

PURPOSES, PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

Our Purpose:

New Life's Vision is to be an "Authentic Christian Community";

Exalting Jesus Christ by placing Him first in all things,

Equipping the Saints for the work of the ministry by maturing each person in Christ,

Evangelizing the world, by persuading every person to in the Lord Jesus Christ, and

Embracing one another by loving as God loves us.

The foundational Principles of an Authentic Christian Community are:

Authority: God has placed authority in all facets of life. Every aspect of the function of the church is under the authority of; Scripture and Christ's leadership. All members: Elders, Deacons and Ministers have been granted authority to protect, ensure order and effectively minister in their respective roles.

Romans 13:1-2 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

I Thessalonians 4: 2 For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

Biblically-modeled: God has given us the inerrant infallible inspired Bible as our design for living. The church's doctrine and structure must conform to the entire counsel of Scripture.

II Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness

Acts 20:20, 27 "how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house"... "for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

Christ led: God has given all authority to Christ. It is imperative that Christ direct and instigate the entire ministry of the church giving Him preeminence in all things. The church provides an environment which allows members to respond as the Lord speaks directly to those He calls to His ministries.

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Matthew 28:19 "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"

Ephesians 4:15 says, "But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

Colossians 1:17-18 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Dependability: God desires and empowers all believers to be found faithful. Therefore, each member should respond in faithful obedience as they fulfill Christ's direction in their lives.

I Corinthians 4:2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

James 1:22 But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves

II Corinthians 9:7-8 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything; you may have an abundance for every good deed;

Excellence: God is a holy an infinite God, worthy of our very best. His standard for our lives is perfection. As we live our lives we recognize that we are human and fallible, but will strive for excellence in all that we do.

Matthew 5:48 "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things

Colossians 3:22-23 in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

Freedom: God has set us free from the bondage of sin. God expects us to use this freedom to voluntarily respond to His leading. As bond servants, we glorify Him, presenting ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness.

I Peter 2:16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.

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Galatians 5:13 I For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Romans 6:13, 18, 22 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.... and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life

John 15:15-16 "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

Grace Oriented: God extends grace to mankind through His Son. Therefore, the church must extend grace to all. We recognize the need to encourage a person to grow in their faith without creating stumbling blocks. The grace-oriented church then becomes a haven for a person to experience the grace of the Lord.

Romans 14:1, 13 "Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions."... "Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this – not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way."

Romans 8:1-2 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Romans 14:22-23 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

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The Practices of an Authentic Christian Community are:

Prayer: The church is constantly dependent on prayer for God's providential activity. We follow Jesus' example as a pattern for prayer. We faithfully anticipate His supernatural response to fulfill His kingdom's purposes in the world and ultimately bring glory to Himself.

Matthew 6: 9-10 "Pray, then, in this way: ` Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ` Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

Isaiah 56: 7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer... For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."

II Thessalonians 1:11-12 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

James 1:6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

Colossians 4:2-3 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the Word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;

John 14:12-14 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

James 5:16-19 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

I Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing

Disciple-making – Reproducing Disciples: God's Great Commission to the church is to "make disciples". Making disciples consists of leading people to Christ, helping them mature in Christ, helping them find a ministry, and the expectation that they do the same for others.

Matthew 28: 19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and

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the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

II Timothy 2:2 says "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also".

Matthew 5:19 "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

John 15: 7-8 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

A disciple at New Life is expected to bear fruit as the Lord commands. Fruit is produced by abiding in the True Vine (Jesus Christ), as manifested in:

- a. witnessing to others – Romans 1:13 and Colossians 1:6
- b. maturing as a believer – Romans 6:22-23
- c. being obedient to the Lord – Ephesians 5:9-10
- d. showing spiritual character – Galatians 5:22-23
- e. living a disciplined lifestyle – Philippians 1:11 Hebrews 12:11, and James 3:18
- f. ministering to others – Colossians 1:10
- g. living a lifestyle of worship – Hebrews 13:15

Multiple-site: God's directive for New Life is to be an authentic Christian community establishing numerous church sites within the region. The New Testament model is one local church governing structure in each city, where worship was conducted in multiple locations.

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ

Acts 20:20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.

Unified: God requires that His church maintain a common set of beliefs and a genuine love for one another. It is crucial that the church distinguish itself as being unified as a witness to the community bringing glory to God. Though multiple-sited, the church will remain one church, encouraging diversity in culture, style and ministries. Diversity issues will be addressed by utilizing the Principles of New Life; Biblically modeled, Grace and Freedom. Realizing that there are numerous divisive theological issues, all members need to be aware

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and avoid becoming a stumbling block to others. Accordingly, teaching on these topics needs to be done with a comprehensive balanced Biblical presentation - not the doctrines of men (e. g. Calvinism). We need to be able to say to people "you know I love you, but you are different from me." This applies to practices and behavior in the church but not regarding a person's experiences. Because it is in the Bible (e. g. foot washing) does not mean that it is prescriptive or mandated, rather it is acceptable within the church not "to be forbidden."

Philippians 2:2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose
Ephesians 4:3-6 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Romans 15:5-6 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity

I Corinthians 12:4-7,12 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good... For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

John 17:20-22 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one.

Ministry Based: God has gifted each believer uniquely and expects us to serve Him through ministry. New Life provides an environment of expectation for each person to discover and employ their spiritual gifts, life experiences, and talents in ministry. Each person has a vital and indispensable function which benefits the body as a whole ultimately glorifying God.

I Peter 4:10-11 "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God... so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ"

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I Corinthians 12:4-7 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Ephesians 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Missional: God expects the church to be outwardly focused. The church must have lifestyle that easily, naturally, and routinely communicates God's gospel and kingdom to the world. The church creates a hunger in the world by living as a community under Christ's Lordship. The church encourages participation in God's movement globally.

Matthew 10:7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

Acts 18:3-4 ... and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Acts 1:8 "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Spirit Led: God desires the church to be led by the Holy Spirit. The indwelling of and submission to the Holy Spirit is a living, practical and essential component of victorious Christian living. The church should seek the wisdom of the Spirit and not the logic of man.

Galatians 5:16-18, 25 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.... If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Romans 8:5-6 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

I Corinthians 2:12-13 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in

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words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."

God Centered Worship: God desires, and is worthy of all worship being directed to Himself through His Son. Worship is to be the collective participation of all of God's people focusing on Him and His "worth-ship".

Philippians 2:9-11 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Revelation 5:12-14 saying with a loud voice, saying "worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

John 4:23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

Matthew 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.' "

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship

Koinonia (Partnership): God desires His children to be in intimate fellowship with one another – specifically to "love one another". The church should create an environment that fosters close relationships with fellow believers. This "koinonia" should include sharing, concern, care and devotion for one another.

Acts 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

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"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Philemon 1:6 and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

Hebrews 10:24-25 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

I John 1:3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Church Discipline: God sets high standards for believer's behavior. The church is responsible to address behavior that knowingly ignores the direct commands of Scripture. Scripture provides a process for confrontation with the goal of restoration.

Matthew 18:15-17 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

II Thessalonians 3:11-15 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Romans 16:17-18 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Titus 3:9-10 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,

I Corinthians 5:1,2,5,11-13 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that

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the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst... I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus..... But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one. ... REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted

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