

**MEMBERSHIP MANUAL
FOR
GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH**
9400 NE 50TH AVENUE
VANCOUVER, WA 98665
(Revised 10/24/04)

This manual is designed to help you have a good understanding of Grace Baptist Church (GBC). GBC sees itself as a family and we developed this manual to help prepare you to be an informed, active, and happy person at GBC! It is our heartfelt desire that you know what it means to be a joyous, well informed, and excited family member of GBC.

We are happy that you take the issue of becoming a church member seriously and are considering becoming a member of our wonderful church family like GBC. And we want you to know that we are here to serve you. If you have any questions, please ask! In this manual you will find the following material pertains to GBC and you.

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-CHAPTER ONE-

WHO WE ARE AT GBC

Each church is unique just as each individual is unique. If you do not understand what our church is about, you will not understand the importance of being a member. (As you go through this manual, we encourage you to look up the Scripture references. All Scripture quotes are from the New International Version of the Holy Bible.)

OUR PURPOSE AT GBC:

Every individual who has achieved great success in life has had goals and plans to live and operate by, a mission for their lives. Take for instance, Jesus Christ. He knew what He had to do and how it needed to be accomplished. (Matthew 16:21) Jesus also knew that the Church needed to plan and prepare. The Church needed to have a "mission" or a purpose. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:19-20; and Acts 1:8)

For this reason, GBC has a mission objective or purpose. After much prayer and consideration, we state it this way:

"We at Grace Baptist Church, being led of the Holy Spirit; seek to win the lost, disciple them in obedience to Jesus Christ, baptize them into the fellowship of our church; and to help them to grow in grace, knowledge, wisdom and favor with God, and to become faithful stewards of Jesus Christ."

Each part of this statement tells of our purpose and mission as a church. It helps us to "Celebrate Jesus Christ in Our Community!" Let's have a closer look.

"We at Grace Baptist Church" -- Means that the whole church body is to be involved in the rest of the statement of purpose. Jesus Himself set up the church (Matthew 16:18-19) and He is the head over all that it does. (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23 and Colossians 1:18)

"Being led of the Holy Spirit" -- Refers to the fact that all Christians have the Holy Spirit living in them from the moment they believe. (Romans 8:9-16; 1 John 4:13) GBC is made up of Spirit-led people.

"Seek to win the lost" -- Shows that God took the initiative to reach out to people. First, during the Creation (Genesis 1:26-27) and then later, when He sent Jesus into the world seeking the lost. As His followers we are not satisfied with simply living lives of just believing in Jesus, we are committed to telling others about the "good news."

"Disciple them in obedience to Christ" -- Reminds us that the Bible specifically tells us that as believers we are to "follow" in Christ's steps. (John 8:31; 12:26; and 1 Peter 2:21) This means we are to grow in Him and to become the people He has called us to be (John 14:15-24). If we love Jesus we will be obedient to what He has to teach us in our personal life, in our home life, and in our church life.

"Baptize them in to the fellowship of our church" -- Relates to the fact that all Christians will follow the Lord's example (Matthew 3:13-17) and be baptized. The Bible teaches that baptism does not save a person or impart any kind of grace. GBC is a

group of baptized (immersed) believers that fellowship together. (Acts 2:42-44; 4:32)

"Help them to grow in grace, knowledge, wisdom and favor with God" -- Encourages us to grow in our faith by having a daily walk with God. This is done through personal Bible study and daily prayer. As we come before God in prayer we realize our need for daily cleansing and our dependence upon Him. God will abide in us as we seek His face in study of the Bible and through prayer. (John 15:1-8)

"And to become faithful stewards of Jesus Christ" -- How a person relates to the stewardship of their time, talents, and treasure reveals how seriously they accept the Lordship of Christ in their life. Christian stewardship does not simply spring from Old Testament law, but from the example set by God through Jesus Christ (John 3:16). We are to be faithful stewards of the creation God has given to us. (2 Corinthians 9:1-11)

The purpose, simply stated then, is this: *"To seek to win the lost and disciple them in Jesus Christ."* Understanding GBC's purpose provides a good for your membership.

