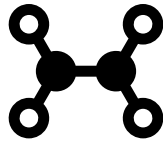


TRINITYCENTRAL

Joining
THE FAMILY

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WELCOME!

Dear Friend,

We're thrilled you're considering joining the Trinity Central family. There are many wonderful churches in our city. Our passion is to see Jesus' kingdom expanding and we know that it will take many churches to see that in our city.

Over the coming pages we will look at who Trinity Central is in order to help you decide if this is the church for you.

Please feel free to ask as many questions as you have. We look forward to getting to know you better!

For Jesus and His mission,

The elders of Trinity Central

WHY DO WE BELIEVE IN 'BEING ADDED' TO A CHURCH?

Scripture tells us that our lives only make complete sense in the context of God's purposes, which are worked out in local churches across the world.

The universal church consists of every born again follower of Jesus in every era and every nation. But it is expressed through local churches. God's plan, ever since the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, has been for every believer to be meaningfully added to a local church and become a functioning part of His body.¹

As pastor and theologian Phil Moore says:

When Jesus told them to 'go and make disciples of all nations' Paul and Barnabas planted local churches. Whichever way you look at it, that's got to make a difference to the way you invest your life. They didn't simply work for large numbers of conversions. They didn't simply establish a collection of Christian ministries. They didn't even form a network of high quality Christian meetings. They were satisfied with nothing less than planting vibrant and self-supporting churches like the ones in Jerusalem and Antioch.

Terry Virgo, the founder of Newfrontiers, writes in "The Spirit Filled Church":

Individuals who have never experienced the joy and delight of belonging to a loving and vital Christian body have missed one of the thrills of the Christian life. Mere 'church-going' was never in God's plan for you. He wants you very closely knit with a group of dear friends with whom you can share your life.

The church is not a meeting we attend, it is Christ's Body, to which we belong.

LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS:

Stated in the Bible: *"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number... and the Lord added to their number daily."*²

Assumed in the New Testament's structure: The epistles are written to local churches on the assumption that all believers would be joined to local churches.

¹ Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4

² Acts 2:41 & 47

Implied in the Bible: The descriptions of life amongst the early believers implies an up-close-and-personal local church community (e.g. Acts 2-4). Furthermore, when writing to the church in Corinth Paul describes the church using the ‘body’ as a metaphor –referring to an intimate and functioning local body not just a worldwide body.

On display in the New Testament language of leadership and followership: The Bible cautions church leaders that they will be held to account for how they lead and followers are similarly instructed to obey their leaders.³ This obviously assumes knowledge of who is leading and who is following!

Required for New Testament discipline: Paul instructed the churches that in cases of ongoing unrepentant sin they should finally resort to putting people out of the church.⁴ This indicates that these unrepentant people were in or joined to the church.

³ 1 Cor. 3:5-9; Hebrews 13:7 & 17

⁴ 1 Cor. 5:3-5 & 9-13; 1 Timothy 1:20

TRINITY CENTRAL'S MISSION:

WE EXIST TO SPREAD A PASSION FOR JESUS BY
MULTIPLYING COMMUNITIES OF SPIRIT-EMPOWERED
DISCIPLES WHO WHOLEHEARTEDLY LIVE OUT THE GOSPEL
TO THE GLORY OF THE FATHER.

The Gospel tells us that Jesus is central to everything. Even if we don't acknowledge Him, He reigns supreme over all creation, holding all things together by the Word of His command. Our lives and our world revolve around Him.⁵

There are many things in this world that compete to be at the centre of our lives: relationships, work, money, pleasure, even religion. When we build our lives around these things they lead to confusion, discouragement, and dissatisfaction. Transformation begins when our lives start to revolve around Jesus, and not ourselves.

Scripture tells us that sin entered God's world through Adam: corrupting creation, turning our hearts against God and reigning over us as a terrible slave master. But God sent Jesus to die for us, taking the judgement for our sin so we can receive the resurrection life which He offers us.⁶

In bowing to Jesus we begin a new life. We discover that we were created by Jesus for relationship with Jesus, and as we surrender our lives to Him we receive joy and peace. We experience His love and discover that, in Him, our lives have more meaning than we could ever have imagined.

As Jesus' disciples spent time with Him three things happened: they began to love Him, they became like Him, and they began to do the things He did.

It is no different today. Embracing a life of discipleship (or becoming a follower of Jesus, to put it a different way) means coming into a deep, intimate relationship with Jesus. As we grow to love Jesus we become more like Him, and we begin to do the things He did.

⁵ Colossians 1:13-20

⁶ Romans 5

Jesus sends us into the world to make more disciples, having given us a model to emulate: small, relational groups in which we learn to love God, love others and love our neighbour. Our goal is to spread a love for Jesus by continually multiplying discipling communities in which people encounter Jesus, grow to become like Jesus and start doing the things Jesus did.

Multiplying communities means continually raising up and releasing new leaders who will, in turn, invest their lives in others for Jesus' sake. Jesus has poured His Holy Spirit into us to empower for this.

OUR 6 CORE VALUES:

Values shape how we do what we dream of doing. They form our culture. Here are the values we aspire to. We want these things to characterize Trinity Central's life together and align us as we go on Jesus' mission together.

We are:

PURSUING HIS PRESENCE

Before anything else we are a people who love being in God's presence and enjoying Him in worship. We respond with gratitude for all that Jesus has won for us. We glorify Him because He alone is worthy of praise. We delight in His love, enjoy His favour, and trust Him for all our needs.

