

Foundations-1: An Orientation

Session 6

OUR MINISTRY STRUCTURE, OUR AFFILIATIONS, & OUR BELIEFS ON BEING A MEMBER

In the last session, we were looking at the structure of the URF and more specifically **Our Governmental Structure**. In that, we defined our church in 4 areas as a fellowship, family, body, and flock. In conclusion, we summarized our government structure as a plurality of leadership, fulfilling a five-fold-ministry, and all for the equipping of the saints for ministry.

As we conclude this “Orientation”, we have 3 more areas of **Our Structure** that we need to explain; **Our Ministry Structure**, **Our Affiliation Structure**, and **Our Beliefs on Being a Member**

OUR MINISTRY STRUCTURE:

Remember, our mission at the Upper Room Fellowship is to **make disciples of Jesus Christ who impact our community with the love of God**. Our mission is not to have church attendees. We do not want you to just go to church; we want you to **be** the church. There is a big difference. To that end, our vision is that each of us would **Know God** intimately, would **Share Life** in the context of authentic relationships, and would **Serve Others** as we live life on mission. Our goal is that you would know how you are known in heaven – that you would know your identity and that you would fulfill your destiny for which you were created.

So how do we do that? How does that happen? What structure do we have that provides for the growth and movement toward that becoming a reality in our lives? Let’s consider the structure of our ministries.

1. Corporate Gatherings: Come for God, for yourself and bring a friend

The Café – provides a relaxed and friendly environment to enjoy some morning refreshments, conversation with others and experience God’s incredible “Good News” message. It is designed for the seeker and mature believer alike. Children are part of this time of food, fellowship, and worship. After worship, children and some adults leave to participate in their “equipping groups”, while the rest remain for a brief message and opportunity for interaction.

The Celebration – provides an opportunity to celebrate what God has done in our lives the previous week and for an equipping for the week ahead by participating in Worship, hearing the Word, and opportunities for Personal Ministry. It is designed for

all ages and spiritual maturity. After worship, nursery is provided and young children (6-12 yrs) have their own time together for spiritual training while the adults have theirs.

Special Meetings – Throughout the year we will have various **seminars, guest speakers** and **events** for the purpose of equipping the saints. Please take advantage of these great opportunities. We do not take the scheduling of the special meetings lightly, but only do so when we believe God is orchestrating such an event and it fulfills our mission and vision. In the past we have had seminars on Worship, the Prophetic, The Holy Spirit, 24hr prayer and worship and more along with excellent speakers such as Dale Fife, Bob Sorge, Don Richter and much more. Don't miss these - check the announcements or the website for the next event coming up!!!

Fellowship Gatherings – Often times, we just come together as a group just because we want to get together. Watch the announcements for the next scheduled picnic, pool party, pot-luck, and more. Don't miss the food, fun and fellowship!!!

2. Children's Equipping: Equipping and releasing children to walk with passion for Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

(Check the announcements for current activities. Bring your children and bring others)

Sunday Morning Equipping Groups (Nursery – HS during the Café on Sundays)

Young Disciples (6-12yrs during the Celebration on Sundays)

G-Crew (1st-4th on the 3rd Fri. of each month, 5-6 pm)

Raisin Up (5th-8th on the 4th Sat. of each month, 3-5 pm)

Plugged In (9th-12th on Wed. 7:30 pm)

DTE (area HS youth meeting every other Sat. evening)

Youth Worship Team

Vacation Bible School

3. Small Groups / Adult Equipping: for Knowing God, Sharing Life and Serving Others

Foundation-1,2,3,4 – Four groups (meeting about 6 times each) are designed to begin or enhance your spiritual growth by exploring our vision of knowing God, sharing life, and serving others. These foundational groups introduce the material in text to be read individually and then discussed within the context of relationships in

the group. Check the announcement, website or contact the office to find out when the next “Foundation-1: An Orientation” starts. These 4 groups are...

