to get the most out of your membership at FBOJ. We are excited about God sending you to participate in the ministries of FBOJ, and we are committed to helping you feel welcomed and accepted. Ask questions, share ideas, and lend a helping hand. We anticipate that FBOJ will be a better church now that you are here.

**“Unto him be glory in the church by
Christ Jesus throughout all ages,
world without end. Amen.”**

- Ephesians 3:21 -

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OUR PASTOR

Pastor Emmanuel Davis was elected the pastor of First Baptist Old Jonesboro on July 1, 2012. Born July 9, 1987, in Birmingham, AL, Pastor Davis is the youngest of five children to James and Josephine Davis of Pinson, AL. He is married to Cumberland Davis of Decatur, AL and is the father of two daughters, Brooklyn Skylar and London Alexandria. Pastor Davis began preaching in April 2002 and was ordained October of 2003 by Rev. Larry Coleman, pastor of Galilee Baptist Church of Birmingham, AL. He graduated from Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham, AL in 2010, earning a B.A. in Bible and Theology. He currently resides in Vance, AL.

OUR DOCTRINE

The First Baptist Church of Old Jonesboro Statement of Faith

THE HOLY BIBLE

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired; that it has truth without any mixture of error for its matter; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union, and the superior standard by which all human creeds, conducts, and opinions should be tried.

GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God; an infinite, intelligent Spirit; the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor and confidence and love; that He is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omnificent, and exercises these qualities with righteousness, justice, and love; that in the unity of the godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, possessing the same nature, essence and being, coexistent and coequal, each one equally divine, executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

God the Father is the first person of the Godhead. He is Almighty, merciful, and just; holy, righteous and true. In His divine office, He preserves the integrity of the holiness and justness of the Godhead.

God the Son is the second person of the Godhead. He is God manifested in the flesh, born of a virgin, and known as Jesus the Christ, Savior of the World. He is worthy of all honor and worship as God the sacrificed Lamb for our sins and as befitting of His divine office.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the godhead equally divine with the Father and the Son. He is the Comforter in place of Christ, the administrator of Jesus Christ's church on earth, our intercessor for prayer, and the reprove of sin, righteousness, and judgment in the world.

JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is God indeed manifest in the flesh, the Son of God, and the Son of Man born of a virgin overshadowed and conceived by the Holy Ghost. That He was sent by the Father to die for our sins on the cross to be our faithful and High Priest, to be the Savior of the whole world, to be the Redeemer of sins. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

SATAN

We believe that Satan, also known as the Devil, through pride fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the malignant prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:4), and the unholy ruler of this age. We hold him to be man's tempter, the enemy of God and Christ. He is the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief authority and instigator of all the powers of darkness—destined, however, to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and to the judgment for him and his angels.

CREATION

We believe in the literal, six day Genesis account of Creation; that man was created in God's image and after His own likeness; that heaven and earth, life, and all unique kinds of organisms were created by divine will; that all living creatures were created and procreate after their own kind. We reject the notion that living creatures evolve into a new kinds of organisms as a result of accumulating changes over long periods of time.

MAN

We believe that Adam was created in innocence, but by voluntary transgression of God's law, fell from his innocent and happy state.

From Adam, all of humanity is born in sin and shapen in iniquity-a depraved nature at birth, but all are sinners by choice.

SIN

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the most tender of sympathies with divine perfection, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

GRACE IN THE NEW CREATION

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, nor by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe in God's electing grace; that the blessings of salvation are made free by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed unto us.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

THE CHURCH

We believe that a church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word; that its officers of ordination are pastors (or elders) and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures

We believe that the true mission of the church is found in the great commission:

First, to make individual disciples;

Second, to build the church;

Third, to teach and instruct as He has commanded.

We do not believe in the reversal of this order; we hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; sending and support of missionaries, schools and colleges, the care of the widows and orphans. We further believe that the True, New Testament Church is the Bride of Christ, and to the church was given the responsibility of these various activities.

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

We believe in the security of the believer, and that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.

