

Discovering Mountain View Baptist Church

Membership Information Class

Welcome to Discovering MVBC!

Session One- Introduction / Doctrine

Thank you for your interest in Mountain View Baptist Church. For those of you who are thinking about joining the fellowship, we pray that this course will help you to decide that this is the right place for you and your family. For those of you who are new members, the completion of this course will help you learn more about this particular body of believers.

By completing this orientation, many of your questions about the church's organization and ministry will be answered. It is important for every member to understand where the church is headed and to participate in that mission to the best of their ability, according to their spiritual giftedness and abilities. Our purpose statement is as follows:

The purpose of Mountain View Baptist Church is, through the Holy Spirit's power, to reach, win, and teach others the gospel of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the Holy Bible, so that together we will worship God, grow in our faith, and share our witness with the world.

All Scriptures are from New King James Version

Biblical Basis for Purpose Statement: *Mark 12:30- And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.*

John 4:23-24- But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Matthew 28:18-20- And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

- **Three kinds of participants!**

- 1) **Seekers**- Those who are interested in knowing more about salvation and/or Mountain View Baptist Church in their consideration of joining this church.

- 2) **Member Candidates**- Those who are not members, but want to know more about the church and discover how its members can become actively involved in its ministries.
 - 3) **Members**- Those who are already members but joined before this class was offered. Those wanting clarification or further information concerning the mission and workings of the church.
- Why is every new member expected to participate in Discovering MVBC?

1) **Clarification**

- a. About the church's beliefs. Before or upon joining any church, you should have the opportunity to know exactly what the church believes. Beliefs are called "doctrine".
- b. About the church's purpose. Many people have ideas about what a church should be, or why a church exists. This class will clarify the Biblical purpose for MVBC
- c. About Biblical values. These values are the things that are important to God. Every member and prospective member should understand Biblical values in order to make sure that those values are reflected in his or her life.

2) **Introduction**

- a. To the pastor and staff of the church.
- b. To the ministry plan of the church.
- c. To the structure and operation of the church.
- d. To the vision for MVBC's future.

3) Identification

Mountain View Baptist Church identifies in general with all true believers in Christ and the Scriptures around the world. In particular, we identify with other Christian congregations who share the same beliefs and purposes we affirm. This class will explain our identity

4) Expectation

- a. **We understand that you have expectations of the church, and we acknowledge the things our church will offer you.**
- b. **We also want you to understand that the church has expectations of its members. We believe there are things every member should be expected to offer his or her church.**
- c. **Expectation is an atmosphere at MVBC because we believe that when we as brothers and sisters in Christ honor God and His Holy Word, we can all expect to see God work in mighty power.**

Church Doctrine

In this session we will discuss the distinctive beliefs or doctrines that our church holds. If you are coming to MVBC from a church, and particularly a Baptist background, much of this information will be familiar to you. If you are not from a church or Baptist background, we hope this information will be helpful and enlightening to you in your Christian growth.

The Scriptures- We believe that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of both the Old and New Testaments, are the *perfect, inspired* Word of God, the written **revelation** of Himself to mankind. The Bible is the *inerrant, infallible, fully authoritative* Word of God, and stands alone as the sufficient and only creed for all believers in Jesus Christ.

II Timothy 3:16- All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

II Peter 1:21- for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

*Psalm 19:7- The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

Matthew 5:17-18- “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

The Trinity- We believe that God exists as **three** distinct personalities, yet essentially and inseparably as one. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God existing in three persons. This is a mystery, but we affirm it because the Bible teaches it.

Genesis 1:26- Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Matthew 3:16-17- When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. ¹⁷And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Session II- Church Doctrine

Salvation- We believe that salvation is **entirely** the work of God's grace toward man. According to the first chapter of Ephesians, it is brought about because those who have been saved have been:

a) *Chosen by the Father*

Ephesians 1:3-4- *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*

b) *Redeemed by the Son*

Ephesians 1:7-8- *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence*

c) *Sealed by the Holy Spirit*

Ephesians 1:13- *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...*

The process of salvation is four-fold:

1- **Regeneration** is a work of God's grace whereby a believer is made to be a new creature in Christ. Regeneration happens at the moment of conversion, described below.

