

MEMBERSHIP



T H E M O V E M E N T

S A C R I F I C E | C O M M I T | L O V E

MEMBERSHIP @ THE MOVEMENT

Members of One Body | Family because of the Gospel

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PART 1 | WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FAMILY (KINSHIP)?

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now. - Philippians 1:3-5

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life." - Mark 10:29-30

Family, Not Just Attending

What we understand about the hundredfold-now-in-this-time aspect of this promise has been fulfilled in my life through a phenomenon sociologists are now calling "voluntary kin." According to a past New York Times article, voluntary kin are simply people who choose to be related.

Anthropologists have traditionally used the term "fictive kin" to separate such relationships from "true" kinship based on blood or law, but many researchers have recently pushed back against that distinction, arguing that self-constructed families are no less real or meaningful than conventional ones.

As a church, and because of our own experience, we can affirm the reality of such relationships. Many Christians have been sold a small dream of what it means to be the church. In the American church, many people are content to simply attend, but we are made for more than just showing up. Kinship means multiple things, but one thing it does not mean is to simply be present. **Kinship carries the weight of care and involvement.** In the New Testament, there is never a picture of people simply "going to church. Instead, we see **disciples in community together on mission, 'being the church.'**

This is why The Movement Church uses the word '**kinship**' to describe membership. Membership is also a biblical word that many good churches use, and it has the same unifying principle as kinship. However, it lacks the same call to action that the word kinship has. Family in the Gospel does not simply unite together for the sake of being a social club or having fancy get-togethers; they unite together to do the work Jesus has called them to do as a family. The church is God's family business.

IS KINSHIP IN A LOCAL CHURCH IN THE BIBLE?

While we do not find explicit texts in Scripture commanding membership in a local church, the New Testament Scriptures are saturated with texts that imply formal membership within local churches. A few examples include the commands in Scripture for elders of local churches to oversee and shepherd local churches (see Acts 20:28-30 and 1 Peter 5:1-4). In order for the elders to be faithful to these commands and held accountable for them (Hebrews 13:17), they must have had a listing of who the individual members within their local church were. Paul commanded the local church in Corinth to formally remove a man from their congregation (see 1 Corinthians 5:1-13). Formal exclusion presupposes formal inclusion. The early church kept a list of widows (1 Timothy 5:9). If widows were listed and kept track of, it is likely that other lists were kept and tracked within the church, possibly including a list of the individual members who formed the local church body. We believe that some sort of formal membership within local churches was understood and present in the early church. In the Bible, to be a part of the universal church meant that you were part of the local church as well.

FAMILY TOGETHER

What does it mean to be family?

When we use the term family, we are referring to a group of people who are committed to one another and committed to living life together as they grow in the Gospel, in the context of family, while living on mission.

- We are Family because of the Gospel

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility... that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. - Ephesians 2:14-16

The Gospel is the basis of our kinship. When Jesus saved us, He reconciled us to God in one body, That means that everyone who has been reconciled to God has been reconciled to one another.

The Gospel reshapes our identity. We think, speak, and live as people who have been made new. God's design is for us to be compelled by His love. In Christ, we are new creations. Everything is from God. He gave us the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors. The way we see people changes, our purpose in life changes and we become reconcilers and ambassadors. We become believers that treasure Jesus Christ, his saving work, and his promises above everything else.

Without the Gospel we could never have true kinship with one another; there would be hostility. However, because of the Gospel, we must have connection with one another because Jesus broke down the dividing walls and killed the hostility between us. The

Gospel unites us, especially people of different ethnicities, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds who have been divided as a result of our broken world. Partnering together in the church is a tangible expression of our unity in Christ.

- We are Family in Community

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. - Hebrews 10:24-25

But we can't be healthy ambassadors alone. We must work together to plead on Christ's behalf. We must work together to live in the newness of our identity and to commit to our church family. We make this happen by cultivating in our hearts a Gospel-centered identity so that we are able to serve our family and work diligently in the ministry of reconciliation. We are family, and as family we actively take responsibility for one another.