THE RESURRECTION AND RETURN OF CHRIST

We believe in the resurrection and return of Christ and related events, and accept the sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their fact and full value. Of the resurrection, we believe that Christ rose bodily, "the third day according to the scriptures"; that He ascended, "to the right hand of the throne of God"; that He alone is our "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God" "That this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" - bodily, personally and visible; that the "dead in Christ shall rise first"; that the living saints " shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump"; and that "Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemies under His feet."

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer; in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relationship and to the Lord's Supper; in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine (the unleavened fruit of the vine, grape juice) are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

EVANGELISM

We believe that the command to give the gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and that this commission was given to the churches; that Jesus has commissioned His churches to go into all the world, to bring the gospel message to every person, to bring all who will into a local church, and to train them to observe all that He has commanded us; that God has empowered His churches to perform this work; that men cannot believe unto salvation unless they hear the gospel; that God instructs his churches to send out particular individuals to do particular works, and that He reveals His will in these matters to the local church body as a whole as well as to the person He is calling.

THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse, and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that the civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ; who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the Kings of the earth.

OUR PRACTICE

Every believer is called by God to be a full-time minister of the Gospel, to serve Him in a local, New Testament church, and to represent Christ twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, in our homes, at our jobs, in our community, and anywhere else we might be found. Therefore, the purpose of FBOJ is to aid every member in their personal ministries. Every ministry at FBOJ is an opportunity for us to improve spiritually and to serve God and others.

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). He expects every church to follow His leadership. Thus, at FBOJ we honestly seek the Lord's will in everything we do. That makes us a theocracy, God ruled, rather than a democracy, autocracy, oligarchy, or any other type of government.

HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to administrate the affairs of the church. Thus, we should do likewise, and seek His leadership. The Holy Spirit has guided church decisions from the very beginning. Notice in Acts 13:2-4, the Holy Spirit told the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch that Barnabas and Saul were being called to do a work. This is typical of how the Holy Spirit administrates the work of Christ in the church.

ELDERS

The Holy Spirit appoints men, called overseers, in the church to guide and instruct the congregation (Acts 20:28). These men are responsible for overseeing or supervising the work of Christ in the lives of the church members. The office of elders, or pastors, is for experienced men, appointed by God, and who meet the qualifications cited in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The work of this office is a big responsibility, and those in position of oversight must give account to God (Hebrews 3:17).

DEACONS

Another group of ordained men, called deacons, must meet similar qualifications and be appointed by the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 3:8-13). The work of the deacon, in addition to proclaiming the Word of God to unbelievers (Acts 6:8-15), includes supervising the physical aspect of church affairs (Acts 6:1-6).

MEMBERSHIP

Every member of the church is here because God added us to this particular body. Notice that Acts 2:47 says, "...the Lord added to the church..." Only God knows which church is best for us. That's why 1 Corinthians 12:18 says, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." God added you to FBOJ as a special member to our body. 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 explains that as a member of a body you have something to contribute. You have a gift that you need to use. We are eager to see what you will do!

BAPTISM

In addition to serving Christ in a ministry of the church, there are two ordinances which the Lord has instructed us to observe as a church. The first ordinance is baptism. The Lord requires that every believer be baptized after they are saved, being immersed in water, by an authorized representative of His church.

LORD'S SUPPER

The second ordinance to observe in the church is the Lord's Supper, also called communion. 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, describes this ordinance. We observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of what Christ has done for us, His death and resurrection, and His covenant with us. This ordinance is a very serious and important time of personal reflection, renewing commitments, and surrendering all to Christ. Notice in 1 Corinthians 11:30 that those who did not regard the Lord's Supper as important were chastised by the Lord with ill health.

OUR COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of GOD, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of GOD, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements. And exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of destructive drugs or intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to shun pornography; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of GOD's word.

OUR CALLING

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

When we become Christians, we are changed. Our values, our goals, our desires, and our destinies change when Jesus becomes our Lord and Savior. Thus, our outlook on life should be completely different from that of the world. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 declares the fundamental mission for every Christian.

In verse 17, we see that what is about to be said applies to all believers in Christ. We are new creatures. We have a new perspective on life and the world.

