



DNA

GET TO KNOW LOCAL CHURCH

God gives each church its own specific build, a DNA that is reflected in its vision and values. Get to know who we are as we look at the building blocks of our church.

DNA

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DNA: Get to know local church

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WELCOME TO THE DNA COURSE

The fact that you've decided to join this course means you're interested in Cornerstone Church and probably like what you have seen so far. This course will give you an opportunity to discover more of who we are, bearing in mind that who we are is better "caught" than "taught".

Since we only have limited time to give you an overview, please be part of all the sessions. Our hope is that once you've completed the course, you will be able to make an informed decision as to whether Cornerstone becomes your church family or not. Should you choose to be a part of us by integrating into a Life Group, we will then welcome you in publicly.

Enjoy this time as we look at the different aspects of Cornerstone Church.

Yours in Christ,

The Elders of Cornerstone Church

CHAPTER 1:

Introduction

Like the human body, every local church has its own unique DNA. Our DNA as Cornerstone is made up of our *History*, our *Heart* (values), and our *Handles* (what we do and the way we do it).

The primary purpose of this course is to determine *who we are*, *what we stand for*, *what we believe* and *what our ethos and values are*. It's important that you know our vision, values and views, so you can lay hold of them and live them out with us.

To live them out with us, two vital ingredients need to happen:

1. Integration

This is about belonging. It's not enough to just believe what we do or just attend meetings—we all have to belong. Integration is therefore about finding your place in the family and being disciplined in Jesus.

2. Functioning

This is about being involved. It's being willing and available to play your part in the body (See 1 Corinthians 12: 12 - 31) as an outworking of the grace you have received in Christ. This is when we're all participating, not spectating—when the “priesthood of all believers” is practiced and prioritised.

“Functioning” is an important part of discipleship. We believe in “friendship and then function”. This means we are more interested in you and who you are and how we can walk with you in your faith in the Lord than what talents you can bring to us. But God has placed a call on your life, a ministry for you to fulfil, and we want to help you discover that and use your gifts to minister to all of us as part of this local church.

Integrating and functioning can only happen in a local church. It's not enough to just belong to the Church universal (made up of all believers in Jesus, everywhere). We've got to flesh out our faith in a local church! It's only there that we can truly “devote” ourselves “to the fellowship.” (See Acts 2:42.)

THE HISTORY OF CORNERSTONE CHURCH

Cornerstone Church was birthed on 6 March, 1983 when two Baptist churches (Wychwood Baptist Church, led by Leon and Pat van Daele, and Bedfordview Baptist Church, led by Gert and Debbie Dolk) joined together. The new-found church was led by Leon with Gert supporting. We started meeting in the Bedfordview town Hall and had about 170 people involved.

Four years later we moved to Queens High School and from there, in 1989, to the current Bedfordview venue on Benard Road East. The property (including the present side hall) was made available to us by its previous owners, Tom and Meg Smith.

In 1994, Leon and Pat handed the leadership of Cornerstone Church over to Jim and Margaret Lamont. Leon and Pat moved to Adelaide, Australia to serve on the New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI) translocal team. (See Part 4 for more details on NCMI.)

Jim and Margaret led Cornerstone for six years. Then, in 2000 they moved to the USA to also serve on the NCMI translocal team. In September of that year, Marcus and Adele Herbert took over the leadership and continue (with the elders) to lead us into all that God has purposed for us.

Two significant adjustments under Marcus' leadership have been transitioning Cornerstone from a “hospital to an army” and from being a “church in the suburbs” to a “church in the city”. This is why we now

have sites across Johannesburg. We are one church and as such the elders oversee each of these sites collectively.

We believe in planting sites and planting autonomous churches, and we promote both of these Kingdom-advancing approaches very seriously.

For a list of our current sites across Johannesburg, see cornerstonechurch.co.za.

Should you wish to become a part of us, we encourage you to do the following:

1. If you were involved in a previous church, please leave that church properly.
2. Take responsibility for your own spiritual growth. (See Philippians 2:12; Jude 20.)
3. The elders are not called to do “the work of the ministry” as much as they are called to equip the *saints* to do the work of the ministry (works of service) – see Ephesians 4:11. So make an effort to find out how you can be a part of the ministry at Cornerstone.
4. Integrate relationally by being part of a Life Group. Make the transition from being an “attender” to developing meaningful relationships, and then partnering with us in advancing the Kingdom.