Foundation-1: An Orientation to the Fellowship

Foundation-2: Walking with God

Foundation-3: Strengthened by Community

Foundation-4: Blessing Others

SHINE/BLAZE – These are groups for men (BLAZE) and women (SHINE) that meet for a year in monthly group meetings and various other relational connections for the purpose of accelerating people toward the divine destiny so that they may be able to thrive and give life in any situation they find themselves. The core values are; living intentionally, loving unconditionally, and leading surrendered lives. We would encourage everyone to participate in these groups designed for personal transformation. However, we encourage you to be part of the Foundation Groups first before entering into the year commitment of SHINE/BLAZE. If you have questions or are interested, please contact the office to connect with someone in this ministry.

Life Groups – These groups can meet around a variety of purposes and schedules based on the desires of those in the group. Some may meet for Bible study, some to strengthen their marriage, some may study a particular book, explore a particular topic, or address and fulfill particular needs for an age or gender. Though the content, format, and schedule may be varied, all groups have the vision that the participants would first and foremost, because of the group experience, truly come to know God, share life, and serve others. Check the announcements or website for current groups or contact the office to find a group or to begin the process of perhaps starting one. Can't find one to meet your needs? Perhaps you are the one to start such a group. We'll help you out.

Adult Classes/Groups – Check out the following: Financial Peace University, Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Experiencing God, Deliverance, and others that we offer for the adults throughout the year. These groups meet, but not necessarily, during The Café on Sunday. Check the announcements, website or contact the office for current classes/groups.

4. Ministry Opportunities: for Serving Others

Mission Trips – We encourage everyone to go on at least one. There is probably one coming up soon. Check the announcements, website, or call the office for the trips planned this year.

Various opportunities – Be part of the following teams: worship, sound, lighting, video/graphics, dance, drama, prophetic, intercession, website, greeters, ushers, hospitality, money counters, missions council, maintenance (building and grounds), kitchen, teachers (adult & youth), youth leaders, nursery, small group leader, Café team, men's and women's ministry, and probably lots more. We could have others if

there is a need and an interest. Do you have abilities, an interest and a calling? Contact the office to get directions and to help you get started.

5. Leadership Development:

Leader Mentoring – We realize the importance and need for raising-up the next generation of leaders. To that end, we mentor leaders within the context of the ministry that some may already be functioning in as well as in group meetings and individual relationships that nurture those that God is calling to leadership. If you have a heart to lead, please talk to an elder to get the “ball rolling”.

VCBC – Vision Christian Bible College is a correspondent Biblical college for personal growth, preparation for ministry, training and acquiring accreditation. Contact the office if you are interested in this type of accredited biblical study.

OUR AFFILIATION STRUCTURE:

We can be identified as an independent non-denominational church. Though we are not affiliated with a mainline denomination and therefore have some independence, we are connected with other churches for accountability, strength, equipping and council. In no way do we want to be a “lone-ranger” any more than we want you to be a “lone-ranger”. We therefore have through the years and to this day, intentionally developed relationship with other churches and individuals for the reason stated above. So that you understand these and see them as an intricate part of our structure, the following **Relational and Organizational Affiliations** are listed...

The Universal Church:

We acknowledge and understand our connection to the universal Body of Christ. Though we may function and look different from others (no two churches are the same), we have the same God, Jesus and Holy Spirit. That which binds us together in our essential doctrinal beliefs is greater than any differences in our non-essential beliefs that may divide us. We claim an allegiance to the true universal Church and all its history, of which we are benefactors, and have a love and connection with our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Organizational Commitments/Affiliations

Columbiana Christian Ministerial Association (CCMA)

- Made up of the local churches in Columbiana
- The purpose is to provide support for local ministry leaders, promoting cooperation and unity among churches, and to provide opportunities for community worship.

Relational Commitments/Affiliations

Network of Local Churches in the Columbiana Area

- This consists of churches that the URF networks with and is based on relationship, like vision and the desire to partner with in seeing the Kingdom of God expanded in our area.

