

## ***Creekside Distinctives***

Creekside Bible Church exists: 1) to exalt God through worship, 2) to edify and equip believers through faithful shepherding and teaching of God's Word, and 3) to evangelize unbelievers in the local community and around the world.

### **Distinctive #1 - Ministry to God Through Worship**

Worship is both the privilege and responsibility of every believer (Matt. 4:10; Phil. 3:3) and involves giving oneself completely to God in attitudes, desires, and actions. One author says, "Worship is a life-consuming sacrificial response to God whereby I offer to him my head, my heart, and my hands for the purpose of bringing him pleasure." Thus, personal worship occurs on a moment-by-moment basis as the individual believer seeks to honor God in every aspect of human life. Genuine worship reflects Christ's character and includes meditation on God's Word, communion with him in prayer (Acts 6:4; 13:2-3), sharing the gospel (Rom. 15:16), giving thanks to God (Heb. 12:28; 13:15), living a holy life (Rom. 12:2; 1 Peter 1:13-16), doing good to others (Heb. 13:16), and giving monetarily (Rom. 15:27; 2 Cor. 9:12).

Corporate worship occurs when believers gather as the "body" of Christ to encourage and equip one another in the Lord (Heb. 10:24-25). As in personal worship, the focus should be upon the greatness of God (Psalm 96:4) and his holiness (Is. 6:1-9; Lk. 5:8). The Bible teaches in John 4:19-24 that NT worship must be in "spirit and in truth" and does not follow the pattern found in the OT. That is, worship does not require a certain location and does not involve literal sacrifices, a temple, and priesthood. Instead, worship takes place through "spiritual" sacrifices (cf. Rom. 12:1-2).

Corporate worship may be expressed in singing songs such as "Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), which are primarily for God's edification and thanksgiving to him (1 Cor. 14:15, 26; Acts 16:25). Music itself is not an element of worship, but a way of "praying, praising, proclaiming, and exhorting."

Services also may include giving (1 Cor. 16:1-3), the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42), baptism, Scripture reading (1 Tim. 4:13), and prayer (Acts 16:13). However, central to corporate worship is the preaching ministry of God's Word (2 Tim. 4:1-5; cf. Acts 2:42; 6:4).

From 1 Corinthians 14 we can see that worship services must be orderly (14:33), planned and directed (14:40), and that all should be edified (14:26).

## Distinctive #2 - Ministry to Believers

In the early Church, believers were “continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer” (Acts 2:42). Four clear distinctives appear in this passage and throughout the NT as well—the teaching of God’s Word, fellowship, partaking the Lord’s Supper, and prayer.

Throughout the NT, the teaching of God’s Word occupies a high priority in the local church. The apostle Paul summarized the church’s purpose in ministering the Word to believers when he said, “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ (Col. 1:28). The church must mature by building itself up in the faith (cf. Eph. 4:13-16) through the instruction of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:2, 15). The Word of God is sufficient for everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16).

The equipping of the body demands leadership by men of exemplary character quality who are “above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:1-2) and will shepherd the flock of God among them (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

The Scriptures recognize two offices of leadership in the NT church, Elders and the Deacons. The NT teaches that the church is led by a plurality of leaders who recognize and submit to Christ as the “Chief Shepherd” of his church (1 Peter 5:1-3). The elders bear the responsibility for the care of the local body and will give an account to God for their ministry (Heb. 13:17).

In Ephesians 4:7-11 we see that God divinely enables “pastor/teachers” with equipping gifts for the edification of the body. The pastor is not the “church’s errand-boy” but one who employs his gifts in ministering to the entire church body and helps others in discovering and using their gifts of service to one another.

## Distinctive #3 - Ministry to the World

Evangelism is central to the life of the church in its relationship to the world. The New Testament teaches that the early church placed a priority on the work of missions (Acts 13:1-3; 14:27; 15:36-40), and was bold in its proclamation of Christ (Acts 4:13-31).

The Scriptures exhort every believer to be involved in evangelism (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 5:19; cf. Acts 1:8), both on a personal level and as a corporate body. The New Testament church gathers for worship and edification (Eph. 4:11-16), and then “scatters” for evangelism (1 Thess. 1:8).

Having received the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18-19), Christians bear witness of Christ both in their walk (Phil. 2:14-16) and in their words (Col. 4:5-6). While only the Holy Spirit can open one’s heart to the truth of the gospel, God uses the faithful witness of the believer to bring people to faith in him (Acts 17:17; 1 Peter 3:15). However, evangelization is not just a “lifestyle” but must be intentional and on an ongoing basis. Evangelism must be taught, modeled, and promoted by the pastor and the elders of the church (2 Tim 4:5b), so that the congregation is equipped and energized to effectively share the gospel with unbelievers.

Missions is evangelism and ministry to people groups outside of the local community (Acts 1:8) with the goal of planting and establishing churches that will grow and be self-supporting. Creekside Bible Church is committed to supporting both national and international missionaries who are actively involved in this crucial work.