Read the following verses and fill in the blanks below:

A. **Romans 10:9-10-** *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

List two things this text says are necessary for salvation:

Confess with your mouth...

Believe in your heart...

B- Romans 3:23- *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

We believe that salvation is necessary because of sin. Sin is disappointing God, or falling short of the perfect example set by His sinless Son, Jesus Christ.

C- John 14:6- *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Acts 4:12- *Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

We believe that placing one’s faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to know God, to gain salvation, and to secure an eternity with the Lord.

Salvation begins with the regeneration/conversion experience, where one initially places his faith in Jesus Christ through confession and repentance.

There are three more aspects of salvation, which are justification, sanctification, and glorification.

2- Justification- We believe that justification is the means by which the believer is brought into a relationship of peace and favor with God. Justification is also God’s gracious and full acquittal, upon the principles of His righteousness, of all sinners who repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:20-26- *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ²¹But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Our justification is based upon God’s righteousness, not our own.

3- Sanctification- Sanctification is a word that refers to the process that begins the moment you are saved. It is through this process that the Holy Spirit works in your life to separate you from the sin and filth of the world to make you more and more like Jesus Christ in holiness and purity. We believe that every believer should submit to the Holy Spirit to be sanctified or “set apart” from the world.

I Thess.4:1-3a- ¹Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ²for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification:

Sanctification is God’s will for every believer.

Titus 2:11-14- ¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

God’s desire- A **special** people who are **zealous** for good works.

I Corinthians 4:16-18- ¹⁶And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

*“I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.”*

¹⁷Therefore

*“Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you.”*

*¹⁸ “I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
says the LORD Almighty.”*

God’s command- Come **out** and be **separate**.

4- Glorification- This is the final aspect of the four-fold process we call salvation. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Romans 8:14-16- *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

As **heir** of God and **joint heirs** with Christ, our **glorification** is finally achieved when we reach **heaven**.

Security- We believe that salvation is initiated and performed entirely as an act of God’s **grace** and is therefore maintained and guaranteed entirely by the same **grace**. Another way to say this is “Once saved, always saved.”

John 10:28-29- *And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.*

No one can snatch us from His hand.

Romans 8:38-39- *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

No one can separate us from Christ.

I John 2:19- *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.*

Those who **deny** Christ and **depart** from the family of God never were **part** of the family of God.

Ordinances- We believe that Jesus established two specific activities for His church to practice. We call them the ordinances of the church. Other denominations might refer to them as Holy Sacraments.

The ordinances of the church are:

- a. **Baptism-** This is an act of **obedience** to Jesus Christ, who Himself was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River as He began His ministry.

Mark 1:9-11- *It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

Baptizo is the Greek word which is translated **baptize** in the New Testament. It means to **immerse** in water.

Matthew 28:19-20- *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize all who became disciples through the preaching of His Word.

-It is done as an act of **obedience** by all who submit to His teaching.

-It is done as a **picture** of His death, burial and resurrection.

-It is done as a picture of the believer **dying** to the old life and being **born** to a new life.

We do not recognize infant baptism as evidence of salvation. Believer’s baptism must follow a genuine conversion experience.

- b. **The Lord’s Supper-** This is also referred to as Holy Communion. Jesus was sharing a Jewish religious meal called the **Passover** with His disciples the night before He was crucified. The unleavened bread and wine He used that night became symbols of His broken body and shed blood.

Mark 14:22-26- *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” ²³Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. ²⁵Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of*

the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”
²⁶And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Partaking of the Lord’s Supper is reserved for born-again **believers**, including those who may not be a part of this fellowship.

The elements in the supper only represent the broken **body** and shed **blood**.