OUR VISION AT GBC:

The purpose of GBC does not communicate the powerful dream that we have as a church family. The vision God has given our church is *"To celebrate Jesus Christ in our community as a family through worship, sharing, training, and ministry!"*

OUR GOALS AT GBC:

Goals are important in the life of a person and in the life of a church. We at GBC value five simple goals that influence everything we do as a church and reflect who we are. Here is what our goals are:

- (1) To have strong pastoral leadership.
- (2) To develop strong lay ministry leadership and mission-mindedness in our congregation.
- (3) To develop a Godly mature lay family leadership. This means developing spiritually mature Christian involvement through personal Bible study; prayer; church encouragement; and the Godly stewardship of time, talent, and treasure in the church.
- (4) To grow GBC to a congregation family of about 250-300 active members so that we can begin new churches with trained leadership from within our own church.
- (5) To encourage personal witnessing and physical growth of the church by training every member to reach out to others in Vancouver and around the world with the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

-CHAPTER TWO-
WHAT GBC BELIEVES AS A CHURCH

Here at GBC we want you to experience the abundant Christian life Jesus promised. (John 10:10) The Christian life should be a lifelong adventure of learning, maturing, and growing in Godly wisdom! (A more in-depth statement can be found on our web site.)

The disillusionment that many Christians face produces one of two results. First, some simply give up on attempting to live the Christian life and usually leave the church altogether! They are the ones that say, "I used to go to that church, but..." Some end up going from one church to the next looking for that "perfect" church or pastor to follow. (Can you believe that?) Secondly, others replace their growing in Christ with church programs or habitual involvement. They have little spiritual growth or satisfaction. They become bummed out or burned out. (Have you experienced that before?)

Is there anyway to experience the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10)? Yes, we believe there is. This is what we believe at GBC:

(1) We believe the Bible. It is the complete authority for the life of a Christian. (2 Timothy 3:16) There are no other books or guides that can replace it in anyway. We believe the Bible is without error and is completely inspired by the Holy Spirit. Members are encouraged to be reading their Bible daily and to attend Bible Study at GBC. Bible Study is important for you and your family! Weak faith depends on feelings instead of knowing what you believe and why you believe it. Trained and talented teachers teach our Bible Studies!

(2) We believe in prayer. We are committed to prayer because it is the way we communicate with our Creator, Savior, and Lord. We believe it is the only way we can "remain" (John 15:5-8) in a loving relationship with God. Prayer is where the Christian gains the guidance, strength, encouragement, and unity they need for their lives! If we do not pray we have lost the battle already. We encourage all members to spend time in prayer daily which should include prayers for their church, its members, its leaders, denomination, missions, and its future!

(3) We believe in worship. Bible Study and worship, we believe, are two of the most important meetings of our church! You can't have one without the other! Jesus said that it is only in worship with other believers that the Christian can expect His church to be manifested (Matthew 18:20). It is commanded of the believer (Hebrews 10:25) for common unity, encouragement, and personal spiritual growth! (Romans 15:1; Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Hebrews 3:13) We can see that since the very first century all Christians have been part of a local church body enjoying the benefits of worship. (Acts 2:42) Worship therefore is where the believer comes together with other believers of like-mind and praises God for what He is doing and has done in their lives!

(4) We believe in church membership. The Bible instructs us that Jesus and the early church taught that being a member of a local church was a sign of spiritual maturity and submission to Christ's leadership. Look again at the Scripture passages for worship. It is because of these that we also believe in ACTIVE church membership!

The word used in the Bible for church is the Greek word *ekklesia*, (pronounced ek-klay-see'-ah). It means a group of called out elected people who are asked to do a

specific task. Christ does His work through the local church. We are His called out body in the world (Ephesians 5:30 and Colossians 2:19). It is through the local church that our time, our talent, and our treasure are best utilized for the furthering of God's Kingdom! (Matthew 25:14-30; 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2) Local churches are to be made up of believing baptized Christians, who have come together as a local community to do Jesus' work and will where they are. Every Christian will be a member of a local church. Just as going into a grocery store regularly does not make you a jug of milk, neither does just visiting or attending a church regularly make you a member.

(5) [We believe in ministry and missions.](#) Ministry grows out of the lives we live for the glory of Jesus Christ! GBC is committed to meeting real needs in our community. We will only continue a ministry as long as it meets the needs of people and follows our purpose as a church. Ministry can last as long or as short as needed. Missions grow out of our concern to see the rest of the world reached for Jesus Christ. We support all Southern Baptist special offerings for mission work: Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, Sylvia Wilson Offering for the Northwest Baptist Convention, and the Interstate Baptist Association Mission Offering for local missions.