There’s no pressure whatsoever for you to join us. It’s God who adds to our number. But if God is adding you to us, we take that responsibility very seriously and you become part of our family, both with privileges and responsibilities. We will cover this in more detail later.

CHAPTER 2:

Local church structure

One of the pictures of the church, particularly seen in the book of Ephesians, is that of a *family*. Psalm 68:6 tells us that “God sets the lonely in families” . This is true not only for the lonely, but for all people.

The Bible tells us we are “*adopted*” into God’s family (Ephesians 1:5) and become part of his “household”, the church. (Ephesians 2:19.) His “household” is made up of all ages, ethnic groups and cultures. (Galatians 3:28.)

Jesus is the Head of the Church and we are his Body (Colossians 1:24), which means we’re in a covenant relationship with Him and therefore with one another. These relationships are based on grace, acceptance and commitment, and are rooted in love, friendship and a strong sense of family. That’s why integrating and belonging to a local church is so important!

When we come to Christ we enter into His Kingdom and become part of the “Universal Church” . It’s only when we join a local church that we can truly integrate and function in the Church.

True integration is done by:

- Submitting to one another and to leadership (see Hebrews 13:17; Ephesians 5:21).
- Committing to one another in unity (Ephesians 4:3).
- Being accountable to one another (Galatians 6:1).

- Serving one another out of love (Galatians 5:13).
- Honouring one another above ourselves (Romans 12:10).

Relational integration and integrity means:

- We resolve conflict biblically (Matthew 5: 23–24; 18: 15–17)
- We protect each other (Galatians 5:15)
- We carry each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- We believe it's more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).
- We help each other in weakness (Romans 15:1)
- We journey together in the upward call of Jesus (Philippians 3:14)
- We agree to be committed!

HOW WE STRUCTURE OUR CHURCH

The way we structure a local church can either hinder or help the above. A healthy structure creates a healthy church. Relationships can flourish if the structure is a good one. Throughout church history we've mainly experienced three different types of church models: the Episcopal, Congregational, or Phantom models, and each of these have had weaknesses that have worked against healthy churches forming.

Each model gets its name from how the leadership is structured. As governments through history have changed their models, so the church has often changed its model of government.

Episcopal Model



Figure 1: Episcopal model of church governance

In a national government, this would be a “monarchy” where the king or queen has all power and authority. In the Church, this may be when the leader has all authority. That creates a dictatorial environment with the result of people being *controlled* rather than *served* and *led*. It often produces either *robots* or *rebels* in the church. People become rebels when they are continually held back, held down, and denied opportunities; or they can become robots who just toe the line.

Abuse of this model produces bitterness and hurt in the church. It often creates an environment where people become suspicious and church leaders become more concerned with holding on to their positions of authority than the Word and ministry.

Congregational Model



Figure 2: Congregational model of church governance

In a national government this would be seen as a “democratic model” where the people have all the power and authority. In the Church, it can be said that this model came about as an over-reaction to the Episcopal model. Under this model, leaders can become oppressed and become nothing more than employees who are appointed or elected by the people. Leaders therefore cannot challenge with the Word of God but must submit to what the culture perceives as truth or often whoever gives the most money to the church. This creates an environment where church leaders become politicians rather than godly leaders. The problem is you can’t keep everyone happy.

Phantom Model



Figure 3: Phantom model of church governance

This means there is no government and no authority, and therefore no leadership. In the Church, some have adopted this model as an over-reaction to the excesses and disappointments of the Episcopal and Congregational models. Sadly, people who are very critical of the Church often take up this model and spend years in a wilderness. In this model there is no obvious authority or government; all believers are considered to have equal authority in their function. The result of having no clear leadership is often a lack of vision. There is no one to take you anywhere (it’s leaderless) and therefore nothing is achieved (Proverbs 29: 18 says, “Without vision the people perish.”)

Apostolic / Prophetic Model

- This model is built on *servant leadership*. Leadership is a *function*, not a *position*. Authority is about serving and not being served.

