

Foundation-1: An Orientation

Session 3

OUR MISSION, VISION, CORE BELIEFS, CORE VALUES, & WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT CHURCH

Ok, let's review. In sessions 1 & 2 we explored how Church is as a family and as followers of Christ we are to be part of and committed to a family, a Church, so that we more fully understand our identity and fulfill our destiny. We also began to examine the four things that make the Upper Room Fellowship a family. First, we looked at **Our Salvation – What God has done for us** (session 1), which included a study of Water Baptism, Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and The Lord's Supper (session 2). In this, session 3, we will look at **Our Statements of Mission, Vision, Beliefs, and Values – Why we exist as a Church and what we believe about our Church**. In future sessions, we will consider **Our Structure and Strategy – How, when and where we fulfill our vision**.

"Let there be real harmony among you so there won't be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose."

That's why we're doing this particular session. We want to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. We want you to understand the vision of this church. It's important that you understand what God is calling us to at the URF and your role in that. What is the foundation upon which we are building? What is the underlying framework upon which all else grows in this fellowship? These are important questions to explore and to understand. As you continue to grow with us in Christ, it will be important to understand and embrace the vision of the URF.

Let's consider two important passages in the Bible – The Great Commandment and The Great Commission.

The Great Commandment: *"Jesus said, `Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments."* (Matthew 22:36-40)

The Great Commission: *"Jesus said, `Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28:19)

From these two scriptures Jesus is giving us some clear directions. When asked, of all the commandments of the law, which one is the greatest, He boils it all down to their essence by telling us to **love God** and **love others**. That's it; plain, simple, and

profound. And then the last thing He tells us before He ascends to heaven is to **ble**
ss or **serve others** by giving away what we've been given. So much can be said here, so
let's go a little deeper.

OUR MISSION:

TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST **WHO IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY AND WORLD WITH THE LOVE OF GOD.**

Our desire is that we would all be disciples of Jesus in the fullest extent, loving God,
having an intimate relationship with Him, walking in obedience to His voice, and loving
others both in and outside the Church. We seek to accomplish this by inviting people
into Kingdom communities that are each established around three primary areas:

INTIMACY – COMMUNITY – MISSION.

What does it mean to be invited into Kingdom communities? Just as Jesus proclaimed
that the Kingdom was present when he walked this earth; His Kingdom is at hand when
his Church, His Body, is present in whatever size. When we gather in His name, He is
there and present in all His fullness. We can know that, experience that, and walk in
that reality whether we are alone, with 2 or 3, or many as in a corporate celebration.
Jesus is inviting us into an intimate relationship with Him and with other believers that
make an impact in our families, neighborhoods, communities, and world.

Let's consider a closer look at these 3 areas: **INTIMACY with God – Inclusive**
COMMUNITY – Incarnational MISSION

INTIMACY with God: We desire people not only to know about God, but to have an
intimate relationship with Him, one in which we hear His voice and are obedient to it,
one in which we engage God daily, actually moment by moment, one in which we are
listening to God, absorbing His Word, are being transformed, and living love. An
intimate walk with God brings about continual revelations of who He is so that we have
deeper and deeper experience of Him over time.

Inclusive COMMUNITY: We were never meant to live this Christian life alone, but
rather in relationship with others. In fact, the transformation that God is after in our lives
can only be accomplished in the context of genuine inclusive communities in which we
are sharing life, our hearts, and our abilities. Inclusive is defined as being enclosing,
encompassing, and broad in scope. Therefore, an inclusive community is to be
Christian fellowship at its truest state and something of stark contrast to the
individualistic way of life in contemporary society.