In verse 18, the change in us has been a work of God. God has changed two areas of our lives: (1) our relationship with Him and (2) our relationship with people. He has reconciled us to Himself, and He has commissioned us to reconcile others to Him (2 Corinthians 4:5, Matthew 5:9).

Verse 19 tells us that God was in Christ reconciling the world and that He has given to us the Word of reconciliation (the Gospel). Our duty is to share the Word of reconciliation with others. This is the work God has given to each of us. It is our number one responsibility.

Verse 20 declares that we are ambassadors for Christ. An ambassador is a full time representative of one nation to another nation. Therefore, no matter where we are, whether at home, at school, at work, in the community, or at church, we are to represent Jesus Christ. We are citizens of the kingdom of heaven on earth for the purpose of representing our King. We are left here to fulfill our Lord's will. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, therefore, we are to do likewise (Luke 19:10). God reaches out to people through our witness of Him.

Verse 21 tells us that God calls people to be reconciled because He has made provision for reconciliation in Jesus Christ. We are, therefore, full time representatives of Christ. All of our decisions should be based upon how to best serve God. All that we do should be to further His purposes and honor Him (1 Corinthians 10:31-33). To use our lives in this way is only reasonable because of who God is and what He has done for us (1 Timothy 6:13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 2:20). To give Jesus Christ less than first place in our life is to insult Him (Malachi 1:7-10).

We do not work or wait to become ambassadors of Christ. We are ambassadors the moment we surrender our lives to Christ. The issue of our lives is: are we effective ambassadors? An effective ambassador is one who represents those who send him. We are responsible to represent the goals, the motivation, the culture, the values, and the methods of Jesus Christ. Becoming an effective representative requires full dedication to the task of becoming a good ambassador (2 Peter 1:5-7). We must resist the pressures upon us to conform to this world rather than to Christ (Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 5:8-9). The goal of our church is to provide for you every possible means to aid you as an ambassador for Christ and to provide opportunities of ministry by which you can minister to more people more effectively.

OUR EMBASSY

Because we are ambassadors of Christ in a world that for the most part rejects Him, God has provided for us an embassy. During Christ's time on the earth, He established the institution known to us today as the local New Testament church. The church is the embassy of the kingdom of heaven on earth. Because the work of Christ is the most important mission in the world, the church is the most important institution in the world. No other organization has been given the privilege or the responsibility to serve as the embassy of Jesus Christ.

Following are some additional reasons why the church is so important.

The church was established personally by Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18). No other organization can validly make this claim.

Jesus Christ loves His church (Ephesians 5:25).

He gave His life for the church (Acts 20:28). Because our Lord regards the church so highly, we should also esteem it.

The church is God's instrument for preserving the truth of the Gospel (1 Timothy 3:15; Matthew 16:19). Other organizations will eventually go astray from the truth, but there will always be local churches remaining faithful.

The church is God's organization for spreading the Gospel of Christ. The apostles were the first ones in the church, and the Great Commission (to teach all nations) was given to them (1 Corinthians 12:28; Matthew 28:16-20). Paul was called to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles and was sent out by the church of Antioch (Acts 26:15-18; Acts 13:1-4).

In the church, God provides everything a Christian needs for spiritual growth (Ephesians 4:1-16). The Scriptures teach that in the church, God provides leadership, proper environment, and instruction for Christians to grow and become effective ambassadors for Christ. Although the church is frequently looked down upon in our culture, it is still the institution Jesus Christ intends to use to fulfill His purposes (Ephesians 3:10-11).

In view of the importance of the church, it is no wonder the Scripture commands us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:24-25). Because the church is so important, it is essential to know what the church is.

The word church, like many words, can be used either in a specific sense to indicate a particular church, or it can be used generically to indicate the collection of all individual churches. The Bible often uses the word church generically. The word church is translated from the Greek word *ecclesia* which means, "a called out assembly." The most common usage of the word *ecclesia* was in reference to "a group of citizens of a city who meet to carry on the business of that city." When the Lord said He would build His *ecclesia*, He was indicating that He would establish His own organization to conduct His business. Obviously, not every organization that calls itself a church is the kind of institution Jesus established. Thus, a church is, "a group of Scripturally baptized believers, covenanted together to do the work of the Lord, having received the power and authority to do the work of the church from another true church, and holding to the doctrines and practices of the New Testament."