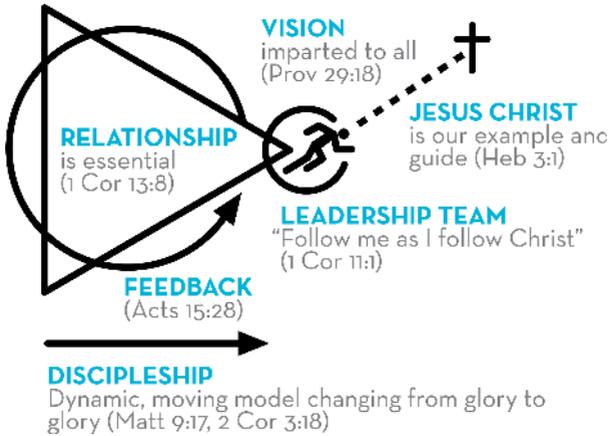


Figure 4: Apostolic / Prophetic model of church governance

- It is “apostolic” as it is about conforming to the teaching of the New Testament apostles and going to the nations, making disciples (Matthew 28).
- It is “prophetic” as the objective is to lead from the front, to have a vision and move towards it.
- Here the leader and their leadership team neither dictate nor are dictated to. It’s a model of *participation* and *partnership*.
- Under this model, we can all be involved in achieving the goals and vision of the church as we fulfil our personal call and function. It’s a model of *team leadership*. One person leads the team (otherwise you get two visions, ie. “di-vision”) but this role is a *function*, not a position or a title. This creates space for healthy relationships to form as the whole church becomes the “team” and must practice grace, acceptance and commitment.
- The key to effective discipleship is to train others to take your place. We’ve always got to build away from ourselves. This model is ‘forward-moving’, creating momentum and space for the next generation to take up the baton.

CHAPTER 3:

Who governs the church?

Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons...

In the above verse we get a snapshot of the Church and the different teams that function in and through the church. Here is who we see are involved:

- Saints (all of God's people in the church)
- Overseers (elders /pastors)
- Deacons (ministry team leaders)
- A translocal apostolic /prophetic team (Paul and Timothy - we will talk about this more later)

1. Saints

This refers to ALL of God's people doing *"the work of the ministry so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."* (Ephesians 4:12 - 13). Without the saints, not much would be achieved in or through the church. They are the A-Team!

2. Eldership team

(Examples found in Acts 20:17-28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Peter 5:1-2)

- Eldership is a *function*, never a title.
- It's always *in plurality*. (Not a solo effort!)
- They are the highest authority in the local church (1 Timothy 5:17) and thereby execute God's government in the life of the church, but never "*lording it over the people*" (1 Peter 5:3).
- Eldership is an office with four functions:

1. "Rule" – this means to govern and set in order (in the original Greek language the word is "*Presbuteros*"). In the Old Testament the elders sat at the gate of the city to fulfil their rulership ("Gatekeepers"). Strong's Concordance says it refers to "those who managed public affairs and administered justice" (exercised rulership and authority). Again, to "rule" is about serving, not being served.

2. "Oversee" all facets of the church ("*Episcopos*" is the original Greek word used in the Bible). Elders are called to see the "big picture"—the vision, direction and momentum of the whole church, not merely one particular ministry or facet, and to see and work out where people fit into this whole picture.

This also includes being a "guardian of truth" (1 Timothy 6:20) and a 'watchman' (Isaiah 62:6-7).

3. Shepherd – lead & gather ("*Poimano*") - see Psalm 23. This means to disciple people, to help them with their life in the Lord.

4. Pastor – nurture & care ("*Poimen*"). As Jesus says in John 21, "Feed my lambs, take care of my sheep; feed my sheep." Elders feed people the Word of the Lord, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and help the local church with their spiritual life in Jesus.

All this above is done through:

- **Teaching** - see 1 Timothy 3:2.
- **Equipping the saints** to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12).

- Praying for the sick (James 5:14).
- **Exhorting** and **refuting** dissidents (Titus 1:9, “*He [an elder] must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.*”)

Alternatively, we often summarise this role by saying that elders are responsible for **discipline**, **doctrine**, and **direction** of a local church.

- Eldership is there for your covering and protection (staying under the ‘umbrella’ brings security and stability).
- Elders are called to give an account to God for you (Hebrews 13:17).
- Our elders oversee all of our sites, but each elder is also given certain functional responsibilities for the sites. Some of these include leading that site (what we call a “captain”) or being an elder primarily based at that site.
- Based on what we see in the Bible, eldership is a male role, but the pastoral *gift* is both male and female (as per Ephesians 4:11). This is why we prefer to use the noun “elder” rather than “pastor”.