Paul teaches that the church is like a temple being built from living stones to be a dwelling place for God.⁷ God dwells among His people - His presence is among us. The Psalmist tells us that God is enthroned in our praises, and Jesus reminds us that He is among us when we gather - even in small groups.⁸ We give priority to worship, seeking God's presence and enjoying our relationship with Him. From this flows our serving and our mission.

FRIENDS FIRST

Jesus draws us into relationship with Him and calls us His friends.⁹ As He welcomes us into friendship with Him we become friends with one another. God has adopted us into His family and so we love each other as brothers and sisters. We prize our unity by fostering humble attitudes toward each other, and loving and serving one another intentionally. We go the extra mile for one another. We are vulnerable, we care, and we don't avoid awkward conversations. We believe the best, we don't gossip, and we take care of each other.

UNITED IN DIVERSITY

We are marrieds and singles, adults and children. Each member of the Body is unique and loved. Each one belongs. We are diversely gifted by the Spirit, and these gifts are used in the

⁷ Ephesians 2

⁸ Psalm 22:3; Matthew 18:20

⁹ John 15:15

building up of the one Body.¹⁰ We are united even though we are ethnically and socio-economically diverse because what unites us is far greater than our differences. This reflects the heart of God, who is calling one people, united in Christ, from every nation and tribe and people and language.¹¹ We don't go to church — we ARE the church!

ROOTED IN GRACE

In Christ everything we are and do is flavoured with God's grace. By His grace we have been released from the power and penalty of sin. By His grace we have come into a new life, defined by the freedom, joy and acceptance we find in relationship with the Father.¹²

God's grace impacts every area of our lives. Knowing that we are loved by God frees us to love others, forgiving one another and extending grace as we have received it. We are vulnerable with each other because we have no pretences to keep up. The Gospel thus shapes not only our initial experience of salvation, but the full experience of our lives.

EMPOWERED BY WORD AND SPIRIT

The early church devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching which we have in Scripture. The Bible has the final word. We are serious about preaching it faithfully and living it out.

We are a priesthood of believers - each one playing a vital part in ministering to God, one another and the world around us. We all live by faith through the Spirit, empowered with His gifts and growing in His fruit. The Spirit is at work in us, and we know He'll finish the good work He has started in us.¹³

ON MISSION TOGETHER

Jesus came to seek and save lost people.¹⁴ That was us not so long ago. Now we have become disciples of Jesus - followers who love and obey Him. We are called to those who don't know Jesus, to be salt and light in our culture. We invest our lives in others, helping them become disciples who make disciples. We love our neighbours, serve our city, are intentional about

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 12

¹¹ Rev. 7:9

¹² Ephesians 2:8-10; Acts 11:23; Colossians 1:5-6; Romans 8:1-25

¹³ 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Cor. 12; Gal. 5:22-23; Phil. 1:6

¹⁴ Luke 19:10

proclaiming the Gospel, and are ever looking to establish new local churches to the glory of Jesus.

WHAT ARE OUR ROOTS?

Trinity Central was birthed out of an apostolic family of churches called Newfrontiers. Here is a very brief history of Newfrontiers:

REDISCOVERING NEW TESTAMENT COMMUNITY

In the early 1970s, Terry Virgo began to help a number of house churches in southern England rediscover genuine New Testament community – something that looked a little more like the church in Acts 2:42-47. The number of house churches grew, and each month about a thousand people began to gather in Brighton, UK for celebration and teaching. From time to time Terry would gather the leaders of these churches for times of prayer and instruction.

On one occasion as they gathered for prayer one of the leaders had a prophecy, seeing the group as a herd of elephants that would break through the jungle and make a path where there was no path, moving in to “new frontiers”. This prophecy led to the churches beginning to form into one family, which became known as Newfrontiers. As the number of churches grew, churches in other nations began to join the family.

During this season, provoked by the New Testament model of planting churches served by apostolic ministry, there came an important shift from adopting existing churches to planting new ones. Training programmes, outreach teams, multiplied leaders and pioneer church planters all followed, and today there are hundreds of Newfrontiers churches around the world.

NEWFRONTIERS GOING FORWARD

In 2011 Newfrontiers transformed. Terry and his team released recognized leaders in different nations across the world to serve the churches as apostles. These faithful leaders were released to take responsibility for the ‘sphere’ of ministry which God had already given them. This has resulted in multiplied church planting, training programs, and gospel expansion into new areas.

Each of these apostles is free to develop his own strategies, training programs, and gospel advance, while remaining in loving, prayerful fellowship with one another.

THE EARLY DAYS OF TRINITY CENTRAL

In 2010 God spoke to Rhys and Sara Scott about planting a church in Vancouver, giving them a vision to see a Jesus-magnifying disciple-multiplying church established here.

At the time the Scotts were living in London, UK, where they had been involved in planting a church. Over the following nine months they gathered a team and, with the support of ChristCentral Church in Fredericton, moved to Vancouver in September 2011. Initially they gathered people in their home, eating and praying together.

Six months later we could no longer fit into their home, and we began meeting at the Roundhouse Community Centre in Yaletown. During the midweek people gathered in Foundations groups, grappling with what it would mean to establish a New Testament community in Vancouver.