The Lord’s supper should be taken **seriously** and should always be a time of **self-examination**.

Because of this, it is appropriate to decline to participate if one feels the need to.

I Corinthians 11:29- *²⁹For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.*

Session III- Doctrine

Origins- We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, as Genesis 1:1 asserts.

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

If this is held in question, the rest of the Bible will be subject to doubt and skepticism.

-We believe that the foundation of all knowledge begins with acknowledging that God is the **creator** of all things.

-We believe that the Book of Genesis maintains that God **created** every plant and animal according to its own kind, thus indicating that **evolution** is an assault on the Word of God.

Marriage and Family- We believe that **marriage** was instituted in Genesis.

Genesis 2:21-15- And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²²Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. ²³And Adam said:

***“This is now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man.”***

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Marriage is the **foundation** for all human civilization and was the first **institution** in history.

- It preceded God’s chosen people **Israel**
- It preceded the apostolic **ministry** and the **church**
- It preceded all human governmental **structures** and **authority**

God created mankind as two distinct genders, **male** and **female**. In bringing Adam and Eve together as the beginning of the human race, God ordained that **marriage** be only between a man and a woman. God’s **ideal** is one man for one woman for all of life.

Any attempt on man’s part to change, deny, or nullify God’s express will for family is a **perversion** of God’s design in creation.

Sexuality- We believe that God intended sexuality to be a holy, procreative, and pleasurable gift between husband and wife. Sexual intimacy is **reserved** for marriage, a privilege to be shared only between a man and a woman who have been united in marriage.

- Any sexual **activity** before or outside of the bonds of marriage constitutes a **perversion** of God's design and law.
- We teach our children, teenagers, and single adults that **pre-marital** sex is a sin.

Testimony- We believe that all Christians have an **obligation** to **demonstrate** to the world the difference Christ has made in their lives. Though believers may have many freedoms through Christ, those freedoms must be exercised with sensitivity to the effect that our words and actions might have on others.

Examples:

1. Because of our **influence** in the world, we teach that it is better for a Christian and a member of this fellowship to refrain from drinking beverage alcohol.
2. While we do not have a dress code at our church, we always encourage and expect our members to dress **modestly** at all church-related services and events.

We refer to the overall **message** your Christian life conveys to others as your "testimony".

Romans 14:21- It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

The Word says that we are to be careful not to become a **stumbling block** to others.

Accountability- We believe that the church represents God's authority on the earth. When believers unite with a local church, they are placing themselves under the authority and guidance of that church. Membership implies that one is submitting his life to the involvement of the church in holding him accountable for spiritual growth, moral purity, and faithful participation in ministry.

Galatians 6:1- Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Endeavor to **restore** those who sin.

Matthew 18:15-20- *“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ ¹⁷And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

Be careful to **discipline** those who refuse to repent. The goal of church discipline is always **restoration**.

Galatians 6:1- *¹Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*

Hebrews 13:17- *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

Seek to **submit** to your spiritual leaders under the Lord.

The Priority of the Church- The local church is the seat of God’s authority on the earth until its removal in the rapture. The Apostle Paul said in Acts 20:28 that the pastor should “**shepherd** the church of God which He **purchased** with His own blood.”

28- Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

If Christ **purchased** the church with His blood, the church should have a place of **priority** in the life of every believer. We believe that Christians should faithfully attend Bible study and worship services, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25).

25- not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

A life of **holiness** and **sacrifice** are the **reasonable** commitments of each church member, with every household structuring its schedule around faithfulness to the church and its ministries (Romans 12:1-2).

¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Financial Stewardship- We believe in the principle of tithing one's income to the local church. We call this tithing "storehouse giving".

Malachi 3:10- ¹⁰ *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it.*

Tithing means giving God **one-tenth** of your financial increase. Some argue that tithing is from "the Law" and that Christians are not obligated to tithe.

However, tithing **precedes** the Law in God's plan, as in the case of Jacob vowing to give God a tithe of all that God gave him.