3. Deacon team

In the context of Cornerstone this would be our Life Group leaders and leaders in other areas of the church’s life.

- Deacons are under the oversight of elders.
- Deacons, at times, make corporate decisions with the elders (but not governmental decisions).
- Deacons are involved in practical and administrative duties.
- Deacons care for the practical needs of the people.
- Deacons are involved in teaching, preaching and evangelism.

4. Translocal apostolic-prophetic team

This would be Paul and Timothy in Philippians 1 quoted above. As a church we partner with a translocal apostolic-prophetic team called New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI).

- “Translocal” refers to a team where each team member is involved in a local church and work *through* that local church to plant or work into other churches that partner with the team (to help, strengthen, and encourage those churches). The NCMI team is not a traveling ministry or an itinerant preaching team. Rather, the team is relationally connected and sent from their local church into the nations.
- “Apostolic-prophetic” refers to conforming to the New Testament teaching (Acts 2:42), having an apostolic heart (a heart to go to the nations and see churches planted in every nation), and listening to God for direction and correction (prophetic). The structure of the NCMI team is the same as the apostolic-prophetic model highlighted in the previous section.
- This team is made up of the gifts given to the church that we see in Ephesians 4:11 - apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. An example of a translocal ministry team in action is found in Acts 13 and 14:
 1. Paul and Barnabas were set apart by the Spirit and sent by their local church (Antioch) to fulfil a ministry of planting and encouraging churches.
 2. The fruit of this apostolic ministry is they “*won a large number of disciples.*” (Acts 14:21.)
 3. They then returned to those towns and churches. It was not a once-off visit. (Acts 14:21.)
 4. They strengthened and encouraged the disciples. They didn’t abandon them. (Acts 14:22.)
 5. They appointed elders in each church with prayer and fasting. (Acts 14:23.)
 6. They returned to their base-church (Antioch) and were accountable (reported back) to the local church. (Acts 14:26, 27.)

“This team labours together in establishing new churches and overseeing the rebuilding of existing churches and the ongoing development of all churches that are in relationship with them.” – Tyrone Daniel

- Tyrone Daniel leads the NCMI team. All those on this team, who are invited to be on the team by Tyrone, are based in local churches.
- Churches choose to partner with the NCMI team on the basis of friendship and trust, not on the basis of a constitution, contract or institutional loyalties. NCMI is not a denomination and does not function as some kind of headquarters.
- Relationships and shared values are what enable us to relate and partner meaningfully with the team.
- NCMI serves as a covering for churches that make themselves accountable to them. (To be in authority, you must be under authority.) We invite the team to speak into our church. It’s an invited authority and is never imposed.
- It’s the elders who direct the affairs of the local church (1 Timothy 5:17), not the translocal team.
- The apostolic-prophetic team lays foundations (Ephesians 2:20) and repair cracks in those foundations (ie. They set in order what is out of order).
- They also help us see and overcome weaknesses (blind spots) as they have an anointing to see what the local elders don’t always see.
- They help to sort out imbalances doctrinally and behaviourally in churches.
- They help in the training and equipping of leaders.
- They are involved in planting and establishing new churches.
- They ordain elders (Acts 14:23: *“Paul and Barnabas appointed (ordained) elders for them in each church...”*).
- They help keep God’s people zealous in the things of God.
- Through these apostolic relationships, churches will be strengthened in the faith and grow in numbers (Acts 16:5).

Who governs the church?

- They have an ability to see the larger, bigger and broader things, thereby keeping the “bigger picture” before the church (prevents parochialism), enabling churches to lay hold of a fuller inheritance.
- NCMI does not own the property of any local church.

CHAPTER 4:

Vision, values, vehicles & ventures

Every church, including Cornerstone, is unique in terms of its *History*, its *Heart* (flavour and ethos), and its *Handles* (what it does and is committed to achieving). And that is all determined, in many ways, by the team of elders leading it.

OUR VISION

To disciple the nations in the freedom and reality of the Kingdom of God because of our love for God and all people.

OUR VALUES

Jesus first

Jesus is our focus in everything we do. We exist to make Him known throughout the world as the one who reconciled us to God and shows us God's unconditional love. We look to live as he lived and love as he loved.

Friendship then function

(John 15:13) Relationships take a priority - not performance, skill or giftings. We see fellowship as a core value established by God in his Church from the beginning (Acts 2:42).