- We are Family on Mission

On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. - Matthew 16:18b

We intentionally seek to make disciples where we live, work, and play. Jesus' plan for the advancement of the Gospel was not through individuals on their own program, but through the church working in partnership. **The Movement exists as a family of believers sent on mission together.** The purpose of our community is not just to be spiritually fed, but to do the work Jesus has called us to do. We need each other for mission, because the mission that Jesus calls us to is huge. Crucial to our mission is that the people partnering with The Movement are on the same page and operation from the same playbook. Kinship helps us understand and own the mission together.

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is generally defined as "a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action." Within the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants; some between God and man (Genesis 6, Genesis 9, Genesis 15, Ezekiel 20, Hosea 2, Jeremiah 31, and Matthew 26), while others are solely between men (1 Samuel 18, 2 Samuel 5).

WHY PARTNER IN THE LOCAL CHURCH?

For many Christians, it is clear that they need to partner together, but they do this mostly outside of the church. They may be involved in various para-church ministries and activities, but the local church lacks priority. Why is it necessary to partner inside

the local church for the mission of Jesus? Surely Christians could accomplish good, godly things partnering together in other Christian ministries?

The Church is God's 'Plan A' for Mission

God's eternal purpose and plan was that His wisdom and glory be revealed through the church. The church is the reconciled people of God, brought together by the power of the Gospel, and she shows forth the truth of the Gospel and gives a glimpse into the radical pursuing love of God. Although other organizations can be witnesses to the Gospel, only the church has been given the great commission to give herself fully to that glorious purpose.

Christians Are Meant To Live In The Church

If I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. - 1 Timothy 3:15

The church is God's household. It is the family of God in which all Christians are meant to live. It is also called the body of Christ, which means that to be disconnected from the church body is like being a dismembered limb. Although everyone who has been saved by Jesus is technically a member of the universal church, it is necessary to live out this truth within a local expression in community with one another. Being in the universal church by becoming a Christian without being a part of a local church is like being a fish out of water. It is simply not the way we are meant to live and thrive as Christians.

KINSHIP IS NOT ULTIMATELY ABOUT YOU

Ultimately, we do not partner for any of the perks or benefits to us. There certainly are benefits. We enjoy rich community and we share our lives with one another. Ultimately though, **we partner together to accomplish the great mission that was entrusted to the church by Jesus to make disciples of all nations.** The most important question isn't "What do I get out of it?" The most important question is "What can I do to be a part of the mission that Jesus left His church?" It is an act of obedience and of worship to our king Jesus.

PART 2 | WHO WE ARE

— OUR HISTORY

The Movement is a multi-ethnic church plant in the community of West Homestead, Florida. We are a local body of believers that understands that God has made us stewards of two very important resources... the Gospel, which is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16-17) and His people. Keeping that in mind, we desire to use all God has blessed us to be and have to tell of His provision of salvation through the gift of His son Jesus Christ and it is through this message that people are changed at their core. Because, as we are changed we begin to affect the world around us, only then are these changed people God's agents to change a dying world.

- Sanders family moved to Homestead July 2014
- Missional Community and monthly preview services began January 2015
- First Sunday Gathering September 2015
- Gifted current building February 2020
- First Sunday Gathering in new building September 2020

— OUR MISSION

Jesus left His church with a mission, and that mission is for all Christians. Mission is central to kinship, because all family members carry the weight of the mission together; it's not just for the staff and pastors.

THE MISSION OF THE MOVEMENT CHURCH IS TO LEVERAGE WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST TO CHANGE THE WORLD AROUND US.

— OUR VISION

Our mission is what we must do as Christians, but our vision is what we hope to achieve as a result of living out our mission. It is what we believe our church is called to accomplish in our generation.

THE VISION OF THE MOVEMENT CHURCH IS TO BE A FAMILY THAT IS DISTINCTIVELY DIFFERENT, SELF-SACRIFICING DISCIPLES GROWING IN RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AND ONE ANOTHER.

