



# DOCTRINE & BELIEFS

## THE BASICS.

### OUR MISSION

The mission of our church is to glorify God by making disciples—to fulfill the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 28:19-20; Matthew 22:37). Our obedience to this mission is the foundation of every Hope Church ministry; our chief aim is to make disciples of Christ who love Him and follow His ways in their Worship, their Walk, and their Work.

### OUR FOUNDATION

Our foundation is Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:11 says “For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Our church stands on the reality of who He is and what He has done. Anything built on less will ultimately be torn down. Building on this foundation guarantees success - whether it is in our church or our individual lives - this foundation stands for eternity.

### OUR PILLARS

Our church is founded on Jesus Christ and supported by four pillars:

1. Unashamed Adoration
2. Unapologetic Preaching
3. Unceasing Prayer
4. Unafraid Witness

These pillars are not specific to Hope Church Mississauga as they are derived from Biblical truths, but they help us understand and clarify what we are committed to as well as explain what we choose to emphasize throughout our church. These pillars will define our church at every level.

*To more fully understand the Biblical basis for these pillars and how they are worked out, please see the next section of this document titled “The Four Pillars.”*

### OUR DISCIPLESHIP MODEL

Mature disciples Worship Christ, Walk with Christ, and Work for Christ. A person committed to a relationship with Christ focuses on personally walking with Him, worshiping Him, and working for Him. The person who does these things will experience significant growth in personal sanctification, and therefore will experience a closer personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and will become “mature in Christ.” (Colossians 1:28)

We are committed to multiplying the godly characteristics of leaders’ lives into others. (2 Timothy 2:2) We strongly believe this multiplication of ministry is key to the healthy growth of the church.

We believe the disciples of Jesus Christ should minister to one another in the local church, rather than one or a small number of professional pastors bearing total responsibility to care for the entire congregation. God has given spiritual gifts to all of His people to provide mutual ministry in the context of the healthy and strong local church. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

# **THE FOUR PILLARS.**

## **UNASHAMED ADORATION**

*Lifting high the name of Jesus through worship*

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24)

We seek to worship Jesus for who he is and what he has done in our lives. Our worship team will lead us in songs each week to help us engage our minds and hearts and give him the praise he deserves. Our hope is that all who join us will experience God’s presence and develop a hunger for God.

## **UNAPOLOGETIC PREACHING**

*Proclaiming the authority of God’s Word without apology*

“Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:2)

Each week, we will devote time to opening up the Bible to a specific passage to explain the truth it contains and apply the principles to our lives. We believe this Book and the God it reveals can make a significant impact in our daily lives.

## **UNCEASING PRAYER**

*Believing firmly in the power of prayer*

“Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18)

We started our church with prayer and will continue to pray as we’ve seen God free us from sin, heal our hurts, exceed our expectations and raise up a group of faithful leaders who desire to love, support and pray for you.

## **UNAFRAID WITNESS**

*Sharing the good news of Jesus with boldness*

“...and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.” (Ephesians 6:19-20)

When you’ve embraced the truth of who Jesus is, you develop a desire to share this truth with others. We encourage you to go tell others about the change God has made in your life, and we provide many opportunities for you to reach out to the community and the world.

# OUR DOCTRINE.

## THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments to be the full record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. Different men, while writing according to their own styles and personalities, were supernaturally moved along by the Holy Spirit to record God's very words, inerrant in the original writings. Therefore, those applying themselves to study its literal, historical-grammatical context can accurately understand God's Word. Scripture is fully trustworthy as our final and sufficient authority for all of life (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

## THE TRIUNE GOD

We believe in the one living and true God, eternally (John 17:3; Isaiah 45:5) existing in perfect unity as three equally and fully divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). Each member of the Godhead, while executing distinct but complementary roles in redemptive history, has precisely the same nature, attributes, and being, and is equally worthy of the same glory and honor and obedience (John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3-4).

## GOD THE FATHER

We believe God the Father created all things in six literal days for His glory according to His own will (Genesis 1:31; Revelation 4:11), through His Son, Jesus Christ. He upholds all things by the Word of His power and grace, exercising sovereign headship over all creation, providence, and redemption (Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:28; Philipians 2:11).

## GOD THE SON

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, moved by love in accordance with the will of the Father, took on human flesh (John 1:1, 14, 18). Conceived through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the virgin Mary. He, being fully God and fully man (John 14:8-9), lived a sinless life and sacrificially shed His blood and died on the cross in our place accomplishing redemption for all who place their faith in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). He arose visibly and bodily from the dead three days later and ascended into heaven, where, at the Father's right hand, He is now Head of His Body the Church, the only Savior and Mediator between God and man, and will return to earth in power and glory to consummate His redemptive mission (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Timothy 3:16).