Over time people were added locally and team members began to arrive from the UK and Eastern Canada, and the rooms at the Roundhouse could no longer contain us. In October 2012, after receiving a prophetic word about *“the train moving to a new station”* we moved to the SFU Wosk Centre downtown.

At the same time we launched our first Alpha course, led by Sam and Kath Wade, at a cafe called *Sciue* in Yaletown. It was with great rejoicing that we saw the first people coming to faith in Jesus.

By early 2014 we were outgrowing the Wosk Centre and with God’s help we found a new home back in Yaletown at the Vancity Theatre.

Gathering at Camp Sunrise on the Sunshine Coast we launched “Thirst” - a weekend of worship, teaching and fun, which is helping us to develop an apostolic vision for church planting.

In October 2014 the first eldership team was appointed and, with much celebration, we moved from church plant to church! Since then we’ve continued to experience God’s blessing, outgrowing the Vancity Theatre, and multiplying the small discipling communities we call LifeGroups. In challenge, grief and seasons of growth we have enjoyed God’s faithfulness.

This is just the beginning, there is much more to come!

PROPHETIC VISION

As we have grown God has spoken prophetic promises over us which have shaped our identity and mission.

Barney Coombes, the founder of a family of churches called 'Salt & Light' wrote: *"A genuine prophetic vision has tremendous power: it touches us in the depths of our being and gnaws away at our insides; it focuses our attention; it produces singleness of purpose; it aligns the saints; it harnesses untapped resources; it obliterates festering aggravations; it motivates people to action."*

We live with prophetic promises which inspire us toward all God has in store for us.

We will not see these promises accomplished in our own strength, neither do we think that because God has spoken it will automatically come to pass. The promises of God are inherited through faith, patience, prayer and hard work.

We pray for these promises to be fulfilled, seek God for direction at each turn, and work hard towards them. They are impossibly out of our reach, and yet with God all things are possible!

There are four particular prophetic promises which we live with as a church family, and speak to four aspects of our mission.

GOD'S SPIRIT POURING OUT IN VANCOUVER

During a Leaders conference before the planting of Trinity Central, while praying for the plant into Vancouver, a church leader felt God speak powerfully that: *"As surely as the snow melts, and the water runs down the side of the mountains and into the sea, I will pour out my Spirit on Vancouver in the coming days."*

JESUS' CROWN

In December 2015, God showed Rob Horn a prophetic picture. He saw the tower blocks of downtown Vancouver at night, their windows brightly lit. As he looked he saw the condos forming into the shape of a crown, a crown fit for Jesus Christ to wear. This crown contained many jewels. The jewels were the people who live in the condos.

Rob saw us walking the streets of Vancouver in Jesus' footsteps. Jesus wants to use us to impact the lives of many in this city, that they may become like jewels in His crown.

This prophetic promise motivates us to reach our city with the good news of Jesus' love for the people of Vancouver, knowing that God intends to rescue many!

A SUPERSTRUCTURE OVER VANCOUVER

During our Thirst weekend away in 2015 Jeremy Simpkins had a prophetic picture in which he saw the blueprints of a massive structure superimposed over a map of the Lower Mainland. This superstructure had massive, deep foundations. Jeremy felt God was reminding us not to despise the day of small beginnings, for God always starts small (like using a baby in a manger to save the nations from sin). What he saw would start small but has multiplication in its DNA.

This superstructure was supported by pillars in different neighbourhoods: North Vancouver, Kits, Yaletown, out near the universities, in Richmond and Surrey and Burnaby. Each pillar was a different expression of Trinity Central because God wants to reach our entire region.

This promise has become key to our strategic thinking: we want to see a church which spans Greater Vancouver but which is rooted into different neighbourhoods and cities. With each step of the way we are asking God to reveal where we should build the next pillar.

VALLEYS, RAILWAY LINES, FAULT LINE AND BRIDGES

Jeremy Simpkins brought another prophetic word to us in the summer of 2012. He felt God speaking to us about church planting, and he saw four avenues God would use to plant churches:

1. up the many valleys of B.C. into the interior and the North;
2. along the transcontinental railway lines which connect the major cities of Canada;
3. down the fault line of the west coast into great American cities like Seattle, Los Angeles, and San Francisco; and
4. 'bridges' from Asia which had brought people and trade to Vancouver, now bringing church-planters from Vancouver into the great Asian cities.

This promise guides and motivates us to plant churches to reach new communities with the Gospel. We are trusting God that He will enable us to plant new disciple-making church communities in city after city for the sake of the Gospel.

These prophetic promises belong to every member of the Trinity Central family - they are not just for the original group who planted the church, or for the leaders. God has given these promises to all of us! Their fulfilment is dependant on us owning them together and working them out together.

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

God has set a big vision before us! But how do we achieve it? God has given us a core strategy and three strategic goals that will help us achieve the vision.

Our core strategy is to make disciples in small discipling communities. We call these LifeGroups. Jesus told us that He would build His church, and that we should go and make disciples.¹⁵ That's the heart of what we're doing.

Our strategic goals will quite likely never change. They will help us work out what we should do and when we should do it. They will help us channel our energy and resources wisely, and stay faithful to what God has put in our hearts.

So what are these goals?

1. **An apostolic base in Vancouver with a presence across the Lower Mainland**

As we make disciples in community we want to see a church family emerge: a worshipping people who are advancing God's Kingdom in our city, extending God's glory throughout Vancouver and the Lower Mainland and sending people to the nations.