YOUR THING, MY THING, OUR THING

In fulfilling the mission of our church, there are many wonderful causes and ministries that we could devote ourselves to, and we simply aren't able to be involved in all of

them. The elders have decided to narrow the focus of the church. Instead of trying to do many things, they have focused on doing a few things, and doing them well.

In the church, we often want the ministries and causes we are personally passionate about to be adopted by the whole church. When this doesn't happen, we become frustrated and hurt. Just because The Movement does not become corporately involved in a ministry does not mean that you cannot be involved in those good ministries and causes in your own efforts to leverage who you are to change the world around you.

The mission of the church has both a corporate and a personal aspect. Although we all have things we feel called to do, some will be shared with the whole church body, and some will be your own act of mission and obedience. In other words, some things will be your thing, some things will be my thing, and some things will be our thing. For example, if I feel called to orphan ministry, that does not mean that the church needs to institute an orphan ministry for everyone. It might simply mean that I should be personally involved in orphan care. That is *my thing*. You will have *your thing* too, which might be a totally different thing from *my thing*, and that's okay.

Our thing is the shared ministries of the church that we should all embrace and be involved in, such as Missional Communities.

— OUR STRATEGY

We subscribe to a discipleship strategy that develops healthy people who are growing in the Gospel, through the framework of Family, while living life on Mission. The goal is to provide an environment that allows for the development of holistically healthy Christ disciples. To be a vehicle for change through Gospel, Family, and Mission we established 6 traits that we believe are characteristic of such health:

6 Traits of Healthy Discipleship

- *Devotion* - Constantly cultivating a heart that pursues God above all else
- *Study* - The ability to perceive the intended meaning of God's viewpoint through his word
- *Action* - Using who we are and what we have to proactively meet the needs of others
- *Communication* - The ability to profess the hope of the Gospel in an understandable way
- *Love* - the desire to be authentic in who you are so that those around you may see the love of Christ through your efforts, intentions and actions toward one another
- *Community* - partnering in authentic relationships to fulfill God's purposes

– VALUES

Live Different

Self-sacrificing (Matt 16:24-25) - The Gospel reshapes our identity. We become believers who treasure Jesus Christ, his saving work, and his promises above everything else.

Committed Disciples (Acts 2:42-47) - We intentionally follow Christ and seek to make other followers of Jesus wherever we are. We are family. And as family, we actively take responsibility for one another.

Loving Siblings (John 13:34-35) - Sacrificial growth in a life-long commitment of loving others as Christ has loved us.

OUR DISTINCTIVES

These beliefs are not as central as our core values, but they shape our DNA. Our theological distinctives shape our doctrinal teaching and beliefs, and our ministry distinctives shape our ministry philosophy and practice.

– THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

The Continued Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit

This is commonly called charismatic theology or continuationism (meaning the gifts of the Spirit continue today) in contrast with cessationism (the belief that the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased for today). Charismatic is a term that comes with an over-emphasis on spiritual gifts and experiences at the expense of other doctrinal truth. Experiences are important and we want to live in the reality of the Spirit, but experiences do not define our relationship with Jesus, the truth of the Gospel does.

The Bible teaches that the Spirit indwells, sanctifies, and empowers all who are brought to faith in Christ so that they might live in obedience to Jesus. It is only through the Spirit's presence and power that the church can effectively continue Jesus' mission. The Holy Spirit gives believers spiritual gifts for the work of ministry and the building up of the church. These gifts include natural abilities such as teaching and generosity, as well as supernatural gifts such as healing and prophecy. The gifts of the Spirit did not pass away with the death of the writers of Scripture, and are actually central to effective ministry in the church. They are to be eagerly desired, faithfully developed, and exercised according to biblical guidelines.

God's Sovereignty in Salvation

This is known as election or the reformed doctrine of salvation. As with the gifts of the Spirit, this doctrine carries baggage, but we must teach what we believe the Bible clearly says. Before we loved Christ, we were dead in our sins, unable to save

ourselves or choose to worship God. Despite our dire situation, God the Father loved us and sovereignly chose us in Christ for salvation, not on the basis of our good works. By His purpose and will, the Holy Spirit draws us to salvation. The atoning work of Jesus on the cross is sufficient to save us and keep us eternally secure in His salvation. The bottom line is that from beginning to end, salvation is of the Lord. This does not keep us from proclaiming the Gospel or going on mission. In fact, the power of God to save is our fuel for mission.