Integrated and functioning

In line with 'friendship then function' (above), no believer in Jesus should live as an island but ought to be integrated into a local church and fulfilling the ministry God has given them there.

Our job is to recognise, raise and release every saint (believer in Jesus) to do the work of the ministry (see Ephesians 4:11). There is *no separation* of elders/pastors (clergy) and people (laity). The *five-fold ministry gifts* (the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11) are to equip everyone to do the ministry (works of service).

Every believer is a recognised priest before God (1 Peter 2:9). This "priesthood" is the "A-team". Without them (without you) not much would be achieved. This is the way God has determined it. For too long the minority have carried the majority (too few are doing too much). Use your gifts, talents and abilities to build up the Body of Christ. You have a part to play, so play it!

Truth before Tradition

(2 Timothy 2:15)

What we see in the Scriptures always supersedes any tradition. Our theology fashions our behaviour, not the other way around.

Wild but not Weird

(Romans 12:11)

We're often called by God to do things that may make us uncomfortable and don't fit in with our culture. God will never contradict what we can see in the Bible (He'll never tell us to do something immoral) but we even

see that Jesus did many things that could be seen as rather wild. But He was always relevant and only acted out of love.

Growing by Going

Our vision must include the Great Commission, which we see in Matthew 28: 19 - 20. These are Jesus' last words and they are therefore important! Note how Jesus refers to all nations. Psalm 2:8 says, *"Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth as your possession."* Not just our community, town or nation, but all nations!

This is an instruction for everyone in Jesus' church, not just pastors or a select few. This is why we do a lot of ministry outside of our church into many areas of the world, where God opens doors for us, and every one in our church is encouraged to 'go'. We call this an 'apostolic culture', which means we are a sending and going people.

Jesus came to see the lost saved (Luke 19:10). *This is where we start*, because without the lost saved, none of this can take place. We've got to "keep the main thing the main thing" - lost people matter to God.

The devil is not trying to stop you getting to heaven, but what he is trying to do is stop you taking others with you.

The Church is not about merely keeping the saved saved (like "keepers of an aquarium") but about being "fishers of men". Jesus said in Matthew 4:19, *"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."* If we're not fishing then are we truly following?

This is the vision of the Church. It begins with **salvation**, then **discipleship** (becoming more like Jesus) and then **mission** (reaching our neighbourhoods, our city, our nation and the nations of the world).

"If the world is not your parish, then your parish has become your world." - John Wesley.

Elder-led

God has established that local elders should lead a local church - not a headquarters, an arch-bishop, the state or any other kind of authority figure. Our relationship to New Covenant Ministries International

(NCMI) is an invited authority based on partnership, not on denominational structure.

OUR VEHICLES & VENTURES

Discipleship

We are all called to be disciples of Jesus and to disciple others. We have various vehicles and ventures to do this. The purpose of our meetings is to engage ourselves in the discipleship process and invite others into this process. This is why we have

- Life Groups
- Sunday meetings
- Prayer meetings
- Gatherings with other NCMI-partnering churches (Equips, Sunday Celebrations)
- Other ministry meetings or events

We do not like to have meetings or events for the sake of a meeting, but in order to engage God and each other in the discipleship process that forms us into being more like Christ. This is why meetings are important and yet are not *all* that is important.

Recognising, raising up and releasing leaders

God works through leaders! The church is full of leaders (potential); the job of the elders is to bring them through. Through discipleship we **recognise, raise up, and release** leaders to fulfil the mandate of advancing the kingdom, planting churches, and discipling the nations.

Jesus didn't just preach "heal the sick and look after people" - he *recognised the potential in them, raised them up by preparing them, and then released them* to do what He was doing. This was His greatest testimony after He left: that the disciples *continued* to do what He had been doing and turned the world upside down!

Planting churches

Our mandate is to go to neighbourhoods and nations, win people to Jesus and plant (establish) healthy base churches (churches which can plant churches). We have supported dozens of church plants in our history and will continue to do so. Every church plant is a cause for celebration!

Ask God: “What is my role in this?”

Planting Sites

We believe that God has called us to reach the Johannesburg metro by inviting people into a local community of believers where discipleship takes place. In our view, having one central location to do this is not nearly as effective in our Johannesburg context (with its various neighbourhoods, socio-economic challenges, and cultural differences) as establishing localised communities that are also part of something bigger across the city and yet are able to reflect and minister into that specific region of our city. For this reason, we see ourselves as one church that is spread across the city. All of our sites are governed by one eldership team, but at each site we recognise, raise up and release leaders in the context of that community.