2. **A movement of church plants partnering in Canada, the U.S. and Asia**

God has given us promises about planting churches into cities across Canada, the United States and into Asia. We must train leaders, send out church planting teams, and resource these plants with apostolic ministry. All of this will be in partnership with Newfrontiers churches and others.

3. **Resourcing Trinity Central and other churches**

God has called us to grow leaders and develop resources that will serve us, and the churches we're partnering with. These resources might be in the form of materials, songs and music, training and other courses, as well as gifted people.

We dream of seeing lives transformed. We dream of a city impacted. We dream of churches planted and nations reached. We dream of the Kingdom of God advancing.

¹⁵ Matthew 16:18; 28:16-20

In order to see that happen we need the Holy Spirit's empowering to:

SEEK THE LOST
CARE FOR THE POOR
SET THE OPPRESSED FREE
HEAL THE SICK
LIVE OUR FAITH PUBLICLY IN PRACTICAL WAYS
TRAIN LEADERS
PLANT CHURCHES

WORKING IT OUT EVERYDAY

Let's get practical! What are we doing to cooperate with God in working out this plan?

WE PRIORITIZE WORSHIP AND PRAYER

It won't take you long to discover that we place a high emphasis on worship and prayer. These two things orient us toward God. Everything else we do is temporary: pastoral ministry, discipleship, evangelism, and caring for the poor. None of these will exist in eternity. When God makes all things new there will be no broken people to pastor, no lost people with which to share the love of Jesus, no poor people to care for!

As a church family we gather to worship in our Sunday celebrations and in our LifeGroups. We pray in our LifeGroups and we gather together to pray regularly as a church. We make a big deal of prayer and worship because they are the centre of our communion with God as a church family. We participate together in body ministry as we worship and pray - expecting that the Holy Spirit will give spiritual gifts to each of us to strengthen, encourage and comfort the rest.

Our gathering is to God first. Everything else in church life flows from our relationship with God. It is well said that *"God doesn't send missionaries, He sends His children on His mission!"*

WE'RE BUILDING SMALL TO BUILD BIG - LIFE GROUPS

Jesus' goal was to save a people from every tribe, every tongue and every nation. He started with 12 men. In the same way, LifeGroups are the building blocks of our church. We are a church of LifeGroups, rather than a church with LifeGroups. In LifeGroups we grow as disciples through:

- 1. Spirit-unified community**

In LifeGroups we intentionally build relationship together, seeking to grow in vulnerability and transparency so that we genuinely love and serve one another. We start our LifeGroup meetings with a meal as life isn't about an agenda, it's about relationships!

2. **Spirit-led worship**

We worship together, enjoying God and His gifts, and trusting the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us as we encounter God and serve each other.

3. **Spirit-filled maturity**

Growth happens through intentionally journeying together, submitting our lives to God's Word, and applying the Sunday message to our lives on a weekly basis.

The focus of LifeGroups is not Bible study per se because the mark of a true disciple is not Bible knowledge but Bible obedience! We want to put what we're learning into practice, so that we are not only hearers but doers of the Word.

4. **Spirit-empowered ministry**

God uses our hands to bless others. As we lay our hands on one another the Holy Spirit imparts, restores and encourages. What a privilege it is to serve each other this way!

5. **Spirit-empowered mission**

Jesus told us to pray for workers. because the fields are ripe for harvest. He taught us to spread the seed of the Kingdom message generously. In LifeGroups we encourage one another to live this out intentionally. We pray for one another, celebrate each other's stories, and encourage one another to expect God to touch others through us.

The life of a disciple is one of intentionality. In LifeGroups we are intentional about being with Jesus, becoming like Him and doing what He does.

Much of LifeGroup happens outside of the LifeGroup meeting - over the dining room table, around the coffee table, in the mountains, on the beach... People meet to pray together, to work out together, and to connect in other ways. LifeGroups are all about disciples making disciples.

WE ARE GENEROUS

God is unbelievably generous in His love and provision toward us. In return, He teaches us to respond with faith-inspired generosity.¹⁶ We discipline ourselves to give regularly and sacrificially, and the result of this is joy in our lives and confidence in God's provision for us.

¹⁶ Matthew 18:21-35

Jesus tells us to store up treasures in heaven rather than on earth.¹⁷ The implication is that we can invest our earthly resources into eternity, choosing to use them to advance the Kingdom. What a reward we will receive!

In 2 Corinthians 9 the apostle Paul encourages us to think of giving as investing, like a farmer sowing seed in his field. The farmer reaps according to what he has sown, and as we sow into God's church for the purpose of Kingdom advance we do three things:

1. we honour God and reflect His generosity,
2. we put to death our tendency toward selfishness and materialism, and
3. we multiply our resources into eternity through the lives of others.

We don't give out of obligation but, as those who have received much, we see giving as a privilege and a partnership with God for building His church and advancing His Kingdom.

We believe that our local church should be the primary source of our regular giving. We encourage people to give over and above that to individuals in need and projects that make a difference in our world.

WE ARE 'SENT'

Jesus told us to "*Go into all the world and make disciples...*"¹⁸

Being caught up in Jesus' mission happens in every sphere of our lives. We believe that we are all in 'full time ministry' in our work places, our homes, our university, and at the school gate. Whether we're caring for the disadvantaged or working in a large corporation God has sent us to the people we work with.