Believers' Baptism (Also known as *credo baptism*)

Baptism is for those who have been given a new life by Jesus. It symbolizes that they have come from a life of sin that was leading to death and have now been given a new life in Christ that will end in eternal life. Just like Jesus was buried and raised from the dead, Christians are baptized by submersion into water and raised out of the water.

Within the different Christian denominations there are several views on what baptism represents and how it works. The purpose of this is not to stir up controversy with other churches or denominations that disagree with us, but to help clarify for those considering Kinship with The Movement Church what we believe about baptism.

A common view that we disagree with is infant baptism (also known as *paedobaptism*). The argument for infant baptism stems from the belief that the sign of baptism corresponds to the sign of circumcision, which was performed on infants. Colossians 2:11-12 is one of the passages that would be used to support this belief:

"In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead."

So, why do we disagree? From our perspective, Paul is clearly referring to the spiritual circumcision that God performs on the heart of believing Christians. Paul says that we were raised through faith, and is therefore talking about believers. An infant cannot have a conscious faith in Christ. In the Old Covenant, Jewish babies received the sign of the covenant (circumcision) when they were born. In the New covenant, spiritual babies receive the sign of the covenant (baptism) after they are born again. God's people are not brought into His covenant based on their ethnicity, but by their faith, and only when they put their faith in Jesus should they be baptized.

Redeemed Sexuality

The prevailing sexual ethic of our culture is that sex is an appetite to be explored and cultivated however a person sees fit, as long as the partners are consenting. It is thought that a person is somehow incomplete unless they are able to express their sexuality any way they choose. .

The culture is loud on this issue, and unfortunately the American church has been silent. This silence has brought further confusion into the church on the issue of sex. The Bible is actually totally clear. God cares about sex because he cares about our relationships and our flourishing. Actually, God has a much higher view of sex than our culture. In the Bible, sex is the highest level of human intimacy. Sex is therefore reserved to be enjoyed only in a covenant marriage relationship between one man and one woman.

In our society this seems overly restrictive, but that is only because sex has been elevated from a good gift of God to an idol that defines our identities. When we make a good thing like sex into an ultimate thing, it becomes our slave-master. Christians believe that there is much more to a person than their sexuality, and that the boundaries God has placed around sex are for our good and ultimate joy.

We also believe that singleness is a valid and positive option for Christians, (like Jesus and the apostle Paul) and that it is possible to have a fulfilling Christian life as a single, celibate person.

Redeemed Gender Roles

Men and women were created equally in God's image, and are spiritually equal as heirs in Christ, with equal access to God. Both men and women should be encouraged and equipped to use their spiritual gifts in service to the body of Christ, as both men and women are given gifts to strengthen the church.

Although they are equal in spiritual value, men and women have different roles and responsibilities in the church and home. God has given to the man the primary responsibility to lead the family in accordance with the servant-leadership and sacrificial love characterized by Jesus Christ. In the same way, the office of elder is distinctly for men as the primary leadership role in the church.

Even within the Trinity, the persons of God have different roles, and the Son is under the leadership of the Father.

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. - 1 Corinthians 11:3

The Father's headship over Jesus does not mean that Jesus is inferior in any way to the Father. Jesus has a glorious purpose within the Trinity, but even He experiences leadership. Male leadership is not about chauvinism, but about living in the fullness of who God has made us to be.

Women should be equipped for ministry alongside men in roles such as deacon, Missional Community leaders, or the director of specific ministries. Their leadership should be felt in the church and their voices should be heard to inform decision-making.