## GOD THE SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ during this age. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He draws the unredeemed to repentance and faith, and at salvation imparts new spiritual life to the believer, bringing that person into union with Christ and the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit sanctifies, seals, fills, guides, instructs, comforts, equips, empowers, permanently indwells at salvation, and bestows spiritual gifts to the believer for Christ-like living and service (John 16:8; 13:15; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-5, 11-13, 19; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

## MANKIND

We believe that God created mankind—male and female—in His own image and likeness, free of sin, to glorify Himself and enjoy His fellowship. Tempted by Satan, but in the sovereign plan of God, man freely chose to disobey God, bringing sin, death and condemnation to all mankind. All human beings, therefore, are totally depraved by nature and by choice. Alienated from God without defense or excuse, and subject to God's righteous wrath, all of mankind is in desperate need of the Savior (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 1:18, 32).

## SALVATION

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as the substitutionary atonement in our place, and that salvation is found in none other than Jesus Christ. Before Creation, God chose those who would be saved and granted this unearned grace solely based on His sovereign good pleasure. Jesus Christ's death on the cross was the sole and complete payment for sins, fully satisfying God's righteous wrath, for each person that turns from sin in repentance and places their faith in Christ alone by grace alone. At salvation each person is made a new creation by the Holy Spirit, declared righteous before God, and secured as an adopted child of God forever. Genuine faith continues in obedience and love for Jesus Christ with a life eager to glorify God and persevere to the end (Romans 3:17-24; Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 John 2:19).

## THE CHURCH

We believe that upon placing one's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, the believer is made part of the Body of Christ, the one universal Church, of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The Scriptures command believers to gather locally in order to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, fellowship, the ordinances of baptism and communion, service to the local body through the development and use of talents and spiritual gifts, and outreach to the world to make disciples (Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Matthew 28:18-20). Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the Church under the watchful care of a plurality of elders. A church's members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 3:21; Ephesians 4:16).

## BAPTISM & COMMUNION

We believe that Christian baptism is a public declaration of the believer's salvation in Christ, identifying with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection symbolized by immersion in water. The Lord's Supper is the united commemoration by believers of Christ's death until He comes and should be preceded by a careful self-examination (Acts 2:41; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29).

## MISSIONS

We believe it is the aim, duty, and privilege of every believer and local church fellowship to glorify God by responding as active participants in the Great Commission call of Jesus Christ to go and make disciples of all nations. We believe the primary focus and priority of this call is centered on efforts that establish, strengthen, and reproduce biblically-based churches, which will then plant churches that plant churches for future generations and God's glory (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2)

## MARRIAGE & SEXUALITY

We believe a person's biological sex accords with his or her gender identity as male or female, which God our Creator designed at conception and gave as a gift to be embraced with gratitude and worship. Marriage is a holy covenant and lifelong union between one man and one woman, and is designed by God for His glory, for a husband and wife's enjoyment of companionship, sexual intimacy, and procreation, and to signify the covenant love between Christ and His bride, the Church. God designed sexual intimacy to be expressed and consummated only between a man and a woman, when they are united as one flesh in marriage. (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24; Malachi 2:14; Proverbs 5:18; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; 7:3-5; Ephesians 5:31-32)

## THINGS TO COME

We believe in and expectantly await the glorious, visible, personal, premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessed hope of His return has vital bearing on the personal life, service, and mission of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost. The lost will be raised to judgment and experience eternal wrath in hell. The saved will be raised to eternal joy in the new heaven and new earth in the manifested presence of God (Matthew 16:27; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; Acts 1:3, 9; Hebrews 7:25-26; Revelation 20:1-6; Revelation 21:1-4).

# OUR CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

## TWO CHURCH OFFICES

The biblical teaching on the subject of two church offices is found in (I Timothy 3:1-16) and (Titus 1:5-9). Though there are three terms used for the offices of the church, i.e. bishop, elder, and deacon, a careful analysis of these terms indicates that bishop and elder are used interchangeably, with the bishop simply being the 'ruling' or leading elder. The pastors of the church have the spiritual authority of the elders. However, with the exception of the Senior Pastor, they will serve on the board only as needed and at the request of the elders.

## OFFICE NUMBER ONE: ELDERS

### SELECTION

When the need arises for additional elders, a nominee will be recommended by the existing Board of Elders. In keeping with the clear biblical injunctions regarding authority structures within the church only men will be considered for the office of elder. An in-depth interview will ensue to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified. The congregation will then be reminded of the biblical requirement for elders and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If the matter remains unresolved, the nominee or church member should approach the Board of Elders and request that their name be withdrawn from consideration.