Incarnational MISSION: Jesus' last commission is our 1st mission, that of "making
other disciples" (Matthew 28:19). This love and relationship we have with God and
others through Jesus Christ must "spill out" to those yet to experience His incredible
loving and exciting Kingdom. We, in essence, live a life on mission in which we live

love, bless pre-believer, sacrificially give, and are sent (or supports others being sent) to near and far reaches of the world. Incarnation is defined as the act of giving bodily form and substance to and the union of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ. Therefore, incarnational mission is the act of living one's life in such a way that it gives Jesus Christ bodily form and substance to those that desperately need to see, hear, and touch Him.

These 3 primary Kingdom principles, **INTIMACY** – **COMMUNITY** – **MISSION**, are the foundation of our vision for the URF.

OUR VISION:

The vision for the UR is that we would be a church that would...

KNOW GOD – SHARE LIFE – SERVE OTHERS

There it is, plain and simple - **KNOW GOD – SHARE LIFE – SERVE OTHERS**. That's all you have to remember. Simple but life-changing if internalized. Transforming if it becomes a reality in your life. Transforming for you, but also to those around you. That's what Kingdom living does. You begin by understanding who God is, how God has created you, live that reality and then look for opportunities to share this wonderful life with others so that they too can live in the fullness of His love.

The content in this "An Orientation" is to lay down some basic assumptions about God, our relationship with him and with others, and the vision and structure of the URF. This session is to be in no way all inclusive. In fact, it is just the beginning, scratching the surface so to say. The other foundational groups; Walking with God, Strengthened by Community, and Blessing Others will cover all of the above and much more in detail. Again, you will have an opportunity not only to learn about it, but to live it out in the context of a small group so that it becomes a transformational reality. We pray you are up for and excited about the journey ahead. However, at this point, let's look a little closer at **our vision statement**: **KNOW GOD – SHARE LIFE – SERVE OTHERS**

KNOW GOD – Ephesians 3:16-19 (NIV) *"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to **know this love that surpasses knowledge**—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."*

Knowing God = INTIMACY with God. We can know **about** God and not really **know** Him. We are to be radically **transformed** by His love, **living in His love**, being **absorbed in His Word**, and always **engaged with, listening to, and obeying His voice** – literally "being filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." If we were to do that, as well as understanding that God is crazy about us, knows how and for what He has made us (**our identity**), loves to hang out with us, and desires for us to enter into His activities, we would radically be transformed and effective for His Kingdom. It is to this

part of the vision we strive.

SHARE LIFE – 1 Peter 1:22 (NLT) *“You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must **show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters.**” Love each other deeply with all your heart.”*

Sharing Life = Inclusive COMMUNITY. Life is a journey of transformation not to be accomplished in isolation, but in connection with others marked by sharing life in all its fullness, sharing our hearts and our abilities as a true family of believers. We were designed to do life in all its fullness together. It is only in relationships marked by trust, respect, vulnerability, honesty, accountability, ministry, and fun that the disciple of Jesus can truly flourish.

SERVE OTHERS – Eph 5:2 (NIV) *“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and **live a life of love, just as Christ loved us** and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Message) *“Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn’t love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.”**

Serving Others = Incarnational MISSION. Though we encourage everyone to go on at least one short-term-mission-trip, we do not just go on missions. Rather, we are to live a life on mission, a life of selfless love. God is at work around us. We have the privilege of entering into His activities and participating with what He is doing in the lives of those that He brings into our path. As we live a life of intimacy with God, while being in community with other believers, we should be a generation of men and women who are so satisfied in Jesus, that we are resolved to sacrificially pour ourselves out for the joy of His church through seeking to bless those around us.

We’ve just looked briefly at our **Statement of Mission and Vision**. Now, let’s look quickly at our **Statement of Faith**, what we believe. We’ll see in these next two pages there are eight different essentials we say about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, human beings, salvation, eternal security, eternity. These are eight doctrines that are important to understand as you begin or continue your walk of faith with us at the URF.