(6) [We believe that every Christian has a Spiritual gift\(s\) given them by God to use in the church.](#) There is a tremendous misunderstanding today concerning Spiritual gifts. They are not a sign of extra spirituality. You do not need to have any of them to be saved. They are to be used only in the church to glorify God and to encourage and build up the church. ALL Christians have a Spiritual gift(s). Later, in this manual, there is a survey that we request you do to help you to find the gift God may have given you to use in the church. There, you will find a listing of the possible gifts and more about what we believe concerning them.

(7) [We believe in Jesus Christ.](#) Jesus is the only way by which mankind can be reconciled to God! There is no other name, person, or being by which people can be saved. We cannot be good enough, nor can we please God through our efforts in anyway. (Matthew 7:21-23) God's purpose is that we experience eternal life. (John 3:16) Our problem is that we are separated from God because of our sin. (Romans 3:23; 6:23) God has provided only Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. (John 14:6) Our response is threefold: (1) We must repent of our sin (Acts 3:19), (2) we must place our faith and trust in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9), and (3) we must surrender to Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9). If you have never placed your faith and trust in Jesus Christ you can do so right now. You can turn from your sins, place your faith in Jesus, and submit to Him as Lord by praying and expressing these desires to Him (Romans 10:13). (If you do this, be sure to share this wonderful news with the pastor or Staff of GBC!)

(8) [We believe in evangelism and witnessing because of our belief in Jesus Christ.](#) This means personal and corporate witnessing. We train, encourage, and are actively involved in telling our community about the "good news" (gospel) of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

(9) [We believe in stewardship.](#) The Bible, from Genesis on, makes it very plain that all Christians are to be good stewards. As believers we have a special debt to God, not only because of our salvation through Jesus, but also because we are His children. (2 Corinthians 9:7) We recognize that God made all things and we are to be good

stewards of His creation. We are also to lovingly give back a portion of what He has lovingly given to us. (Leviticus 27:30-32; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:19-20; Luke 19:12-19) We no longer bring to church live animals, part of our crops, or dedicate our children to godly servitude. Jesus has paid the penalty for us, however, the Bible teaches we are still asked to praise God through our giving. How else would the Gospel be shared, Bibles given away, mission work done, community ministries function, the lights and heat be paid for, or the simple work of the local church done? It couldn't.

We also believe that all Christians should be willing to give of their time serving, give of their talents God has endowed them with, and give of the material blessings God has granted them. We know that people can be at different levels in these areas of spiritual growth. So we prayerfully ask you to ask God and seek where He wants you to begin.

If you have any questions about these things – **please ask!**

(10) **We believe we are a family at GBC!** This means each of us is responsible for one another and each of us are to encourage each other! (Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:11-22; Hebrews 3:13 & 10:25) Welcome to our family!

-CHAPTER THREE- **HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS AT GBC**

In order to help you understand how we make decisions as a church, especially if you do not have a Southern Baptist background, it may help to explain a little bit of GBC's history and about how we are formed as a church body.

GBC'S HISTORY AND FUTURE:

Grace is a Southern Baptist Church (see the insert Meet Southern Baptists) and was started in 1952 as Minnehaha Baptist by pastor Bob Hite and the people of Trinity Baptist of Vancouver, Washington. Pastor Hite had a vision to begin a work where people could walk to their local church. (Though times have changed, GBC still has a vision to meet people's needs!) Six families prayed together and became the nucleus of the Minnehaha Mission on January 20, 1952. They met in the old Minnehaha Elementary School. On the very first Sunday there were 34 people in attendance.

Shortly thereafter, O. M. Allen became the first full-time pastor of the church. In October of 1952 the church decided to purchase a two-acre plot on Manor Road (St Johns) and they moved an old barracks building there that they had bought from the Army at Fort Vancouver. On November 6, 1952 they held their first worship in the "new" building. The property was located 4 miles south of today's present site, at 4606 St Johns Road. Today's land was purchased in the 70's and a building built by volunteer labor. The name was changed to Fiftieth Avenue Baptist Church. In the late 70's the building was added on to and it was pretty much the same as it is today except for a tremendous job of inside remodeling done during 1989 and 1990. Also during the great windstorm in December of 1995, that tore the roof off the building and the subsequent rains that did excessive damage, the building was remodeled once again and is as it appears now.

