

What is a philosophy of ministry?

A philosophy of ministry expresses what a church believes God wants them to do and how they intend to do it. This brochure summarizes Fellowship's philosophy of ministry. Behind it is a larger document which explores these concepts and their applications in greater detail.

What is Fellowship's Philosophy of Ministry?

1. Our purpose comes first!

Jesus Christ is building His church and He invites us to participate in that process. We express our part in Christ's program by saying Fellowship Bible Church will be a church that is ...

...growing together to glorify God
by developing and deploying disciple making disciples.

Our purpose is to glorify God. We do this as we reach people with the good news of Jesus Christ and then help them to follow Him. Jesus calls this "making disciples." He instructs all His followers to be making disciples. Disciple making is not a part of our purpose; it is our purpose. Wherever we are in our spiritual development, Christ wants us to follow Him from where we are, to where He wants us to be in our relationship to God and in our relationships with others. That brings us to a second major element of our philosophy of ministry.

2. People are the product which fulfill our purpose!

Christ does not call us to build buildings or programs, but people. Our first priority is helping people establish a dynamic relationship with God. That involves seeking to know Him and to serve Him in everything we do. Fellowship's ministries challenge us to understand and obey God, not in outward ritual or habit, but in heart-felt appreciation and service. Our love for God changes our attitudes and actions in every aspect of life. Jesus calls this loving God with all our being, and He says it brings God glory.

Our next priority is to love people, the second great commandment. Our love for people moves us to share God's love, expressed most vividly in His Son's death and resurrection, with those who have not yet trusted Christ. We graciously explain what Christ did for us and invite people to place their trust in Him as their Savior. Our love for those who are trusting Christ finds expression as we help them grow more like Christ and encourage them to help others in that pursuit as well. At Fellowship, we believe the process of learning to love God and others is a life-long endeavor encompassing four discernible phases.

This first phase of a person's spiritual growth begins with curiosity about God. We seek to introduce curious people to a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. We graciously express our one message, the Gospel, through many means and through messengers who communicate this good news about Christ through words and actions. In this way Christ is recognized as Savior and people trust Him. This phase continues as the person learns and believes basic truths about God and His claims on our life through His word, the Bible. When these basics are grasped, the person enters a second phase of spiritual development. We call it the convinced phase.

People in the convinced phase of discipleship make a growing, dynamic relationship with God their priority. We assist them to know Christ better, to understand His desires for us, and to establish personal spiritual life disciplines which cause the spiritual life to flourish. As growth takes place in this phase, they also discover the privilege of serving Christ. When they commit themselves to do so, it marks the transition to the third phase of spiritual growth. We call it the committed phase of spiritual growth. In it people discover and use their unique gifts and abilities. As they do, others grow through their encouragement and example. Committed disciples are not content to learn more; they want to put what they know into action. They want Christ to use them, helping other people to experience the kind relationship they have with God, and moving those people toward spiritual maturity.

There is one final phase in the process of spiritual growth. We call it the core phase. God burdens core phase people to be a trainer of the trainers. They long to multiply themselves through others so that even more individuals will come to Christ and grow to maturity. We call this spiritual multiplication. It is the privilege of the disciple making disciple.

Each Christian grows through these phases uniquely. Some may not go beyond the earliest phases, some will progress rapidly, but all are called to pursue the continuing process of spiritual growth.

3. Programs and facilities are a means to our purpose; They are not the purpose itself!

Our goal is that all we do will help us grow together to glorify God by developing and deploying disciple making disciples. While this finds its final expression in the lives of people, programs and facilities do have a place in this process. All our programs, whether large or small, intentionally encourage spiritual growth. Most people, however, grow best in the context of caring relationships. For this reason we encourage everyone to participate in a small group appropriate for their discipleship phase. In the right small group they will be personally encouraged and held accountable to grow through close, caring relationships. Our facilities handle our large group gatherings, but we purposefully do small group meetings in homes and in other locations to better facilitate relationship building.

Only God's Spirit can bring about spiritual growth, but we know our faithfulness facilitates His work. For this reason we seek excellence at every level and in all areas of ministry. To help insure excellence, we train our leaders, expect faithfulness to ministry commitments, and evaluate our ministers and ministries. We encourage people who are growing and helping others grow. If someone is struggling, we bring them to God's grace and victory through loving relationships. If a ministry no longer helps people grow, we seek to understand why and address the difficulties or discontinue it so another ministry can take its place. We know what was effective yesterday may no longer work today, so we remain open to innovations which make us more effective in growing together to glorify God by developing and deploying disciple making disciples. All of this is motivated by our desire to serve God and people.

So what is the bottom line?

The bottom line is that at Fellowship Bible Church we seek to be God's people, doing God's work in God's way. By His grace we expect Him to help us to grow together to glorify God by developing and deploying disciple making disciples. If this kind of ministry excites you, we invite you to become a part of what God is doing in the Fellowship Family.