Essentials and non-essentials:

Ephesians 4:4-6 *“There is one body and one Spirit, there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all.”* That’s essential. These are core beliefs and values. But there are a lot of things in the Christian life, the Christian walk, that are not essentials. They’re kind of open to however you interpret them, as you study, as you pray, as you ask God to show you. There are some things you’re going to differ from other people on. We consider a lot of these to be non-essentials and in those there’s liberty. In those we can have diversity.

Romans 14:1-4 (NIV) *“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.”*

Consider how the Message translates this same passage. *“Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently. For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.”*

Let's take for example, the second coming of Jesus Christ. There are probably three main positions. You're either pre-millennial, post-millennial, or a-millennial. (If you have no idea what this means, don't worry about it!) In this issue, there should be liberty. Does anyone know for certain which position is correct? The only thing that we believe, as you see in these eight essentials, about the second coming of Christ, is that Jesus Christ is coming back. To that we can be absolutely sure. It is an essential truth. It is our responsibility to be ready, to have our hearts ready to meet Him. Beyond that there are so many divergent views about the second coming of Christ. As long as you believe that, we can have liberty, we can discuss it, going back and forth in our discussion. The essential thing is that you do believe Jesus Christ is coming back.

Someone once asked, "Will smoking send you to hell?" This is one of these disputable matters. We'd said, "No, it'll just make you smell like you've been there." That's a disputable matter, a non-essential.

The point is, it is important that we communicate our essential beliefs and values so they are out there to be known and examined so we can walk in unity. There are many other things that are open to interpretation and we have liberty in those. And in all things, we have love. 1 Corinthians 13:2 *“If I hold in my mind, not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God and if I have the faith that can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all.”* You can be so theologically correct, and you can have all the things worked out in Revelation about who the beast is and who the red horse is and what the bowl is and what the trumpet is and when this happens. And you can have Daniel figured out to the nth degree, but if you are not a

loving person, who cares? It doesn't matter!

The bottom line is we should have unity in the things that really matter, that we allow each other liberty in the things that aren't as important, and above everything else we relate to each other in a loving way.

You're going to run into some people here at the URF you don't like. You're going to run into some people that may hurt your feelings either intentionally or unintentionally. You may find some people who take credit for an idea that was yours. You may find you don't get credit for something you did that you worked so hard on and it hurts you. You may find some people who are obnoxious. Why? Because this is a church made up of people just like you – imperfect, sinners, saved by the grace of God, who make mistakes. You have to make a decision, if you're going to join with us in this journey of faith, that you will have a loving heart toward those you meet and that you would be willing to do the work of reconciliation and forgiveness if it's ever needed. You're going to need it! You're going to need to learn and be willing to forgive. Doing life together puts us in situations that confront our willingness to go through that process. We should be here with an attitude that says "If I run into trouble, when I run into trouble, when I run into difficulties, when I run into situations, I promise before God to do what the Bible says and that is to work through it with a loving heart to reconciliation and forgiveness."

OUR CORE BELIEFS:

The Upper Room Fellowship is a part of a long tradition of churches that believe God has not given up hope on the world. He still calls people to come together as the Church and express his boundless love and power to change lives. We join with fellow believers past, present and future to put our faith in what God does through Jesus.

1. ABOUT GOD

God is the Creator and Ruler of everything. There is only one true God who is revealed in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. God is the Creator of everything that exists and nothing exists apart from and outside of that creation. God is a personal being - not some vague force or a subjective "truth." God is perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. God concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of humanity. God hears and answers prayer. God saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. God is love. God can be known and wants us to enter into a conversational relationship with Him so that we know Him. Psalm 90:2 Matthew 28:19

2. ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the personality of God described as "Son." Jesus came to earth as a human but retained His deity, being fully human and fully God. By coming to live among humanity, he inaugurated God's Kingdom on earth. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all humanity by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead as a demonstration of His power over sin and death. He will

return again to earth to reign as Lord of everything. As His name literally means, He is the chosen one who saves. Hebrews 4:14-15 Romans 1:3,4 Acts 1:9-11

3. ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make humanity aware of its need for Jesus. The Holy Spirit is a person of the Godhead and lives in every Christian. The Holy Spirit provides Christians with power for living, understanding spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Holy Spirit equips people with spiritual gifts that make ministry effective. Acts 1:8 Corinthians 2:12 Ephesians 1:13 Galatians 5:25

4. ABOUT HUMANITY

Humanity is made in the image of God, to be like Him in character. Humanity is the supreme object of God's creation. God created humankind to live forever and enjoy creation with Him. Humanity has tremendous potential for good though marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called sin. This attitude and the choices made that reflect it, separate humanity from God. God's grace enables us to connect with Him, not our efforts alone. Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1-2

5. ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is a gift from God to humanity. When people trust in Jesus as God's offer of forgiveness they are saved from sin's penalty. No degree of good living earns one's relationship with God. Salvation provides life with God here on earth and in Heaven. Salvation is our introduction to Kingdom living. It is a stepping out of an old life and stepping into a new Kingdom living. It is not the goal, but just the beginning. John 14:6 Titus 3:5 Galatians 3:26 Romans 5:1

6. ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's word to all people. Human authors, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote the Bible. It serves as the primary source of Christian beliefs and living. Because God inspired it, it can be completely relied upon to reveal God's ideas about Himself, humanity, sin, and ultimate truth. In the many types of literature contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments, God's love for, and redemption of humanity is a consistent theme. It is a story of God's love and plan for humanity and a record of encounters with God as an inspiration for us to desire such encounter, experiences, and reality. Psalm 119:105,160, 12:6 Proverbs 30:5

7. ABOUT THE CHURCH

The Church is the dynamic and spiritual body of which Jesus is the head. All those who put their trust in Jesus are a part of the Church. Local churches are expressions of the universal Church. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances or sacraments that the church practices. The Church ordains its leaders, prays for people to be empowered in ministry, and works cooperatively for the restoration of creation. Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18 Hebrews 11:39-40

8. ABOUT THE END

At the end, Jesus will return to earth to restore it to its original state. The Kingdom that was inaugurated when he came to earth as a human will be perfected. He will bring dead believers back to life with new immortal bodies, and transform the bodies of the believers still alive. He will judge the dead and living. Humans will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation found in Jesus Christ alone. Heaven is where followers of Jesus will spend eternity with God. The worst thing about hell is eternal separation from God. The order of these events and the time of their occurrence are debatable and not specifically revealed in the Bible. Romans 6:23 Revelation 20:15 Matthew 1:8 Revelation 1:7 Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:30 Philippians 3:21 Hebrews 9:27

OUR CORE VALUES:

1. A GROWING LOVE FOR GOD

We believe every Christ-follower should crave to know God deeper because of a growing attraction to His character and deep love. *Psalm 27:4-8, Jeremiah 29:13*

2. PEOPLE FAR FROM GOD

We believe God is passionate about lost people, and that members of His church family should be just as passionate about those that are far from Him and find ways to connect them to the King and His Kingdom. *Luke 19:5-10, 2 Peter 3:9-10*

3. CULTURAL RELEVANCE

We believe the church must – just like Jesus – be culturally relevant, while never wavering from Biblical truth. *1 Corinthians 9:19-22, John 4:1-24*

4. COMMUNITY

We believe all people crave the acceptance and security of common-unity and that God most often changes lives in that context. *Acts 2:44-47, Eccl. 4:9-12*

5. PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

We believe it should be normal, not the exception, for members to be the ministers and owners of the church vision. Nobody here wears special clothes, a special collar or a special robe. We are all priests before God. We don't need anybody to stand between us and God anymore. Jesus Christ did that by His death and resurrection. You don't need another human being to stand on your behalf in front of God. Because of that, we all have equal access to God.