There have been 13 pastors, including Pastor Lee Hemen, since Minnehaha (GBC)

became a mission and then a church. In the early 80's the name was again changed, to reflect the changes that had occurred within the church and the community, to Grace.

We are excited about what God is doing and will continue to do here at GBC. As GBC seeks to reach out to the community with the love of Jesus we see that the needs of adults, the elderly, singles, teens, children, and all family members can be met in some way. Our earnest prayer is that people will come to know Christ weekly at GBC. We also see greater involvement by people like you who are looking for a place to worship and serve Jesus Christ!

HOW GBC OPERATES:

GBC operates as *a democratic theocracy*. Each member votes as God directs him or her. Because we are voluntarily part of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) we may be different than other SBC churches you are used to. That's because every SBC church has the right to develop its own style of worship and way of doing things.

GBC Teams

GBC has a Deacon/Yokefellow Team that seeks to serve GBC members. We also have a Church Ministry Team that is comprised of the Pastor, Ministers, Chairdeacon, Church Secretary, Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, any Department Directors, and elected Team Leaders. They meet on the first Sunday of each month. The Church Ministry Team prepares reports made by other Teams and Staff. These are related to the church during our regular business meetings (The second Sunday following the first Sunday of the month). The Church Ministry Team also sets the agenda for business meeting and makes recommendations to the church for consideration. During GBC business meetings only those members in good standing can vote or voice their opinions.

Members In Good Standing

Members in "good standing" are those persons who have met all the following: 1) Placed their faith in Jesus Christ; 2) those who have been baptized (through immersion); 3) those who have studied and agreed to what is presented in this New Member's Manual; 4) those who agree with the Baptist Faith and Message (see insert enclosed); 5) those who have been voted into membership by the church; and 6) those who regularly attend worship (This devotion is between you and the Lord and the church will not keep track of your commitment.) and support GBC. NOTE: Regular attendance in worship for you may be twice a month because of your job, or there may be other circumstances involved. Again, we believe that each person, under God's leadership, can honestly know if they are "regular" in their church attendance.

You may ask, *"Does every member of GBC, whether from a SBC background or not, have to meet these requirements?"* The answer is *"Yes."* It is encouraged because of church unity in vision and spiritual strength! The early church expected its members to be unified and going in one direction and so do we. Therefore, all voting and the conducting of church business is reserved for members in good standing.

Church Records and Meetings

All church meetings, financial records, minutes, and budgets will be open to all church members. We recommend you read through the GBC's constitution and by-laws for more information on how we operate. (Personal copies are available upon request.)

-CHAPTER FOUR- **HOW YOU CAN SERVE AT GBC**

There are many ways in which you can serve at GBC! And, like we stated earlier, every Christian has a Spiritual gift(s) given them by the Lord that they are encouraged to use within the church. The majority of Spiritual gifts are mentioned in four key chapters of the Bible: Romans 12:6-13; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:10-11. Below is a list of all the gifts that many Biblical scholars believe are mentioned in these Scripture passages. (1 Peter repeats other passages and is therefore not listed).

Romans 12:6-13

1. Prophecy - (Gk. prophetia) "speaking forth."
2. Service - (Gk. diakonia) "servanthood."
3. Teaching - (Gk. didasko) "to teach."
4. Exhortation - (Gk. paraklesis) "to call along side."
5. Giving - (Gk. metadidomi) "to give a share."
6. Leadership - (Gk. proistemi) "to stand firm."
7. Mercy - (Gk. eleeo) "to be kind."
- *8. Love - (Gk. agape) "sacrificial love."
- *9. Fervent - (Gk. zeo) "to boil over."
- *10. Hope - (Gk. elpis) "assured confidence."
- *11. Prayer - (Gk. proseuche) "pouring out."
- *12. Hospitality - (Gk. philoxenia) "love of strangers."

1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30 (Without repeating the above.)

13. Wisdom - (Gk. sophia) "wisdom pertaining to a skill."
14. Knowledge - (Gk. gnosis) "a seeking to know."
15. Faith - (Gk. pistis) "a faithful steadfastness."
16. Healing - (Gk. iama) "healing."
17. Miracles - (Gk. dunamis) "an act of power."
18. Discernment - (Gk. diakrisis) "a thorough judging."
19. Tongues - (Gk. glossa) "a known language."
20. Interpretation - (Gk. hermeneia) "explanation."
21. Apostle - (Gk. apostolos) "one sent forth."
22. Helps - (Gk. antilepsis) "supporting."
23. Administration - (Gk. kubernesisis) "steer or pilot."