CHAPTER 5:

Our commitments

Acts 2:42 says, *“They [the church] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”*

These four things best describe the activities of a church and highlight our mutual commitments.

1. A devotion to the Word of God (the Apostles’ teaching)

God’s Word has to be a priority in our lives, hence the word *“devotion”* which means, *“to be zealously loyal and loving.”* Therefore, we can’t have a casual approach to God’s Word or be nonchalant about it. We’ve got to build our lives on His Word and then build His Word into our lives.

We are challenged to, *“let the Word of Christ dwell in [us] richly”* (Colossians 3:16). It’s the whole Bible plus nothing, minus nothing; the *“Whole Will of God”* (Acts 20:29).

That means God’s Word has to be our final authority on all matters, but for that to happen we have to be radically Word-based and radically obedient to His Word, where the truth of God always over-rides any tradition. This is when our theology from God’s Word shapes and fashions our behaviour and not the other way around.

Right doctrine enables us to live our purpose and call out effectively. The challenge from Scripture is to, *“...do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of truth.”* (2 Timothy 2:15.)

Understanding that if our passion for truth does not imply a passion for obedience to truth, then we are not really serious about truth! (See Luke 6:46 - 49.)

2. A devotion to the fellowship

This means we are serious about our relationships with each other as a local church across our city. In the original Greek, this is called “*koinonia*”, which speaks of a close association, friendship, relationship and partnership between believers.

In “*koinonia*”, the individual shares a common and intimate bond of fellowship with other Christians. It’s what cements the believers to the Lord Jesus Christ and to each other.

That’s why believing in the Lord Jesus is not enough; we’ve got to also belong - to one another and to the local church.

This is why the church is ultimately a family and not a preaching centre or a venue with events. It’s here that we are linked together through covenantal relationships, where there’s no generation or gender or cultural gap - only a community of friends who love God, love each other, and love the world to win it to Jesus.

Our devotion to the fellowship means that we don’t just “*work out our salvation*” (Philippians 2:12) with God alone but work it out in the local church. (Think of the cross - our “vertical” relationship to God and our “horizontal” relationship to each other.) It’s here where “*iron sharpens iron, as one man sharpens another.*” (Proverbs 27:17.) It’s here where we can be “*devoted to one another in brotherly love*” (Romans 12:10). It’s here where we can “*spur one another on towards love and good deeds.*” (Hebrews 10:24.) And it’s here where we can encourage one another and “*all the more as we see the Day approaching.*” (Hebrews 10:25.)

But for all this to happen, we need to be fully integrated (belonging) and fully involved (functioning).

3. A devotion to the breaking of bread

“*Breaking of bread*” refers to both the “*Lord’s Supper*”, as we read in Acts 2:42, and to the sharing of a meal in each other’s homes, as seen in Acts

2:46: *“They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”*

The reason we devote ourselves to this is because of what it symbolises: the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our sin. He took our sins upon himself, died for us, broke his body for us (what the bread symbolises) and shed his blood for us (what the cup symbolises) to pay the price of sin for us and bring us into right-relationship with God. Jesus himself established this as our practice in Matthew 26: 17 – 30.

It's important to understand that this ordinance of breaking bread was foreshadowed in the Old Testament by the Jewish Passover (see Exodus 12). Centuries later on “Passover night”, Jesus with his 12 disciples instituted this practice. He did it to remind them of himself, who was about to become the true “Passover Lamb” (a lamb without spot or blemish to be sacrificed on behalf of us for sin), shedding his blood for their (and our) salvation, to save his people from the penalty of death brought by sin. And as 1 Corinthians 11:26 puts it, we are to do this *“whenever (or as often) as you eat this bread and drink this cup.”*

Breaking bread is a visible reminder of Christ's death and the glorious hope of his return. Every time we eat the bread and drink from the cup, we are remembering Christ's death for us and we are renewing our commitment to serve him.

4. A devotion to prayer

For it to become a “devotion”, prayer must become a passion – both private and public prayer. For the early church, prayer wasn't an extra-mural activity, it was the life-blood of their lives.