A person may say to one of the pastors, "Will you pray for me?" and tell them the need in their life. Not that the request is a bad thing, but a reason they may be asking a pastor, as opposed to someone else, is because they think the pastor has some kind of a special hot-line to God. Not at all. We all have equal access to God. We are all priests, which means we all have that same responsibility of praying for one another, telling people about Christ and of worshipping before Him. That's a unique privilege we have and something we believe in. *Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Mal. 3:10*

6. CHRIST PERSONIFIED

We believe church relationships should epitomize Christ through humility, unity, love, and by sacrificially serving others. *Eph. 4:15-16*

7. EXCELLENCE

We believe that excellence honors God and inspires people when carried out with humble conviction. The Church should be a place of excellence because we personally know the God of all excellence. *Col. 3:23*

8. WATER BAPTISM

Colossians 2:12 *"When you were baptized you were buried with Christ and in baptism you were also raised with Christ."* As stated in Session 2 of "An Orientation" water baptism is a picture of being buried under water just as Christ was buried in the tomb and raised into a new way of life. Baptism is simply a picture of what's happened on the inside.

9. BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit in the believer for the edification of the church and the evangelization of the world, and the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit in every generation. (Act 2:38 – 39, 1 Cor 12 & 24)

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT OUR CHURCH:

Our deepest desire is to bring glory to God through lives changed by the powerful gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray that our church will be a place where you can experience the love of God.

At the URF we believe church is for everyone; it should be fun, exciting, relevant and equipping. We aren't here to impress you by showing off our "Sunday faces", or creating a production, or even showing off a fancy building. We believe:

1. CHURCH IS FOR EVERYONE

We hope to remove all boundaries of church culture, so that those who don't normally go to church, or those who feel disillusioned by their experience of church can feel welcome here.

2. CHURCH IS FUN

It's clear that people loved being with Jesus and enjoyed His company. We aim to create an informal and relaxed atmosphere here which people will enjoy. We also try not to take ourselves too seriously!

3. CHURCH IS EXCITING

We believe that God's church is an adventurous and dynamic place to be, where our lives are transformed far beyond what we ever consider imaginable. It is also exciting that God uses us to transform the lives of other people.

4. CHURCH IS RELEVANT

Commonly, the church is perceived to be dull, boring and irrelevant to modern life. The claims of Jesus are seen as little more than a fairytale. We believe Jesus' claims are the key to a life of meaning, fulfillment and freedom. Therefore the church could not be more relevant.

5. CHURCH IS EQUIPPING

We believe God uniquely gifts all His people, not just some of them or worse still only to a select few. We therefore seek to help people identify their gifts, and support them as they use them, both within and beyond the church.

6. CHURCH IS AUTONOMOUS

Jesus Christ is the head of this church. Not an elder or a body of elders. Jesus Christ is the head of this church, the recognized honored head of this church. Because of that, we are a body and we work together. He is the source of our life. There is value in associating with other Christians, other groups of Christians. We will be talking about that later, but this church makes its own decisions about its land, its property, its response to God's call, direction, and vision. No control from outside can tell us what to do with our land, building or organizational structure. This church makes its own decisions about those kinds of things. We are autonomous.

FOUNDATIONS-1/3: LIFE APPLICATION:

- 1. What is the Mission of the URF?**
 - 1. Your response to that mission...**

 - 2. Can you embrace the mission?**

- 2. What is the Vision of the URF?**
 - 1.**

 - 2.**

 - 3.**

- 3. In regards to the Vision...**
 - 1. What is your response to that vision in those 3 areas?**

 - 2. Can you embrace the vision?**

3. Any area easier or harder than the other?

4. Simply state in your own words, what are the Core Beliefs of the UR?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
 - 8.

5. Simply state in your own words, what are the Core Values of the URF?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.

6. Simply state in your own words, what do we Believe about Church?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

7. Having considered our core Beliefs, Values, and Beliefs about Church...
1. What is your response?

2. Can you embrace them?

3. Any concerns or questions?