Genesis 28:22- *And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."*

Before Jacob, there was his grandfather, Abraham, who **tithed** to Melchizedek, the mysterious priest whom many believe to have been a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ.

Hebrews 7:2- *to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"*

Tithing seems to have been the minimal **expectation** of God to those who follow Him. Tithing is just the **beginning** of giving, there is also Spirit-led giving in which the believer is led to give **sacrificially** above the tithe.

Denominational Affiliation- Mountain View Baptist Church is affiliated with the **Southern Baptist Convention**, the Alabama Baptist State Convention, and the Elmore Baptist Association.

Our convention is a denomination which affirms the **authority** of the **Scriptures** and the **authority** of the **local church** to follow the Scriptures. The most distinguishing characteristics of the SBC are:

1- **Loyalty** to the Bible as the Word of God.

- 2- **Faithfulness** to evangelism and missions
- 3- The **autonomy** of the local church
- 4- Though the SBC has no power over the local church, it can choose to withdraw fellowship from any church whose practices and beliefs are scripturally deviant.

The two words which unite Southern Baptist are the verbs **associate** and **cooperate**. We associate with other Baptist churches through our common Baptist identity. We cooperate with other churches, associations, and state conventions by pooling our resources “to do together what we could never do alone”.

Affiliation with the convention means that we voluntarily participate in the **Cooperative Program**, through which Convention causes and Mission entities are funded.

Our support of the SBC helps to fund **six** SBC seminaries, over **10,000** missionaries serving in North America and other nations, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC, and many other noble causes.

Missions- MVBC sends 12% of all undesignated receipts to **mission** causes (10% to the Cooperative Program and 2% to Associational Missions). We also give to special mission offerings throughout the year, including the **Lottie Moon Christmas** and **Annie Armstrong Easter** offerings. Additionally, our church participates in hands-on mission projects locally, nationally, and even internationally.

The Biblical **basis** for missions is found throughout the Bible, but especially in these two texts:

Matthew 28:18-20- *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

Acts 1:6-8- *Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”⁷ And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

We **participate** in **missions** through budgeted **contributions** to other community ministries as well, including *People That Care*, the *Elmore County Pregnancy Center*, and *WLBF Christian Radio*.

Session IV- Additional Information

The Person of the Holy Spirit- The **doctrine** of the Holy Spirit is one which has been debated by Christians for many years. It is at this point that many denominations disagree, therefore it is important for one to understand the way MVBC views the **person** and **work** of the third person of the Trinity.

We highlight these points:

- 1- The Holy Spirit **inhabits** the heart of every believer in His fullness at the very moment of **Regeneration**.

Romans 8:9- But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

I Corinthians 12:13- For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18- And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit...

- 2- The Holy Spirit gives every believer **spiritual gifts** to be used in **serving** the Lord and **advancing** the kingdom.

Romans 12:6-8- Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

I Cor. 12:8-11- for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills....

I Cor. 12:28-30- And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

Ephesians 4:11- *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,*

I Peter 4:9-11- *Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*

¹⁰*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

¹¹*If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

3- I Corinthians 12 gives specific **instructions** for the **exercising** of the believers spiritual gifts.

a) The **gifts** of the Spirit are given to individuals in order to **profit** the whole body of Christ

7- But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all

b) Every **believer** has at least one **gift**

7- But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all

c) The Spirit **chooses** who gets what **gifts**

11- But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

d) There is no **single** gift every **believer** must have

29-30- Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

The gift of tongues was given as a sign gift to validate the **power** and **presence** of God in the early church. At MVBC, we believe that the **Word** of **God** serves that purpose today, therefore we do not encourage the exercising of the gift of tongues in any service or ministry associated with the church. Any expression of the gift of tongues related to **corporate worship** must always be subject to the strict guidelines found in I Corinthians 14, which include:

a) Only **one** at a time may speak in tongues (v. 27)

²⁷If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.