For us to be an effective church and people, prayer has to be an absolute value and priority. It's been said that the biggest problem in the church today is not sin but prayerlessness. We are a praying church, and a praying church is a powerful church.

Put another way, a prayerless ministry is a powerless ministry.

“All our strength lies in prayer.”- Charles Spurgeon

“Prayer is the single most important thing in my life. Should I neglect to pray for a single day, I would lose a great deal of the fervor of my faith.”- Martin Luther

Paul writes to the church in Colossae: *“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”* (Colossians 4:2.) The Amplified Bible puts it this way:

“Be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer life.”

Paul knew the power that is found in prayer!

James 5:16 also tells us that, *“the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”* The same is true for a praying church. Every time we pray (privately and publicly), power from heaven is being released because our prayers are both “powerful” and “effective.” *The Amplified version* says this: *“The earnest and heartfelt continued prayer of a righteous person makes tremendous power available, dynamic in its working.”*

It's this kind of prayer that releases God's power to bring about mighty results. If we want to excel for God, we need to excel in prayer. No person is greater than their prayer life.

“To be much for God we must be much with God.” - Leonard Ravenhill

What you can expect from the elders

- They will set the doctrine, direction and discipline in the church (1 Timothy 5:17).
- They will minister to your spiritual needs by providing spiritual food, helping you grow in your faith, and providing opportunities for you to work out your faith.
- They will shepherd you and care for you by getting you relationally and functionally integrated (Life Groups are important here).
- They will guide you spiritually as they lead you through the Word of God (ie. sign posts to help you on your journey. For example: We will help you hear God for yourself, not hear God for you.)
- They will teach you the truths of God's Word as the “guardians of truth”. (1 Timothy 6:20.)

- They will disciple you as best they can (ie. help you come to maturity and reach your full potential in Christ.)
- They will pray for you (including anointing you with oil when sick). See James 5: 14 - 16.
- They will correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction (2 Timothy 4:2).
- They will refute (come against) those who oppose truth (Titus 1:9).
- They will equip (prepare) you to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11).

What can the elders expect of you?

Hebrews 13:17 says, *“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”*

- To accept their leadership, oversight and authority in the Lord. (Dudley Daniel, who once led the NCMI team, said: “Our attitude towards God’s leaders is the visible expression of our attitude towards God himself.”)
- To submit to their authority
- To honour them by not criticising or speaking badly of them or others (talk to the person first, as Matthew 18 encourages us to do).
- To pray for them and the church
- To be loyal to this church and its leaders, and committed to the vision and values of this church.
- To add value and play your part in Cornerstone Church.
- To contribute to the forward momentum of Cornerstone Church (including financially, such as tithes, offerings, alms, apostolic and general giving).

Our commitments

- To be faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2), available (Ephesians 4:16), and teachable (1 Corinthians 10:12).
- To embrace the apostolic heart and culture by going on or supporting ministry trips, site plants, etc.
- To keep communication open between ourselves!

CHAPTER 6:

Where to from here?

Are you born again?

To be part of the local church you've got to be part of God's family - a son or daughter of God (John 1:12). All you have to do is trust in Jesus and you are born again!

Are you a new believer?

If you're a new believer, we recommend you go to our foundations course (Christ-Centred Life), which will teach you the foundations of our faith and answer your questions in a more detailed way.

Have you been baptised?

We believe that all believers should be water baptised. If you haven't yet been baptised, let us know. See Matthew 28:19; John 4:1; Acts 2:38; and Acts 8:16. We believe that even if you have been christened as a baby, you should still be baptised in water when you come to faith in Christ. Baptism is also symbolic of your identification and inclusion in the body of Christ (and the local church).

Have you been baptised in the Holy Spirit?

By His Spirit, God empowers and enables us to live for Christ, able to do all that he has called us to do. See Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16,17.

Adhere to our understanding of Biblical truth

Amos 3:3 says, *“How can to walk together unless they agree?”* We can't walk together if you disagree with us doctrinally, especially on these practical points:

- The need to confess and repent of sin (Acts 3:19)
- The need to turn away from sin and back to God (Acts 3:19)
- The need to pursue holiness (1 Timothy 4:8)

For example, it's not God's will for couples to live together outside of marriage, to engage in pre-marital sex, or for people to engage in homosexual practices. Likewise, it's not God's will that we should gossip, slander, criticise each other, get drunk, view porn, and so on. The point is that we acknowledge that we are all struggling with sin and we acknowledge that in God's power we can overcome sin, but if you are not committed to this process (or do not agree that these things are sin) then we will not be able to walk together - we are going in different directions!