Jesus calls us to love our neighbours - the people with whom we are in proximity. We serve them, pray for them, and ask God to give us opportunity to share the Gospel with them. Some of us will be involved in running Alpha courses, others in caring for the poor, others in other Kingdom initiatives, and some will eventually go to plant new churches. All of these are expressions of being sent.

¹⁷ Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁸ Matthew 18:16-20

LEADERSHIP IN TRINITY CENTRAL

The church is a unique organism - there is nothing else like it in all creation! Scripture describes it as God's household, Jesus' Body, and God's Temple.¹⁹

The New Testament also teaches us that God has given leaders who are suitable to lead this unique people. Jesus turned worldly concepts of leadership on their head and taught us that God's leaders are to serve.

Godly leaders serve God, His people and His purposes. They aren't in it for their own gain or status! They give and they serve because they're passionate about Jesus and the mission He has given to His church.

The apostles speak of two groups of leaders that God gives to lead and serve each local church:

ELDERS

Peter and Paul's epistles show us that each local church is led by a team of male elders, one of which leads the team. Elders are servant leaders who feed, guide, guard and govern the church, exercising oversight of the church and shepherding the people. They are fathers to the church, leading the church into Christ's mission, caring for the people and raising up and releasing leaders across the church. They shape the culture of the church, and model life in Christ for the church to follow.²⁰

DEACONS

While elders carry overall responsibility for the church, much of the leading is done by others. The Greek word used for these others is deacon, which simply means '*servant*'.²¹ As the church grows we keep releasing more men and women to lead others. Deacons lead ministry teams, LifeGroups, a children's group - pretty much any role that involves bringing leadership and serving others in the life of the church.

While the local church is led by elders and deacons working together to serve the congregation, they don't do so in isolation. Paul teaches that Jesus has given gifts to His church in the form of people who are able to equip others to fulfil the work of ministry - and

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 2:19-22

²⁰ 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-22; 1 Peter 5:1-5; Acts 20:17-35

²¹ 1 Timothy 3:8-13

these leaders we colloquially refer to as “Ephesians 4 ministries”.²²

EPHESIANS 4 MINISTRIES

Paul tells us that God has given particular gifts to the church to equip the church and bring it to maturity. Those gifts are people: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

We invite and welcome these gifts into the church on a regular basis in order to equip and strengthen us.

APOSTLES:

God gives apostles to the church to catch it up in His global mission, to foundation new churches, raise up and appoint leaders, and to strengthen existing churches. Apostles work relationally, connecting people and churches together. They invest in people, and model a life on mission with Jesus for the rest of the church. They lay a foundation of Biblical teaching into the church in order that the church might understand its identity and purpose.

PROPHETS:

Prophets inspire the church by pointing them to God, bringing God’s eternal nature and purposes into the ‘now’. They remind us of God’s heart towards us, towards the world and towards the poor. They equip the church to hear from God, and to live out the prophetic identity of the church in the world.

EVANGELISTS:

Evangelists inspire the church to seek and save lost people, connecting us with God’s passion to reach those who don’t yet know Him. They equip the church to be effective in reaching out, and lead the charge to see the church fully functioning in loving lost people.

²² Ephesians 4:1-16

PASTORS:

God gives pastors to the church to equip the church to care for one another. “Pastor” is the Latin word for “shepherd” and Ephesians 4 pastors will demonstrate God’s love for the church, inspiring the church to love one another and fostering healthy community. They equip the church to care for one another, and lead the charge for healthy relationships in singleness, marriages, parenting... and the list goes on. Pastors help the church to be ‘people people’.

TEACHERS:

The church needs to know who God is, what salvation means, her identity as God’s people, and what God’s intentions for this life and eternity are. God gives teachers to the church to inspire us to believe and trust God, and equip the church to grow in understanding God and His big picture for creation. God reveals Himself to us through the Bible, and Ephesians 4 teachers help us to grow in a healthy understanding of the Bible, and to be able to teach others about the Christian faith.

As we grow we will receive Ephesians 4 gifts into the church to help us mature, and to inspire us to become all that Jesus desires. We will increasingly recognize and release those that God gifts in these ways to serve us and other churches.

TRAINING UP LEADERS

Developing leaders is crucial to the growth and health of God's church. The Bible tells the stories of many of the leaders God has appointed.²³ We raise up and release leaders in order to see the Kingdom advance. We're looking for 'FAT' leaders!

FAITHFUL

Leaders often need to persevere. We need consistent leaders who are in it for the long haul, and who do what they say they will do!

AVAILABLE

You may be incredibly gifted, but if you're not available God can't use you! Leaders need to be available to the people they lead and the role they carry.

TEACHABLE

The best leaders are always seeking to learn and grow. Teachability is an attitude, and without it you cannot grow and often act as an obstacle to the people following you.

LifeGroups function as our primary place for leadership development. LifeGroup leaders recruit a CoreTeam with whom they share the responsibility of leading the LifeGroup. The CoreTeam help the LifeGroup leaders to lead well by sharing the load, and in turn, they are prepared for leadership themselves by learning on the job. In due course members of the CoreTeam will start new LifeGroups.

So we train leaders on the job in LifeGroups and ministry teams. We believe God wants to raise up many new leaders and release them into leadership in Trinity Central over the years to come. That includes you!

²³ e.g. Genesis 12-50 and the book of Acts

WHAT MAKES A GREAT CHURCH MEMBER?