— MINISTRY DISTINCTIVES

Elder Team Leadership

Leadership in the church is not a one-man show. Jesus' plan for the church was for it to be led by a team of biblically qualified elders who provide vision and direction, guard doctrine, and lead in preaching and teaching. This team is led by a 'first-among-equals.' This leader is not a king, but functions more like a quarterback, taking a lead role in calling the plays. While he has a leading role on the team, he relies on the support and accountability of the rest of the team. An elder team is not a hierarchy; it is a team that is committed to one another relationally, and committed to leading the local church into everything that Jesus wants it to be.

Biblical Preaching

We believe that it is the Word of God that changes people, not our ideas or our personalities. Therefore, at The Movement Church we will always preach from the Bible. Primarily, we will preach through entire books of the Bible. Our hope is that the Family of The Movement would have a thirst for the Word that would grow as the Bible is opened and preached.

Local and Global Impact

In the New Testament we see the early church both sending and receiving gifted men and women who build up the church. These are not celebrities, but servants whose lives are laid down for Jesus and His bride. Churches did mission in their towns, cities, regions, and even internationally. We partner with local churches with which we share a common mission, as well as several church planting networks. Currently we partner with Advance, an international network for planting and strengthening churches (www.advancemovement.com).

Multi-ethnic Church

Just as the New Testament church included men and women of different ethnic and economic backgrounds worshiping God together and providing a witness of God's love for all people by making disciples of all nations, the Movement is a multi-ethnic church made up of people from diverse backgrounds.

Jesus envisioned and prayed for the multi-ethnic church the night before he died, united for the sake of the gospel (John 17:20-23). Luke described the multi-ethnic church in Antioch as a model for future congregations (Acts 11:19-26, 13:1-3). Paul prescribed the multi-ethnic church as a biblical mandate and expectation because Jesus has broken down the dividing wall of hostility (Ephesians 2:11-4:6). Heaven pictures the multi-ethnic church of every tribe, language, and nation worshiping God as one for eternity (Revelation 7:9-10).

Difficult to Fake It

In our particular context, it is easy to pretend to be a Christian. Unlike many parts of the world where you may encounter persecution for your faith, it is actually very socially acceptable, even encouraged, to call yourself a Christian. However, actually living as a Christian is always costly. Jesus said to count the cost, and to take up your cross and follow Him.

Many people want the perks of calling themselves Christians, but they have no intention of living like one or obeying Jesus. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian who was martyred by the Nazis, called that cheap grace. He said, "Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance." Real grace is costly. Bonhoeffer said, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

At The Movement, we want to do everything we can to let people know what it really means to be a disciple of Jesus, and obey Him as Lord. Jesus had His harshest words for hypocrites. Our heart is that at The Movement it is difficult to be a hypocrite, and difficult to fake it.

PART 3 | WHAT A FAMILY MEMBER DOES

Now that you know where The Movement came from and what the church is all about, you can begin to decide if this is the church God is calling you to commit yourself to. Before anyone makes a commitment, they always count the cost. Every relationship has expectations, and this one is no different. Being a part of this family is not just committing to the church; it is contributing to the church. As a family member, something will be required of you. So what does it mean for your life to connect with a local church?

— LIVE DIFFERENT - SACRIFICE, COMMIT, LOVE

— FAMILY MEMBERS COMMIT

Serving as a Family Member

One of the key differences between simply attending a church and being kin to a church is how a family member serves. Many of us have not been a part of a church where this was expected. Most of us have been taught to be good spectators rather than participators. We arrive at a meeting, pay our dues, grab a seat, and try not to spill our drinks or be too loud. Then we leave and go on about our lives. This is falling far short from partnering together for the advance of the Gospel.

Everyone has gifts from the Spirit, for the body

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are virtues of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. - 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

The Scripture is clear that God gives His people gifts, and because they are received from God, they are also to be used for God. Many Christians do not serve because they feel they have nothing to contribute to the body. The Bible says otherwise. Everyone who has the Spirit of God through belief in Christ has gifts from the Spirit to serve and encourage the church. These gifts are not for paid professionals, but for all Christians. The work of the ministry is not the work only of pastors but of all family members.

