

# Meadows Christian Fellowship

## Shared Member Values

Meadows Christian Fellowship is a place for all people to **know** Christ, grow in **love** for Christ, and ultimately to **become** like Christ.

Membership in Meadows demonstrates a spiritual and relational commitment, primarily to God and secondarily to this local gathering of believers, while also providing a credential for participation in church governance. This commitment is reflected in the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), explicit in the scriptures (Jn. 13:35; Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:18-19; Eph. 4:4; Jam. 5:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:9-10), essential to the praise of God's glory (Eph. 1:9-14), and proclaimed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:16 & Rom. 5:8).

The spiritual and relational commitment to God comes by grace through faith in the saving and sanctifying work of Jesus Christ, which is God's gracious gift to us (Eph 2:8-9). This is primarily demonstrated through public baptism after the saving truth of the Gospel is received and a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is made. We believe that saving faith will result in a growing willingness to submit to the authoritative Word of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, qualified spiritual leadership, and to one another as the local expression of the body of Christ. Therefore, in addition to baptism after conversion, we have the conviction that there are specific spiritual and relational values which all members must share.

While there is no stigma associated with non-membership, it is our belief that the process of knowing, loving and becoming like Christ happens best in the context of a spiritual and relational commitment. We have chosen to express this commitment in terms of shared values, believing the values a person holds reflect their heart. We also recognize that the process of becoming like Christ is a lifelong process that depends on our study and application of God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and our walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26) but will look different for every person (Heb. 6:1). It is therefore impossible to have a list of behaviors which are universal across all members, nor is it scriptural ("...People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" - 1 Sam. 16:7).

The following list of shared member values is by no means exhaustive of biblical values to be incorporated into our lives, over time, by the Holy Spirit. Yet, we believe the following values are essential for a healthy disciple-making environment and will aid and guide the mission and purpose of MCF. While we desire to see these values in persons of all ages, they require a degree of emotional maturity and life experience to be lived out well. Therefore, membership is reserved for those 16 years of age and older.

**Unity** – God has clearly revealed His plan to unite all things in Christ (Eph 1:10). Followers of Jesus Christ are called to display this unity to the praise of God’s glory. While this is true of all believers, this can and should be uniquely displayed in the context of local gatherings where members can willingly and intentionally make a spiritual and relational commitment to one another (Jn 13:35). Unity indicates a right relationship marked by peace and cooperation while serving the mission of Christ to love and make disciples (Rom. 5:1-5).

**Maturity** – Unity will flow out of the continued and disciplined pursuit of biblical maturity (Heb. 6:1-3). As the Gospel impacts our beliefs, emotions, and behaviors (the process of maturity or Becoming like Jesus Christ) through the call of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, we will be more unified (Eph. 4:14-15). The primary tools the Holy Spirit uses to bring us to maturity are the Word of God, prayer, and the fellowship of believers. While maturity is dependent on these tools, it is also helped in many ways by other spiritual disciplines.

**Submission** – Through faith in Jesus Christ, we as individuals are being knit together (Col. 2:2), built together (1 Pet. 2:4-6) and brought together (Eph. 5:25-27) as the body, building and bride of Christ. At the center of each of these pictures is the call to mutual submission. While we each bring our God given value, gifting, ability, and personality into what God is doing, we are equally dependent on one another to become a mature, unified display for the praise of God’s glory (Eph 5:21).

**Trust** – Trust provides the context for submission and the foundation for transformational discipleship. Ultimately our trust is in the Lord (Ps. 9:10) who loves us and gave himself for us (Eph 5:2), but it is important for trust to be built in our earthly relationships so we can reliably speak to one another and hear from one another in ways that bring about submission, maturity and unity.

**Humility** – As a foremost characteristic and value of Jesus Christ, humility should mark our lives as well (Phil. 2:5-11). Humility enables us to trust and submit to Christ and to trust and submit to one another. Humility flows from the conviction that we don’t have all we need in and of ourselves rather we all need something from outside ourselves, first and foremost grace (Rom. 5:10).

**Grace** – It is by grace we have been saved (Eph. 2:8). We all need and have been shown grace in Christ. Grace is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control shown to others who don’t deserve it (Gal. 5:22-23). It is because we have been shown grace that we can and should extend grace to others. As we recognize the grace we’ve been shown by God and the value we have in His sight and to one another, grace for one another will grow in us.

**Affirmation** – We all need to be reminded that we have value and matter to others. Every human has intrinsic value because we’ve all been created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Every follower of Christ has value because they have been sealed and gifted by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:3-8) and are an indispensable part of the body, building and as the bride of Christ. We need to recognize, remind and celebrate one another as people of value and as valuable to one another.