In view of the eternal importance of the responsibilities of the church, it is essential that the church operate effectively. The church has the responsibility to communicate the Gospel to every person in hopes that they will be reconciled to God. Therefore, the church is not a social club. God has clearly set forth in the Bible His plan for the administration and operation of the church. The church is a theocracy not a democracy. Jesus is the head of the church (Ephesians 5:23), and the Holy Spirit is the administrator. When Jesus was on earth in the flesh, He guided the church. He directed all of its activities. The Scriptures tell us in chapters 14, 15, and 16 of John that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to take His place when He went back to

the Father. The Holy Spirit is now the appointed administrator of the church on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit adds people to the church (1Corinthians 12:28) and selects people for positions of responsibility such as the pastor (Acts 20:28). Therefore, church leaders should be respected (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

The Holy Spirit should direct all of the church's activities. This means that the church is responsible to discern the will of the Spirit of God and to carry out that will. To protect the church from deceptive spirits, God gave us the Bible. 1 Timothy 3:16 tells us that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...." The Bible is our standard for what to believe and how to live, and the Holy Spirit never contradicts it (1 Corinthians 14:33). He will never lead us contrary to the Scriptures. Therefore, the Bible is our final authority for knowing God's will. The better we know and understand the Bible and submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit's leadership, the better we will know and understand the will of God for ourselves and our church.

OUR CHURCH

God intends for local churches to meet the spiritual needs of their members. This is an important responsibility, not to be taken lightly, because first of all, God expects His churches to obey Him; second, the spiritual well-being of the congregations is at stake; and third, the work of winning souls to Christ requires active churches. The Bible speaks plainly on the role and importance of the local church. Read carefully the following verses and comments concerning the local church.

Ephesians 4:11-14. This passage presents four purposes of the local church. Verse 12 states the first three. The first purpose, is to perfect the saints. Perfection does not mean flawless. It means to become mature. God adds us to a local church to mature us. Second, God intends for the work of the ministry to be done by believers in the local church. Third, the local church is for our edification. That means we receive encouragement, strength, and support by the fellowship it provides. Fourth, in verse 14, God adds us to a local church to protect us, to provide spiritual stability and safety.

1 Timothy 3:15. The church is referred to as the house of God. There is a special presence of God's Spirit dwelling in each local church. Also, it is described as the pillar and ground of the truth. This denotes that the church, each local church throughout the world, is the platform for upholding and proclaiming truth. This is God's choice for where the Word of God, the Bible, is to be taught and defended.

Ephesians 5:23. Christ is the head of the church. He is her leader and master. Also, He is the protector and provider of His bride.

Ephesians 5:25, 29. Christ loves the church, and gave Himself for her.

Ephesians 5:26-27. He wants His church to be sanctified, cleansed, glorious, without spot or wrinkle, holy, and without blemish, to present to Himself.

Matthew 28:18-20. This passage is referred to as the Great Commission. In verses 19 & 20, Jesus commands His church to do four things. The first is to GO, then to TEACH, next to BAPTIZE, and finally again to TEACH. This is how Christ intends for His work to continue on. We must, "GO," that is, we must take the Gospel to others, not wait for them to come to us and ask. Second, we must teach the lost about their need for salvation and the importance of following Christ. Third, all Christians should be baptized and added to a local church. Fourth, these baptized believers need to be taught to observe, or to do, everything Jesus told us and expects us to do. This, "Great Commission" of Christ to His church, is how Jesus wants us to do the work of reconciliation, and He commands us with all the authority granted to Him (verse 18).

Ephesians 3:21. God wants to be glorified in the church. Therefore, the place to serve and worship God is in the fellowship of a church.

Hebrews 10:24-25. One way to provoke others to love and good works is to encourage them to assemble. Our presence at a church service is important to others as well as to ourselves. The church fellowship encourages, strengthens, refreshes, and helps us maintain our walk with the Lord. As the day of Christ's return approaches our society will become increasingly wicked, and we will be exposed to greater influences of sin. Therefore, we need to assemble more often as "the day approaches", in order to maintain a godly life and perspective.