Ephesians 4:11 (Without repeating the above.)

24. Evangelist - (Gk. euangelistes) "messenger."

25. Pastor - (Gk. poimen) "a shepherd, feeder."

* - Disputed by some as true Spiritual gifts because of the way they are listed.

THREE THINGS SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE NOT:

(1) *Spiritual gifts are not natural talents.* Every human being, by virtue of being made by God, in His image, has certain natural abilities they can do well. These natural abilities help to give us our personality. Some of us can sing, dance, draw or play baseball well but these are only God-given abilities.

(2) *Spiritual gifts are not the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23.* The fruit of the Spirit is the normal expected outcome of the life of every believer who is walking in Jesus Christ. This fruit is developed as we "abide" in Christ and yield our lives to Him. We have a responsibility to grow in our faith and develop this Spiritual fruit. All Christians will display this fruit (John 15:5).

(3) *Spiritual gifts are not Christian roles.* Do not be surprised but all Christians are expected and commanded to be responsible for certain things! Christians are called to give regularly, pray, be kind, love and serve one another and witness to the lost--to name just a few. And we are expected, above all, to have faith in Jesus Christ! These are the normal responsibilities we have as Christians, not Spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts are therefore a supernatural manifestation of God's Holy Spirit working in the life of a believer. Not all Christians display their gifts either due to a weak Christian walk or ignorance that they are given them. *Spiritual gifts are in no way chaotic in nature or manifestation nor are they necessary for salvation.* God is the God of order in conduct and use of His gifts. *The Bible makes it very plain that the gifts are to be used only to encourage and build up the church body and to bring people to knowledge of Jesus Christ.* Never are Spiritual gifts to be used for "show" or self-gratification. Only Satan, who can duplicate all the gifts, uses them for these purposes.

We want you to be aware that feelings are never an indicator of Spiritual gifts either. Emotionalism can be a defeating segment in the Christian church. Some Christians may confuse emotions with Spirituality. However, when the emotions are gone a person is back to "normal." For the survey you will be taking we only list and seek to find those gifts of service. It is our belief that gifts of tongues, healing, interpretation, prophecy, and the like have been mismanaged by some well-meaning Christians. All gifts should seek service rather than prominence. Therefore, GBC's survey and the interpretation of it focuses on service gifts only.

Before you take the Survey please consider the following things seriously:

1. *Are you a Christian?* Have you placed your faith and trust In Jesus Christ? Unless you have, the Holy Spirit cannot help you to answer the Survey.

2. *Do you believe in Spiritual Gifts?* Some theologians believe that the Spiritual gifts were done away with after the Bible came into being. They have influenced many well meaning Christians and this view cannot be consistently supported by Scripture. You cannot experience something in your life that you do not fundamentally believe in.

3. *Are you willing to use your gift(s) in the local church?* Remember the Bible clearly states that the gifts are to be used only in the church. Never as a sideshow or for

personal pride or gain! (1 Corinthians 12:7,31, and 13:13; Ephesians 4:11-12)

4. [Are you willing to accept the gift\(s\) God gives you?](#) I have seen good Christians mistakenly think that because they do not display a certain gift, God must not love them very much. This is a total lie! (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) God determines the distribution and you cannot "learn" to use a certain gift by practicing it. Nowhere in Scripture does it state this. Gifts are never a "test" for spirituality or salvation!

5. [Are you willing to truthfully examine your feelings and not confuse emotions with an answer from the Lord?](#) While God can and does work through the array of emotions He has given us, we must be very careful that our lives are not lived by emotionalism but through our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

6. [Are you ready to take the Survey?](#) Stop for a moment and pray. Ask God's guidance for the answers you will give. Do the complete Survey in one sitting. Do not do part of it one time, and then later get back to it. Use the very first answer that God gives you. Yes, the Survey is subjective. It is meant to be because God uses your likes and dislikes. What is important is not trying to score a "high" number, but that you truthfully and prayerfully allow God to help you answer as best you can. Please do the whole Survey without leaving any statement out. If you are a relatively new believer, you may not understand some of the concepts or terms, that's okay, do the best you can. You can do the survey again, later, when you have grown more in your Christian faith.