So, let's talk about membership and you. As you're thinking about becoming part of the Trinity Central family, what attitudes should you cultivate, what actions should you take?

Here are some characteristics of great church members:

1. **BUILDING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Membership in God's family starts with God. We encourage each and every church member to invest in a rich, vibrant and healthy relationship with God through worship, prayer, reading the Bible, and participating in church life.

This vital part of our Christian life is easily neglected in our fast paced world; sometimes our 'being with God' dwindles as our 'doing for God' increases. Great church members cultivate healthy life rhythms and spiritual disciplines that nourish and sustain their walk with God.

2. **PRIORITIZING FRIENDSHIP**

Building and sustaining healthy relationships is a high priority for a great church member. We build vibrant and authentic relationships. We invest time in people. We put others first, choosing the good of others over our own preferences.

Hospitality is a high value because building a great church family is not just about attending meetings, giving and serving. It's about meals with friends, welcoming new people, BBQs on the beach, and hikes in the mountains. Hospitality fosters sacrificial friendship rather than the superficial relationships we build if we only see each other in meetings.

3. **'FULLY IN' ON THE MISSION**

In a consumer society where everyone wants to know "what's in it for me?" the church is a refreshing demonstration of commitment to something greater than "me, myself and I".

We're not here to get, we're here to give! As we come with this posture God responds by joyfully meeting our needs.

Great church members own the mission that God calls us to as a church, and we put our energy and time into its fulfilment. We're not so concerned about 'my ministry', we're

more concerned with 'our mission'.

A great church member is committed to the people and the mission of the church. That means that we live intentionally towards both. We participate in the life of the church, give ourselves to corporate prayer, prioritize worshipping together on a Sunday, and fully engaging in a LifeGroup. We serve in the life of the church - recognizing that the body needs all parts functioning to work well.

4. **WORKING FOR UNITY**

The unity of the church is unique. It begins in Jesus Himself - we are all saved into One Body. The Spirit Himself is our bond of peace - empowering love in the church in order to make our radical unity possible. In almost every letter in the New Testament unity is a prominent theme. Great church members take unity very seriously!

Handling Conflict:

Where there are people there will be conflict! However, when conflict is handled well it helps forge strong, long lasting relationships. On the other hand, when conflict is handled poorly or avoided it destroys relationships. Unaddressed conflict is like a cancer growing in the body of the church.

In Matthew 18:15-20, Jesus provides us with a Biblical pattern for dealing with conflict in the church family. Here are three simple things that great church members do to conflict well:

1. **Determine** to resolve the conflict quickly before it grows. We don't let conflict lie unresolved.
2. **Resolve** the conflict directly with those involved. Much unnecessary damage is done when people speak to everyone except the person involved! We only involve others who can help resolve the conflict, and only when appropriate.
3. **Move forward** - once the conflict is resolved we leave it in the past. True forgiveness means that we don't keep raising the issue.

Gossip:

Great church members know that gossip is one of the most damaging sins in the church - it wounds individuals and hurts the Body of Christ. We all want Trinity Central to be a safe place for people to grow and thrive, not a place where people protect themselves from others. In order for that to be the case gossip has to be

ruthlessly eradicated! Great church members refuse to participate in the sin of gossip, and shut it down wherever we see it.

Theological differences

As we all work hard to understand God's revelation of Himself and His purposes in the Bible, we might disagree in our interpretation of what the Bible says. That's not a bad thing! God encourages us that iron sharpens iron, and genuinely grappling with truth is a good thing. However, an argumentative attitude breaks down the church, and so great members resist the urge.

In Trinity Central there are things which we are 'closed handed' about (beliefs that you need to agree with to be part of our church family) and things that we are 'open handed' about (issues where we can agree to disagree).

We're 'closed handed' about major doctrines, like the identity of Jesus as God and Saviour of all, the nature of salvation through repentance, faith and baptism, and other key truths you can read about in our accompanying doctrine booklet. We're 'open handed' about more minor things - you're free to disagree with us.

However, if you do disagree on something which we clearly hold we ask that you do not oppose the elders' teaching in and among the church. This is divisive. Rather, engage with the elders and seek to work through to a healthy place of agreement (or disagreeing in good heart). We may come to agree with you - we're all learning!

5. PRAYING FOR AND SUBMITTING TO LEADERS

Great members understand that we are joining with leaders.

Think about it: the leaders of a church bring definition to that church. Trinity Central is a family of people who have chosen to follow the leaders of this church, and it is important that each member is committed to following the leaders.

Leaders work hard to love and serve their people. The apostle Paul teaches us to imitate our leaders, to honour our leaders, and to pray for our leaders.²⁴ The writer to the Hebrews reminds us to obey our leaders.²⁵ 'Obey' is not a popular word in our culture. It doesn't mean blindly following, but it does mean that, in matters of church life, we should listen, submit to and support those whom God has set as leaders in His church, provided

²⁴ 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Timothy 5:17; Ephesians 6:18-20

²⁵ Hebrews 13:7 & 17-18

that the leadership is true to God's Word.

Great members understand that this should never be a 'gritting our teeth' kind of submission, but a joyful, supportive submission, accompanied by prayer and discussion, which encourages leaders to serve all the more joyfully and graciously among the church.

Leaders don't always get it right - leaders make mistakes as they learn the skills of leadership. This means that people can get hurt by leaders. While we'd rather it didn't ever happen, we know it will from time to time. When it does happen we want to work it through in a healthy manner.