### TERM

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for elders, no specific fixed term of office is recommended. Instead, each elder, upon appointment, shall be asked for a three year commitment. At the end of three years the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation by fellow elders. During the review, both the individual and the other elders shall evaluate his continued service as an elder, again considering the biblical qualifications, as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as an elder may be discontinued by his own decisions or by a consensus decision of the other elders. A person leaving the Board of Elders would not preclude his service as a future elder, subject to the regular selection process.

### DUTIES

The Scriptures are clear that the elder's responsibility is the spiritual oversight of the congregation. The elder's responsibility can be broken down into three main areas:

1. Ensuring that the doctrine of the church remains purely biblical; all doctrinal issues in the church will be settled by the Board of Elders.
2. Ensuring that the direction of the church remains consistent with our statement of purpose and the four pillars statement as outlined in the Constitution.
3. Administering in love and humility the biblical process of church discipline as outlined in (Matthew 18:15-20) and (Galatians 6:1-4). All decisions affecting the overall doctrine, direction, and discipline of the church will be the responsibility of the Board of Elders.

### STRUCTURE

All elders will have equal authority and responsibility. The Senior Pastor will work in cooperation with the Elder Board Chairman to ensure healthy ministry development and strong accountability. Agenda items for the elder meetings must be submitted to the Elder Board Chairman prior to the elders' meeting. An elders' meeting may not be held without a majority of the elders present and the entirety of the elders informed. The Elder Board Chairman will be selected by consensus decision of the Board of Elders with no fixed term and may not be one of the pastors. The Elder Board will consist of the Chairman, the Senior Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons Board and additional elders, who will assume responsibility as agreeable and necessary.

## QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications for an elder are clearly laid out in Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and are as follows.

- Above reproach
- Able to teach
- Husband to one wife
- Not addicted to alcohol
- Temperate
- Not antagonistic
- Prudent
- Uncontentious
- Respectable
- Free from the love of money
- Hospitable
- Manage own household
- Not a new convert

## REGARDING PASTORS

### SELECTION

All members of the pastoral staff will be chosen by the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor will automatically be a member of the Board of Elders. The elders may nominate additional member(s) of the pastoral staff to serve on the Board of Elders.

### TERM

All pastoral staff members will serve for an indefinite period of time. The Senior Pastor is responsible and accountable in the performance of his duties to the Board of Elders. All other staff members are responsible to the Board of Elders through the Senior Pastor. A staff member may only be dismissed by a consensus decision of the Board of Elders.

### DUTIES

The responsibility of the Senior Pastor will be to faithfully preach God's Word and model the priority of discipleship within the church. He will give oversight and direction to all ministry staff and work with the Board of Elders in carrying out the overall vision of Hope Church Mississauga.

## QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications for a pastor are equivalent to the biblical qualifications of an elder.

### ADDITIONAL PASTORAL STAFF

Ministry descriptions for the remaining pastoral staff will be established by the Board of Elders in keeping with the giftedness of the individual and agreed upon at the time of hiring.

## OFFICE NUMBER TWO: DEACONS

The office of deacon is one that exists biblically to give leadership to the serving functions of the church (Acts 6). The qualification for deacons are the same as elder in the area of character, but different in aptitude. The elders are to be "apt to teach" while the deacons are to be "able and proved as servants."

### SELECTION

When the need arises for additional deacons, a nominee will be recommended by the existing Board of Elders. Following an independent interview to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified, the congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirements for deacons and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If the matter remains unresolved, the nominee or church member should approach the Board of Elders and request that their name be withdrawn from consideration.

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for deacons, no specific term of office is recommended. Instead, each deacon, upon appointment, shall be asked for a two year commitment. At the end of two years the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation by fellow deacons.

During the review, both the individual and the other deacons, shall evaluate his continued service as a deacon, again considering the biblical qualifications as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as a deacon may be discontinued by his own decision or by the consensus decision of the Deacons Board. Upon their request the elders will have the opportunity to participate in the review process.

A person leaving the Board of Deacons would not preclude his service as a future deacon, subject to the regular selection process.

## TERM

Deacons shall serve a term of two years and be eligible for additional terms upon nomination of the Board of Elders. A deacon may only be dismissed by a consensus decision of the Board of Elders.

## DUTIES

The Board of Deacons will be responsible for the oversight of all financial, benevolent, ordinance, and facility operations of the church.