YOUR CHURCH

First Baptist Church of Old Jonesboro is your church. God added you to this body of believers. He added each one of us in particular to participate as a team. Your participation is vital to the work of FBOJ. As church members, we have pledged to obey the Biblical principles of godly living and doctrine. As a church, our covenant specifies some of the particulars that we agree to abide by believing that we can do a better job for the Lord by doing these things together, such as attending services, promoting good will, giving, and maintaining personal devotionals. You have a talent that God wants you to use here. You may be a helper or an organizer. Maybe, you are a musician or a mechanic. Whatever you can do, God added you because FBOJ needs your ministry. You have a responsibility waiting for you. Active participation will result in personal gratification, growth, and support in the fulfilling the Great Commission.

YOUR MINISTRY

Your personal role in the great commission is vital. Christ commissioned His disciples to repeat their training process with others in Matthew 28:19-20 saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." As a result, every disciple carries the responsibility of repeating the training with new disciples. By doing so, the ministry of Christ multiplies throughout the earth. We see this described in Acts 6:7 where it is said that the Word of God increased and the number of the disciples multiplied.

Multiplication occurs as each disciple trains another disciple.

From one disciple come two. From these two come four. From these four come eight, then sixteen, then thirty-two, sixty-four, one hundred twenty-eight, and so on. After ten years of multiplying disciples without drop outs, there will be 1,024 disciples. After twenty-five years, there will be over thirty-three million (33,000,000) disciples. The entire world's population could be reached within thirty-three years beginning with you. However, the numbers only double when everyone becomes a participant. Obviously, most do not become participants. Thus, your participation is all the more critical. If you do not participate, someone else will not be trained to be a disciple. In fact, the subsequent disciples of four, eight, sixteen, etc., will never happen.

As a Christian, you know the importance of Christ's message and the desperate need of lost souls. You know the fulfillment that Christ promises to those who live in Him. Therefore, you know that the only correct thing for you to do is to prepare yourself to disciple others. Discipling others is for everyone. It is not difficult. It involves three simple steps: (1) prayer, (2) friendship, and (3) training. The first two steps are easy enough, but most doubt their ability to train someone else. Put your mind at ease. You train a disciple by your example and by your conversation as you spend time together. Take him to Bible studies and to seminars where both of you can learn God's Word. Share with him tapes, videos, books, articles, memory verses, and devotional thoughts. Arrange to visit one of the leaders in the church to share the lessons of follow-up, new member orientation, and Christian Growth with both of you. Discipleship is just living for Christ and sharing your life with someone else. You can do it with your children, family, and friends.

The discipleship process repeats itself through four steps: (1) salvation, (2) immediate follow-up, (3) church orientation, and (4) Christian growth. As you experience growth as a Christian, your love for God increases, your knowledge of His Word increases, your development of godly character increases, your ability in ministry skills increases, your commitment to Christ increases, and your burden for souls increases. You will have opportunities to share the Gospel and lead someone to the Lord! This will initiate another cycle of ministry in a new Christian's life. The four steps of discipleship repeat themselves as people are saved and new disciples participate in the Christian growth process. As a new member in the church, you have followed the Lord in baptism, been empowered to be a witness for Christ, and publicly announced your commitment to serve Christ. Be faithful to your Lord, and allow Him to use you to strengthen the ministry of His church.

REVIEW

Please answer the following questions?

What is the purpose of church ministry, and what is your role?

Why is it important for church members to understand and make a commitment to uphold the church covenant?

What do you think bonds church members together?

Your ministry for Christ will be a blessing to you and to others if you are faithful to pursue it. It should involve continuous training and application. Though your ministry will not be just like someone else's, it is nonetheless important. God wants to use you, souls are depending on you, and saints are counting on you. Look for ways to minister to your family, your friends, your community, and the world.

To begin a ministry to others right away, answer the following questions:

What people do you know who might be interested in a Bible study or coming to church?

What people would you like to have information sent to describing the church, Bible studies, and other ministries?

Circle the names of those you would enjoy ministering to.

Begin praying for them.

Invite them to church or to arrange for a visit with a church leader.