Some people are aware of their gifting, but use those God-given gifts for advancing themselves and their own agendas, rather than Jesus' church. Because our gifts and talents are gifts of grace from God, we do not get to determine their purpose. We must steward our gifts for the purposes God has for them, because His purposes are higher than ours.

Not only that, but we must celebrate the diversity of gifts instead of comparing or becoming envious.

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. - Romans 12:6-8

One of the purposes of Christian community is to discover how you are gifted to build up the body of Christ. Many Christians feel they have little to offer, but that is simply not true. You have:

- The God-given gifts and talents with which you were born
- The passions that inspire you.
- The blessings of education
- The skills you've honed working at home or in the marketplace
- The life experiences that have matured you
- The pain that has deepened you
- The love for your neighbor that spills from God's heart into yours

Our serving advances the Gospel

The biggest problem with our lack of service is that it slows down the advancement of the Gospel in our communities. Do you have to unlearn a culture of privilege where you were always on the receiving end of service? Family members recognize that they are a part of a whole, and the mission of the family is bigger than their personal agendas. Sometimes this will mean doing something you would rather not do because it needs to get done! Committed family members do not feel above certain tasks. The Gospel needs an army of countless men and women who are done with self-serving dreams, and are throwing themselves wholeheartedly into all that God has for them in the local church.

Practically, we call those that are family members with The Movement to serve by volunteering at least once a month somewhere in the life of the church. The Movement hosts a number of ministries, which are only made possible through the faithful service of volunteers. However, just as importantly, we want to be people who informally lead lives of service, always looking for open doors through which we can be a blessing to others for the sake of the Gospel.

Giving as Family Members

Not only do family members serve, family members also support the mission practically with our financial resources. As Christians, we understand that we own nothing; rather, we are stewards of the resources God has blessed us with. Everything in all creation belongs to Him, and our giving back to Him is the right response to a faithful and generous God. In Matt 6:21 Jesus tells us that where our money is shows us where our hearts are. This is a massively important issue, not only for the support of the church and the advance of the Gospel, but also for our hearts.

God is faithful, generous and sacrificial

God is faithful to us forever. The whole of Scripture is filled with examples of God's faithfulness to humanity, even though we have rejected Him. The sun continues to rise, the ground continues to give us food, and God continues to faithfully sustain and uphold His world.

God is also unspeakably generous. He adopts us as His children, gives us an inheritance in Christ, and lavishes blessings on us. The great gift of His Son Jesus was history's greatest act of generosity, over and above what we could imagine.

The gift of Jesus Christ is not only generous, but also incredibly sacrificial. In order to give us life, Jesus subjected Himself to incredible suffering, took our sins on Himself, and gave Himself up to death. There has never been a more costly love.

Our giving should be faithful

The truths of who God is and what God has done fuel our response to Him. Because God is faithful and never changes, our response of giving should be faithful and regular.

Tithing is the historic practice of faithful giving for both the people of Israel and the Christian church. The word tithe means tenth, and indicates the faithful response of giving the first 10% of total income in support of the regular operations sustaining ministry in the local church.

The Old Testament contains several instances of tithing as a spontaneous response to the grace of God. Both Abraham and Jacob have moments of worship in which they declare a tithe. Following this, tithing is established as the normal practice of the people of Israel following the Law of Moses.

It is through the tithes that the temple system and priests were funded and were able to minister to the people. In 1 Corinthians 9:13-14, Paul says that ministers of the Gospel should be supported in the same way. The faithful giving of the church through tithes funds the operations of the church.

Tithing is clearly a practical and biblical way to fund the local church. The church should not be supported by large outside donors, or by a handful of wealthy people in

the church, but by the faithfulness of normal believers partnering together. This is an area where we all put 'skin in the game' to advance the Gospel.

A Christian who feels that they do not need to give at least 10% to fund God's mission through the church should examine themselves to see if there is an undue love of money, or a lack of love for the bride and body of Christ — the church.

Our giving should be generous

It is true that New Testament believers are no longer under the law, but the grace of Jesus actually makes us more generous! Believers in the early church would most likely have begun their give at least at 10% due to the Old Testament precedent, but many went much further, selling all their goods and seeking opportunities to be lavishly generous.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. - Acts 2:42-45

The key was that they were devoted to each other and to the Gospel, and the result was that awe came upon their souls. When someone is in awe at the generosity of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, the natural response is radical generosity.