## STRUCTURE

The Board of Deacons shall consist of a chairman, who shall be a member of the Board of Elders. The church treasurer will be the deacon in charge of finances. The remainder of the deacons will assume responsibilities as agreeable and as needed.

## QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications for a deacon are clearly laid out in I Timothy 3:8-12, and are as follows.

- Individual of dignity
- Above reproach
- Not double tongued
- First tested as servants
- Not addicted to wine
- Spouses must be faithful
- Dignified Temperate
- Not fond of sordid gain
- Holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience
- Husband of one wife
- Manages household well

## CHURCH SECRETARY

The Church Secretary will be any member of the church with the qualities of faithfulness, spiritual maturity, and a reputation for keeping confidences. The Church Secretary will attend board meetings and business meetings of the church and record the minutes of these meetings. The minutes will then be formally prepared by the Church Secretary and distributed to the appropriate people one week before their next meeting. Corporate offices, as required by law, will be subject to church offices as outlined by this Constitution. The Church Secretary will be chosen by the Board of Elders with no fixed term.

## FULL BOARD

At the discretion of the Board of Elders, a Full Board meeting may be called. The Full Board consists of the three divisions of church leadership: the pastoral staff which is responsible for the day to day operation of the church; the deacons who direct the financial, benevolent, and facility operations of the church; and the elders, who oversee the doctrine, direction, and discipline of the church. The Elders may also include, when needed, small group coaches and/or leaders or other key ministry leaders who are not on staff in a Full Board meeting. All are to be under the authority of, and in submission to, the Board of Elders.

# ISSUES FOR CLARIFICATION.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The New Testament clearly indicates that groups of people who were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body. In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, Hope Church Mississauga recognizes the need for formal membership. Membership at Hope Church Mississauga is for all who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and have visibly demonstrated that commitment through believer's baptism.

We believe in the importance of serving the body of Christ by offering clear paths for people to start and develop healthy and growing relationships with others in the church body. We value an intentional plan to help every interested person enjoy godly relationships in the church. Church membership is a by-product of people who are growing in Christ and who grasp the importance of serving the Lord by using their gifts to serve others in the local church.

## **SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE**

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and that they contain all the words of God that we need in order to completely trust and obey Him. The Scriptures are inerrant in their original writings (Psalm 119:97-104; Psalm 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-16) and are infallible in their instruction (Proverbs 6:32; 2 Peter 1:19), eternal in duration (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25); the final authority and the standard for faith and practice (Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119); and sufficient for counsel in every issue of life (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16).

We believe that the very words of Scripture in the original Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic are inspired by God. Therefore, we believe that the Bible versions which translate God's Word most literally into modern English should be preferred.

## **CREATION, EVOLUTION AND GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**

We believe God created the universe in six 24-hour days and that, before He created the universe, nothing except God existed (Genesis 1; Exodus 31:17; Psalm 33:6-9; Acts 17:24; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16). God chose to create the universe and all that is in it to reveal His glory, divine nature, eternal power, infinite wisdom and supreme authority. (Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 19:1-2; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11). We deny the theory of evolution, which states that nonliving substances gave rise to the first living material, which then reproduced and diversified to produce all living creatures.

We believe that all people are descendants of Adam and Eve, whom God created personally and individually and as complete human beings (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9). The fall of Adam and Eve infected all people with sin and death, but the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives the opportunity to receive God's gift of eternal life. (Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22). God rules over His creation and cares about and is involved in the lives of individual people (Job 12:10; Acts 17:25; Acts 25:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:13; Ephesians 4:6).

## **SALVATION AND SECURITY**

It is God's divine decision to save a person (John 6:37; John 6:44; John 6:65; Romans 8:29-30; Romans 9:11-18; Acts 13:48; Acts 16:14; Ephesians 1:4-6; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:3) and it is God's kindness, forbearance and patience that lead that person to repentance (Romans 2:4). The Bible also teaches that each person is responsible to embrace or reject Jesus as Savior and Lord and that God welcomes all who come to Him by faith apart from works (Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 15:7; Luke 20:9-18; John 6:37; John 7:37; Romans 10:9-13; Acts 16:30-34; Acts 17:30.) Both of these two truths—God's sovereignty in salvation and man's decision to embrace Christ—are taught in the Scriptures. Their co-existence is a mystery and is completely understood only in the mind of our omniscient God. All glory for the salvation of every believer belongs to God alone (Romans 3:21-31; Ephesians 1:7-9; Ephesians 2:8-9, Jude 1:24-25).

Those who are born of God's Spirit through Jesus Christ persevere in the faith (Matthew 13:13; John 15:4-8; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:10-13; 1 John 4:13; 2 John 9). God is faithful to His people, and empowers them to persevere in the faith (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:19-20).