- b) Only a total of **three** can do so in one service (v. 27)
²⁷If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.
- c) If no **interpreter** is present, tongues must cease (v. 28)
²⁸But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.
- d) **Women** cannot speak in tongues in a service (v. 34)
³⁴Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive...
- e) God is not the **author** of confusion (v. 33)
³³For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.
- f) Paul said that in the **church** he would rather speak **five** words he understood than 10,000 words in tongues (19)
¹⁹yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Church Unity- The trademark of Christians who live in a dark world is our **love** for each other.

John 13:35- *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

Ephesians 4:1-3- *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Endeavor to keep the **unity** of the Spirit.

I Corinthians 1:10- *Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

We are to be **perfectly** joined together.

John 17:11- *Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.*

Jesus **prayed** that His followers would be **one**.

Proverbs 6: 16a, 19- *These six things the LORD hates...¹⁹A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.*

God hates it when someone causes **discord**.

Complaining is a sin. Paul writes to the Corinthians and refers to the people of Israel:

I Corinthians 10:10- *nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.*

Rather than complain, the Bible teaches us to **pray**.

Philippians 4:6-7- *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Be **anxious** about nothing, but **pray** about everything.

By being grateful and counting our blessings, we can escape the **pitfall** of having a negative, complaining spirit, which always fosters **division**.

Church Operation- Our church considers the **Pastor** to be a servant of God in the biblical sense of an “elder” or “bishop”, as well as the humble under- shepherd of the flock.

I Timothy 3:1- *This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.*

I Peter 2:1- *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ²Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

MVBC believes that the church is to be pastor-led through the **church staff** and **Church Council**, as designated in the church bylaws. Under the direction of the Pastoral Staff and Church Council, the ministry teams and ministries of the church operate freely to fulfill the **Great Commission**. Business requiring the **direction** or **approval** of the Church shall be considered at the quarterly church conference, or at any special church conference called for that purpose, as prescribed in the bylaws of the church.

Deacons- At MVBC, deacons are elected by the **congregation** each year to serve three year terms. **Qualifications** for deacons are prescribed in the Word of God and are also found in the by-laws of the church. The by-laws enumerate the deacon's responsibilities and describe election procedures. We believe that our deacons are to be **servant leaders** who come alongside the pastor in **ministry** to the fellowship, and also endeavor to **support** the church through tithes, missions, evangelism and education.

Ministries of the Church

All of the ministries of the church are **administered** by the pastor, pastoral staff, elected leaders, or ministry teams. Ministry Teams consist of **three** elected members who enlist others to help carry out their assigned ministry or responsibility. Ministry Team members are **elected** by the church and a job description and election procedures are prescribed in the **by-laws** of the church.

All members of the church are **encouraged** and **expected** to participate in one or more ministries of the church, according to their **spiritual gifting**, the Holy Spirit's **leadership**, and their **abilities**. A ministry **survey** will be given to every new member and upon evaluation of that survey, the appropriate ministry team leaders will be notified of your willingness to serve.

Expectations- We understand that you are expecting certain things from your church. All of us bring expectations into any relationship. We want to clarify what you can expect from this church. Among other things, you can expect MVBC:

- to **teach** you the **Word** of **God**; to **love** and **encourage** you; to **pray** for you and your needs
- to offer opportunities of **worship**, spiritual **growth**, and **service** to God
- to provide you with spiritual **accountability** in your Christian growth.

On the other hand, we want every person who desires membership at Mountain View to realize that this church has expectations of its members. Among other things, we expect our members:

- to **love** the Lord with all their **hearts**
- to be **faithful** in attending the worship **services** and Bible study **opportunities** offered
- to pray for and seek the **salvation** of lost souls
- to be **involved** in some area of **ministry** and **missions** through the fellowship
- to foster **love** and **unity** within the church

- to give regular **tithes** and **offerings** in support of the church.

Each of these expectations should be the normal expression of Christian commitment as demonstrated by believers since the beginning of the church.