Great members who have been hurt by a leader talk with them about it, and if necessary, involve one of the elders. Great members understand that we can walk through these things in such a way as to grow together in strength and love.

6. SERVING OTHERS

Great church members focus our energy in areas which help and serve others, rather than ourselves. We don't put our preferences at the top of the list, rather we ask: "what will best help those who don't know Jesus, and what will best help my brothers and sisters in the church?"

Great members are participants, not consumers. We are solution finders, not problem creators!

Membership in a church is not like membership in a social club or other organization. Most organizations exist to serve their members. The church of Christ seeks to serve non-members. At Trinity Central, we take seriously that we are a church not for ourselves but for others!

7. GIVING

Great church members give of their resources to enable the life and growth of the church. We recognize that God has put resources in our hands to make the advance of His Kingdom possible through the church. We love to be generous, choosing to sow liberally into the church.

Great members not only give of the first-fruits (in other words, giving doesn't come at the end of our budget), we set faith goals for our giving, seeking to grow in the grace of

giving.²⁶ Giving is both a joy and a discipline which we cultivate.

The crux of membership is each of us working out our part in the mission. Paul likens the church to a human body, where all the parts play different roles, but together we make it possible for the body to function effectively. For us to be effective for God together will require many people doing what we're each gifted to do, serving God and each other.

²⁶ 2 Corinthians 8 and 9

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

Membership is ultimately a heart thing. It doesn't happen through signing a piece of paper or making a public declaration of commitment. You're a member because you've become part of the family through developing relationships and committing to the people and the mission of the church.

However making your commitment clear is important. It means you know you belong in the family, and we know you do too!

FIRST WE ARE JOINED TO JESUS

The Bible helps us understand the prerequisites for membership in Jesus' church:

Peter replied, "*Repent and be **baptized** for the forgiveness of sins, everyone of you, and you will receive the gift of the **Holy Spirit** ... those who accepted his message were baptized and about 3000 were added to their number that day...and they **devoted themselves to fellowship and the apostles' teaching***"²⁷

1. **Repent:** You need to be born again (if you aren't already).
2. **Be Baptized:** You need to be water baptized soon (if you aren't already).
3. **Receive the Holy Spirit:** You need to pursue the baptism of the Holy Spirit (if you haven't already).
4. **Devote yourself to the leadership, doctrine and people:** You should feel comfortable committing to the leaders, the doctrine and the people of Trinity Central.

How do we work that out in Trinity Central?

BAPTISM

Becoming a member of the Trinity Central church family means becoming a member of God's worldwide family - through faith, repentance and baptism in water. We believe that baptism is the first step of obedience in living for Jesus, and that baptism is only appropriate once there has been personal expression of repentance and faith.

²⁷ Acts 2:38-41

Thus, membership in Trinity Central is based on a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ, and baptism is how we declare that to the world. We will be more than happy to baptize you!

SECOND, WE JOIN THE CHURCH FAMILY

Together we grow as we worship Jesus, grow in friendship, submit our lives to God's Word, minister to others and live on mission together. These things are centred in LifeGroups, our small discipling communities. Here we are known, loved, served, and do the same for others. You can't be part of the family without actually *being* part of the family!

THIRD, WE COMMIT TO THE MISSION

The real 'work' of becoming a member has already happened in your growing relationships and participation in your LifeGroup. As you decide that you want to join the Trinity Central family we invite you to do three things:

1. **Listen** to the three Membership talks and read through this booklet. Hopefully, that will confirm your decision to become a member in the Trinity Central family!
2. **Ask** yourself whether you feel you could subscribe to these four statements. You're unlikely to fulfil them completely 100% of the time, but they're a great indicator of our hearts as we come to the point of committing:

DOCTRINE | I believe that the Bible is God's authoritative Word for all matters of church and life, and I will seek to apply the teaching of scripture in every area of my life.

CHARACTER | I commit myself to seeking to grow into the likeness of Christ, not through proud self-reliance but through constant fellowship with God, repentance and trust in the Holy Spirit.

COMMUNITY | I will participate in the life and ministry of Trinity Central, committing myself to the mission that Jesus Christ has called us into together. I will love this family, serve in church life, and give of the resources which God has entrusted to me.

ACCOUNTABILITY | I hold myself accountable to the leadership and to the church to live up to these promises, and I seek to be a biblical peacemaker in my relationships.

3. **Have coffee** with one of our elders so you can ask any questions you might have, and we can hear your heart regarding becoming part of the family.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER?

Becoming a member of Trinity Central is not a prerequisite for participation in our church family or ministries. However, we believe that it really is the best way to be a genuine part of the church. We are privileged to be members of this church family and would love you to be part of it too.

If you don't want to become a member you are still welcome to join us on a Sunday and you're welcome to journey with us as a friend. However, we would encourage you to find a church family where you can commit - if not with us, then with one of the other churches in our city.

COMMITMENT MATTERS

Expressing commitment is an important part of genuine participation and belonging. You can't work out family without commitment. And committing yourself to others means that they will likely commit themselves to you.

If you find this difficult it might be worth asking yourself: why don't I want to commit to being fully part of this church family? Is it because of a previous negative experience? Is it because you are fearful of committing in general? If either of these answers ring true then it would be very good for you to consider talking about it and praying with someone. Not dealing with these things will cause you to miss out on much of what God has in store for you.