Family in the church should faithfully support the church, and they should also be looking for needs they can meet. Family members should be aware of opportunities for generosity, such as mission trips, building projects, or individuals in need. Those who have much should be aware of those who have little, and seek to extend generosity. A pastor friend of ours likes to say of family members, "what's in my fridge is yours, and what's in your fridge is mine!"

Our giving should be sacrificial

Jesus' gift of Himself wasn't just generous; it was the greatest sacrifice. Many of us can give generously out of our abundance, but if our giving is never sacrificial, it shows we have perhaps not been impacted by the Gospel. We always sacrifice for the things we love. Our financial response to God's grace should require sacrificial adjustments in our budgets, and will probably require us to say "no" to other things in our lives so that we can devote resources to Jesus' mission.

A note on financial accountability

Many have experienced financial mismanagement, or leaders who have manipulated the church in an attempt to enrich themselves. As a result, many people are jaded when it comes to churches and money. The danger of living in past hurts is that we use

them as an excuse to justify our disobedience. Ask yourself this question: “If I was under perfect leadership, would I then be obedient with my finances?” Even under the perfect leadership of Jesus, the rich young ruler refused to obey and become generous. In the end, financial obedience is not just a leadership issue, but also a heart issue we must all wrestle over.

While The Movement is not a business, all the necessary checks and balances are in places for proper stewardship of resources.

— FAMILY MEMBERS SACRIFICE

Family together means submitting to one another and to the leadership of the local church. The subject of church leadership can be a difficult one for people, because leaders who have led poorly, selfishly, and hypocritically have done so much harm. Despite the damage done, a Biblical church requires leadership, and all Christians should be under accountable, Christ-honoring leadership.

Leadership starts with Jesus

Jesus is called the head of the church, and is the ultimate authority of every church. The church exists through Him and for Him, and is ultimately accountable to Him. Jesus’ life is our example for leading, His death is our power for leading sacrificially, and His fame is the purpose of our leading. Although Jesus is the ultimate authority in the church, He also left human leaders in place to care for her.

Elders

The primary leadership role in the church is the elder. There is much confusion in the church over what an elder is and what they are supposed to do. In many churches, the elders are figureheads with no real authority. Actually, in the New Testament, the elders are the primary governing authority in the church.

“Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.” - Acts 20:17

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” - Acts 20:28

In this passage, Paul addresses the elders as the key leaders in the church. Elders is simply the most common term for the leadership role that is also referred to as ‘shepherd’, and ‘overseer’. These other two words are where we get the terms ‘pastor’ (Latin for ‘shepherd’) and ‘bishop’ (Latin for ‘overseer’). Even though in many churches these are three different positions, in the Bible the words are used interchangeably to

describe the responsibilities of the office. At The Movement, we do not make a distinction between elders and pastors.

The elders lead the church, determining direction, defending doctrine, and performing discipline. They help keep the church on her Jesus-given mission.

It is important to note that whenever elders are mentioned, they are mentioned in plurality. None of the churches mentioned in the New Testament have only one elder. Even small churches meeting in house had more than one elder. In our celebrity-driven culture, it is common to want to follow the 'top-dog.' We have to resist the temptation to build the church around any one person's gifts or personality.

Although we believe eldership should always be done as a team, that does not mean there is no leader running point. All elders are equal in value as elders, but they can serve different functions. Corey Sanders, who planted The Movement, functions as the elder primarily responsible for the vision of the church, but he does not make decisions in a vacuum. The totality of the eldership team keeps Corey, and the rest of the elders, accountable.

At The Movement, potential elders go through a process of evaluation, which includes testing their character, their doctrine, and their lifestyle. We also want to make sure they are a good relational fit before adding them to the team.