Statement of Belief

Cornerstone Church believes:

1. In the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in their original writing as fully inspired of God, and accepts them as the final authority for faith and life.
2. In one God eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. That the Lord Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and is true God and true Man.

4. That God created man in His image; that man sinned and thereby incurred the penalty of death physically and spiritually; and that all human beings inherit a sinful nature, which manifests in actual transgressions resulting in personal guilt.
5. That the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, as a substitution sacrifice, according to the Scriptures, and that all that believe and trust in Him are justified and saved from eternal judgement on the grounds of His shed blood.
6. In the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven, and His present life as our High Priest and Advocate.
7. In the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. In the personality of the Holy Spirit, His regenerating work, and abiding presence in the true believer. That the Holy Spirit indwells all true believers and that He has been sent to be the Comforter and Helper of the Christian Church, to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit and exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to the Scriptures.
9. That all who repent of their sin and receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.
10. That all Christians are called to a life of holiness, devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and service to Him.
11. In the resurrection both of the just and the unjust, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed, and the eternal banishment from God of those who have rejected His offer of salvation.
12. That all of those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, been redeemed by Him and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, form the one true Church, and that the local Church on earth should take its character from this concept. Therefore the new birth and personal confession of faith in Christ are essentials of church membership.
13. In the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
14. In the priesthood of all believers in Jesus Christ.
15. That the Lord Jesus Christ appointed two ordinances - baptism and the Lord's Supper - to be observed as acts of obedience and as a perpetual witness to the cardinal facts of the Christian faith; that baptism is the immersion of the believer in water as a confession of identification with

Christ in burial and resurrection, and that the Lord's Supper is partaking of the bread and the cup as symbols of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood, in remembrance of His sacrificial death till His return.

16. That the ascended Christ has given various ministries or ministers to the Church in order to bring all believers to the place of Christian maturity in understanding of truth, and the performance and function of the ministry. (Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:10 ff.).

17. That the healing of the sick in the name of Jesus Christ is still active in the Church. Mark 16: 16-18; Matthew 8: 16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:9; James 5: 14-15.

18. That God never removed the gifts of the Holy Spirit from the Church, and that the Scriptural commands to "eagerly desire the greater gifts", and "do not forbid to speak in tongues", are still applicable today. 1 Corinthians 12, 13 & 14. Note 1 Corinthians 14: 1-39.

19. That the miracles as recorded in the Bible were real miracles, and are possible in the present day. John 14:12 and 1 Corinthians 12:10.

20. That Scripture allows, with regards to sexual behaviour, only heterosexual relationships between a natural man and a natural woman and only within the confines of lawful matrimony (Hebrews 13:4, Ephesians 5:22, 23; Romans 1:24-27).

21. That all believers are called to fulfill the Great Commission. Matthew 28:18-20.

22. That Christ is the Head of His body, the Church, and that in all things He has pre-eminence.

23. That all believers are called to love God above all else and their neighbours as themselves. In loving God they are to enjoy, exalt and worship Him. Matthew 22:37-39.

FIND A LIFE GROUP

While we meet in larger gatherings at our various *sites* across Johannesburg, we meet in smaller gatherings in *homes* during the week. These two ways of meeting are integral to a healthy church life and we value both formats of meeting.

Life Groups are led by deacons in Cornerstone and can take several different formats.

Sometimes groups may have a specific age focus or interest focus, but most of our groups are fairly mixed as relationships develop naturally.

When groups meet can be dependant on the site you are a part of. We have Life Group information pamphlets at the sites, you can call 011-616-4073 or email info@cornerstonechurch.co.za for more information, or speak to any of the elders or deacons.

GET INVOLVED

There are many areas of ministry which you can get involved in. Have a chat to an elder or check our website at cornerstonechurch.co.za.

THANK YOU!

Thanks for being with us at these times we've shared together. It's been a blessing for us to meet with you and share our hearts with you.

It's time for your decision. **Will you join us on our adventure in serving Christ?**

If so, and if you are integrated into a Life Group or connected in an accountable relationship with a leader or ministry team, then we would love to publicly welcome you in on a given Sunday.



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CHURCH

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