"I'M ALREADY A MEMBER IN THE GLOBAL CHURCH..."

One common objection to joining any church is, *"If I'm already a member of the Body of Christ, why do I need to join a church?"*

Although all believers are indeed members of the worldwide church, the New Testament shows that membership is expressed through commitment to a local church. There are many benefits to belonging to a local church family, including being cared for by, and being accountable to, spiritual leaders.

OTHERS COMMIT TO YOU

Just as you are making a public commitment to support your fellow members, they have made a commitment to support you. By joining the church as a member you cease to be an independent Christian and become, instead, part of the family. Your public declaration in joining the church serves as a powerful reminder that you are not ashamed to identify with Christ or his people as you openly demonstrate the reality of the Body of Christ.

MEMBERSHIP OPENS THE WAY FOR GREATER PARTICIPATION

Membership also gives you the right to participate in shaping the ministry of the church and growing in leadership among us. You become part of a stronger, more unified expression of God's people. While Trinity Central does not require membership before allowing you participate in many of the church's activities, only members will be involved in leadership, and becoming a member opens you to greater opportunities to use the gifts God has given you.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Discipline is an important part of our lives. Initially our parents discipline us, and as we grow the focus shifts toward self-discipline.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus involves engaging with spiritual disciplines, and a walk of obedience to Jesus. The Holy Spirit guides us in this walk. In Hebrews 12 we read that God the Father disciplines all his children - it's a sign of His love for us that He trains us to live in a Godly way by disciplining us for our good.²⁸ Similarly, there are times when discipline happens in church life. Our accountability to one another is real.

MOST DISCIPLINE COMES IN THE FORM OF PERSONAL CHALLENGE.

For example: a caring friend in the church might gently and wisely question a decision you are making and ask whether you have sought God's guidance in the matter. This is an expression of concern that you might be making yourself vulnerable to sin and its consequences.

SOME DISCIPLINE COMES WHEN WE AVOID RESOLVING CONFLICT, OR WE CONTINUE IN SIN.

Jesus teaches us how to deal with conflict in Matthew 18.²⁹ When we are sinned against, or notice an issue with a member of the church family, we are to lovingly and gently challenge that person. If they refuse to listen we should take someone else with us to bring more force to the challenge. If they still refuse to listen, then the matter should be brought to the church, involving the elders and leaders. If there is still no openness to dealing with the sin then we should treat that person as we would treat someone who is not a fellow disciple of Jesus.

In 1 Corinthians 5 and 15 we find Paul addressing a situation of this nature in the church in Corinth, where a man refuses to repent of his immorality. Paul eventually encourages the church to treat him as someone who doesn't actually know and love Jesus, and to remove him from fellowship among them.³⁰

²⁸ Hebrews 12:4-11

²⁹ Matthew 18:15-17

³⁰ 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

LEADERS AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Sadly, leaders sometimes sin in ways which disqualify them from continuing to lead. Scripture teaches that they should be disciplined in the context of those they lead, for those they lead will be the most impacted by their failure. For elders who fall into sin scripture requires that they be disciplined in the context of the whole church, for that is the scope of their authority and leadership.³¹

DISCIPLINE IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF RESTORATION

Church discipline can be difficult and painful, yet it is clearly directed in scripture. The point of church discipline is restoration, if at all possible.³² Church discipline should be motivated by a love for the person and concern for God's purity and holiness to be honoured and preserved in the church.

³¹ 1 Timothy 5:17-22

³² 2 Corinthians 2:4-11

HOW DO I LEAVE TRINITY CENTRAL?

There may come a time for you to leave our church family. We can do this in a way that glorifies God!

Here are some reasons people leave churches:

1. **"I want to be part of a new church plant."**

Wonderful! We really want to plant more churches and know that it will mean that we will have to give away our best people to resource these new churches. Our commitment to you is that we will assess you (make sure you are a good fit for a church plant), resource you as far as we are able, and commission you through prayer. Often this means we will announce to the church that you are leaving us to serve a church plant and then we invite the whole church to pray.

2. **"My job is taking me to a new part of the world."**

We will be sad to see you go, but will be happy to pray for you and help you find a new church in your new location. Please let a leader know so we can walk with you in the transition.

3. **"I think there is another church in this city that is a better fit."**

We will bless you as you go. If you're comfortable we would love to sit down with you and hear you out. As much as we want to be a church for all people, we know that some may feel more comfortable elsewhere. Again, we will pray for you and with you in your transition.

4. **"I have an issue with the church, or with someone in our church family."**

It is sad when people decide to leave a church because of this reason, and we would love to sit down with you and work through the issue(s). If it can't be resolved we understand that we may well need to go different ways, but we'd rather have the chance to resolve the issue before you decide to leave.

We encourage you not to speak ill of the church or its people. We promise that we won't speak ill of you. In a day and age where social networks and blogs are so easily accessible and public, we encourage you to use discretion in what you say or post. We are committed to doing the same.

IN CONCLUSION, WE'D LOVE FOR YOU TO JOIN US!

Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel."³³

Like Moses, we know that God has called us together and made promises to us. We trust that, as you join with us in this adventure, you too will receive an inheritance as we journey into God's promises, and joy from being part of the family.

You have character, friendship, gifts and ideas and a key role to play in what lies ahead. We'd love to journey with you in sharing God's blessing as we spread a passion for Jesus in our world. We can do more together than apart!

³³ Numbers 10:29