In the Bible there are no women elders, and Scripture teaches that God has given men the primary responsibility to lead the church in this particular office. Women are totally equal in spiritual value and are not inferior in ministry gifting, but men and women are given different roles in the life of the church. The women in the church add massive value to the leadership team, and their voices should be clearly heard.

Deacons

The word deacon means servant. In the early church, faithful servants were chosen as deacons so that the elders did not need to oversee every aspect of ministry (Acts 6:1-7). In Acts 6, the deacons are commissioned in order to care for widows, but that does not mean that deacons should only care for widows. It means that deacons should do whatever is necessary to advance the Gospel with their faithful service! At The Movement, deacons lead various ministries, depending on the current needs of the church.

A deacon is not a governmental position in terms of overseeing the church, but they do provide leadership to specific areas of ministry. In the Bible, the qualifications for deacon are the same character qualifications for elders. Unlike elders, deacons may include women, as was the case with Phoebe, who was mentioned as a deacon in Romans 16:1.

— FAMILY MEMBERS LOVE

Missional Communities

A Missional Community is a community of Christ followers on mission with God in obedience to the Holy Spirit that demonstrates tangibly and declares creatively the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a specific pocket of people.

More than a Bible Study

A missional community by nature is intended to be more than a typical bible study. For us, a missional community is not just a bible study, it's not just a fellowship group, it's not just a social action club, it's not just a support group, and it's certainly not just a weekly meeting. Healthy missional communities include all of those things over time, but it's a family of missionaries learning to follow Jesus in every area of their lives. A Missional Community is a group of people asking "What does loving my city and neighbor really look like?", and realizing Jesus may ask far more of me than I ever thought. The great news though, is that we are experiencing and knowing Jesus where He is...on mission to the broken and lost.

Practices of Missional Communities

1. Gathering as a family in the Missional Community Meeting

The Meeting typically is composed of a Family Meal and a low barrier Bible study. Great things happen around the dinner table. More often than not, the most significant conversations I have happen around the table. Eating together also teaches us in many ways to behave like normal people. Participating in a meal together is a symbol of your fellowship and relationship with one another, and we think it should be a regular practice of every community, because it's a regular practice of most families.

The second component of our meeting time is low barrier Bible study. Many Bible studies and groups make a lot of assumptions about the knowledge of those entering into it. Those assumptions actually create significant barriers for new people entering your community. We lower the barrier of entry into the conversation so that it doesn't require any minimum knowledge to meaningfully participate. Secondly, we want to create an environment where individuals are expected to contribute, not simply come and consume.

2. Gathering as disciples in DNA Groups (Discover - Nurture - Act)

We encourage groups that desire to "go deeper" to start what are called DNA groups. These are smaller groups of two or three believers of the same gender that commit to

meeting outside of the group meeting time. There are three primary elements to this kind of group:

1. **Hear** from God's Word and **Obey** what you have learned
2. **Repent** of sin and **Believe** the gospel together
3. **Consider** opportunities we have to share Christ and Pray by name for lost people

Our hope is that these groups will help you and other believers in your group to begin measuring depth by obedience, rather than simply knowledge.

3. Gathering as missionaries in **Third Spaces**

You've probably heard the term "third space" before. Starbucks used the concept in their marketing strategy. A third space was another place to frequent besides your work and your home. This third space is somewhere to find refuge and a sense of place.

In a similar way, in the church, we need to create a third space. Your first space is often the Sunday gathering. Your second space is your weekly Missional Community meeting. **And now we need a third space as a way to cultivate your mission together as a community: a place to introduce your lost friends to your community.** The purpose of this third space will be to create some neutral ground that anyone would naturally go to on a **regular** basis. We think it's important for a missional community to create a neutral space to go to that isn't the Sunday worship service and not your Bible study. You want a place where you can bring your lost friends that doesn't demand that they have to enter into another culture. This is informal, casual and non-committal. They need to see and relate to Christians in a natural and relaxed environment. They need to feel that your group really enjoys being together and third place is a great environment for this to happen.

NEXT STEPS:

Pastoral Interview and signing Membership Covenant
Baptism (if you have not been baptized after believing in Christ)
Introduction in Sunday Gathering!