These Network churches include the following:

Crossroad Ministries

1909 N. Ellsworth
Salem, OH 44460
Pastor Freddie Rodriguez
330-332-9797

Hope Christian Fellowship

13320 St. Rt. 7
Lisbon, OH 44432
Pastor Mike Ross
330-385-4673

Real Living

Boardman, OH
Pastor Joy Chickonoski
330-965-6000

Victory Christian Ctr. Columbiana Campus (VCC)

350 State Rt. 7
Columbiana, OH 44408
Pastor Randy Morocco

Partnering Local Church

- The goal of a partnering relationship is to work toward developing the next generation of leaders through mentoring, having access to apostolic oversight, training, and accountability, and seeing the Kingdom of God expanded regionally and world wide. To that end we are partnering with Victory Christian Center. They offer many opportunities to help with and supplement our training and mentoring of new leaders. They also have excellent seminars with quest speakers that our leaders and others in our fellowship could take advantage of for personal growth.

Victory Christian Center (VCC)

3899 McCartney Rd.
Lowellville, OH 44436
Pastor David Thomas

Partnering Extra-Locally

- Don Richter is founder and leader of Harvest Preparation International Ministries.

With a passion to see leaders world wide strengthened and equipped, this ministry sponsors leadership conferences in Africa, Mexico, and more to leaders in those countries and provides short term mission opportunities for some of our own leaders. Chuck Hamilton is presently on the HPIM council to help plan for the yearly conferences. Not only does this ministry provide leadership to international leaders, but also those in the US with conferences in Florida and locally as well as apostolic or leadership input and oversight for the URF from Don himself.

Harvest Preparation International Ministries (HPIM)
455 Suite B Interstate Ct.
Sarasota, Fl 34240
President and Founder: Pastor Don Richter

Being a Member of the Upper Room Fellowship:

Now, having considered **all** the material from the previous 6 sessions in this “An Orientation”, do you have a desire to be part or member of our family? Are you ready to move from “attender” to member? There is a big difference and it can be summed up in one word – **COMMITMENT**. You may not be ready for this and that is fine. Perhaps you need more time. Perhaps God would have you be part of another church family. We are fine with that. We want you to be where God wants you to be. He would want you to be joined with others that you can grow in Him and with others. If you need more time and would like to continue with the other Foundation Groups, great! Come on back and keep going! In Foundation 2, 3, & 4 we take a deeper look at our vision of Knowing God, Sharing Life, and Serving Others. You are welcome to continue with us on this journey. If at anytime along the way you make this decision of commitment and would like to make this public, please let one of the elders know.

In the meantime, let’s consider specifically what being a **member** of our family, the Upper Room Fellowship, means and what it looks like. Just as a **member** of family has rights and privileges, it also requires commitment to be healthy and meaningful.

The leadership desires that we focus on being a **member** as in a family rather than just membership as in a club. Perceiving oneself as a **member** provides the potential for more commitment and a growing into and the participation of the vision. Our desire is that each person who considers himself/herself a member of the URF not only understands and embraces the vision of the URF, but lives it out. Being a member is not an event, but a way of life in the present and as a preparation for the future. Though it is not an event, we would like to acknowledge those who agree to enter into a covenant relationship with us. When you are ready to make that commitment, please let us know so that we can celebrate and share this with the other family members.

What It Means To Be A Member:

At The Upper Room Fellowship, we recognize the need for an individual to take this

decision seriously. Therefore, we ask you to commit to being a member for four reasons:

1. A Biblical Reason: Christ is committed to the church

“...Christ loved the church and he gave his life for it.” Eph. 5:25

2. A Cultural Reason: It is an antidote to our society

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything...a job...a marriage...our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers and hoppers”. Being a member of a church swims against the current of America’s selfish “consumer religion.” Commitment is an unselfish decision and always builds character.

3. A Practical Reason: It defines who can be counted on

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Our family, as in any family, is identified by our members. We don’t just count our members, we “count on each other”.

4. A Personal Reason: It produces spiritual growth

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to any specific church family. We were never designed to walk out this life with Jesus all by ourselves. We cannot experience the growth God intends for us unless we are doing life together.

Covenant agreement for a member of the Upper Room Fellowship:

What are the expectations and responsibility of those that choose to become part of the Upper Room Fellowship? What does it look like when someone chooses to be part of our family? We never ask our members to do more (or less) than the Bible clearly teaches. We only expect our members to do what GOD expects every Christian to do. We believe these things are defined in our vision statement: Know God, Share life, and Serve Others. So, if you are a member of the URF, you not only understand this vision, but you are growing in these areas. It’s all about relationship, and we have attempted to define the responsibilities of this relationship in the following covenant agreement:

“Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with URF’s statements, strategy, and structure, I, _____, now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the URF church family. In doing so, I make the following covenant agreement to ...

1. **Know God in an every growing intimate relationship by...**
 - *Intentionally seeking God in my “secret place” & being disciplined in the essential habits of a follower of Jesus.”*
 - *Living a life of integrity, faithfulness and humility that exemplifies a Godly life.”*
 - *Consistently participating in our corporate gatherings (Café &/or Celebration) with my whole body, soul and spirit.”*
 - *Participating in small groups, classes, seminars, and special events for the purpose of growing in my knowledge and experience of God.”*

2. **Share life with others in this fellowship by entering into deep personal relationships and community by...**
 - *Committing to a small group (Foundation Groups, SHINE/BLAZE, and Life-Groups).”*
 - *Protecting the unity of the URF by my thoughts, actions and words (acting in love toward other members, refusing to gossip, and following the leaders).”*
 - *Faithfully giving of my time, treasures, and talents for advancing the Kingdom in and through the Fellowship.”*

3. **Serve others in a way that strengthens the kingdom both in and outside this fellowship by...**
 - *Developing my attitude to be a servant attitude as that of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5-11).”*
 - *Understanding my identity and destiny and from that, fulfilling my responsibilities for the healthy function of the Fellowship.”*
 - *Intentionally developing my gifts and talents for the Kingdom.”*
 - *Praying for growth, inviting the pre-believer to come into our church family, and welcoming those who visit and begin to attend regularly.”*
 - *Living a life of love and on mission so that I participate in advancing the Kingdom beyond the walls of the Fellowship.”*

You may want to record this date: Name: _____ Date: _____

What next:

1. Keep it going. Knowing God, Jesus, and The Holy Spirit is inexhaustible. But don't try it alone. Continue in these Foundation Groups. The next one is “Walking with God”. Then follow through with the others. Eventually, we encourage you to be part of SHINE/BLAZE for at least a year, and then to be involved in an ongoing Life Group. It should also be a goal of every member to go on at least one short-term mission trip.

2. Go for it. Get involved. Don't hold back. Get to know others. Start sharing your life with others. Look for ways to connect and serve the Body.
3. Give it away. Begin to look for ways you can serve others and use the interests and abilities God has given you to bless others and help the Fellowship function. Bless others by loving them as Christ has loved you. Live Love. Live the Good News...

FOUNDATIONS-1/6: LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Do you have any comments, questions or response to the material on Our Ministry Structure?
 1. Corporate Gatherings
 2. Youth Ministries
 3. Leadership Development
 4. Small Groups
 5. Ministry Opportunities
2. Do you have any comments, questions or response to the material on Our Affiliation Structure?
 1. The Universal Church
 2. Columbiana Christian Ministerial Association
 3. Relational Affiliations
 - Network of Local Churches
 - Partnering Local Church – VCC
 - Partnering Extra-Local – HPIM
3. What is your reaction to being a member at the URF when you consider...
 1. The Biblical, cultural, practical, and personal reasons?
 2. The commitment to the expectations?

4. What is your next step?

5. Beyond that next step do you have any further plans?