We believe that everyone who is born of God's Spirit through Jesus Christ is assured of salvation from the moment of conversion (Ephesians 1:13-14). This assurance relies on God's decisive and faithful grace rather than on the works of the Christian. Obedience, good works and fruit-bearing do not earn or retain the believer's salvation, but indicate the reality of the person's love of Christ and profession of faith (Luke 6:46; John 14:21; James 2:17-18).

Eternal security in salvation relies on the Lord's guarantee of each believer's adoption as His son or daughter (Galatians 4:4-7), and His seal of the believer by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14) and the conviction that God gives the Holy Spirit to each believer as a down payment toward future bliss in heaven (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

A person who professes genuine faith in Christ immediately becomes His possession (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 2:40-41; Acts 16:30-34), and nothing can snatch that person out of His hands (John 10:27-29). Having been bought with the price of Jesus Christ's crucifixion as complete payment for sin, Christians are not their own. They are Christ's possession (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This assurance is absolutely certain, reserved in heaven, protected by God's unlimited power (1 Peter 1:4-5).

### PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION AND MATURITY

Mature disciples walk with Christ, worship Christ and work for Christ. A person committed to a relationship with Christ focuses on a personal walk with Him, worship of Him and work for Him. That person will experience significant growth in personal sanctification and, therefore, will experience a closer personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and will become complete in Christ (Colossians 1:28).

We are committed to multiplying the godly characteristics of leaders' lives into others (2 Timothy 2:2). This multiplication of ministry is key to the healthy growth of the church.

We believe the disciples of Jesus Christ should minister to one another in the local church, rather than one or a small number of professional pastors bearing total responsibility to care for the entire congregation. God has given spiritual gifts to all of His people to provide mutual ministry in the context of the healthy and strong local church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

### WORSHIP

The chief purpose of mankind is to glorify God by loving Him with the entire heart, soul, mind and might (Deuteronomy 6:5; Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 22:37). All believing men, women and children are to glorify God and thus fulfill the purpose of their existence. Worship glorifies God through adoration (Psalm 95:6), praise (Psalm 99:5), prayer (Daniel 6:10-11), thanksgiving (Nehemiah 12:46) and a complete yielding to Him (Romans 12:1). Worship declares His worth, pays Him homage and celebrates Him in a life of devotion. We seek to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth (Exodus 15:1-21; 2 Samuel 6:14-16; Psalm 5:7; John 4:23-24; Revelation 4:11; 5:12).

Several tenets guide our worship. We seek to: lift high the name of Jesus Christ (John 4:22-26; John 12:32; John 14:6); lead God's people to lift their hearts and voices to Him, giving Him praise and thanks in music and lyric (Nehemiah 12:45-46; Psalm 66:1-4; Psalm 95:1-2); prepare hearts to hear the Lord speak through the proclamation of Scripture (Psalm 95:6-9; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42); emphasize fresh and contemporary expressions while retaining traditional elements that recognize the richness of our heritage in the faith (Deuteronomy 32:7; Psalm 33:3; Isaiah 46:8-9; Matthew 13:32, Ephesians 5:19; Revelation 5:9); pursue excellence in worship, knowing that God is worthy of our best (Exodus 12; Deuteronomy 17:1; Psalm 33:3, 1 Timothy 4:14-15; Hebrews 11:4).

### BIBLICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD

Hope Church Mississauga affirms the God-ordained and significant role that women should play in establishing and leading the local church. Every leadership opportunity is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture. The Scriptures clearly state that men are to serve in the office of Elder and that women are not to serve in church positions in which they exercise authority over men or in which they teach doctrine to men (1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:6-9). We do not see this as an issue of equality, for men and women are equal under God. The Bible is clear that men and women do not have the same roles. Qualified women should serve in any leadership position that is not forbidden in the Scriptures.

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Satan and his demonic servants viciously oppose the work God performs in and through His people (1 Peter 5:8; Genesis 3:1-7; Ephesians 6:12). God, who by His nature is infinitely more powerful than Satan, in due time will have complete and total victory over Satan (1 John 4:4; Revelation 20:1-10).

Although it is appropriate to pray in Jesus' name for protection against demonic activity, the Scriptures do not instruct the Christian to "bind Satan in Jesus' name." Rather, the Scriptures instruct the Christian to combat Satan by: humbly drawing near to God, knowing that He will give grace, mercy and strength (2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 4:8; 1 Peter 5:6-10); resisting his temptations (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9); rightly applying the truth of the Scriptures (Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44; Ephesians 4:24-27); forgiving offenses (2 Corinthians 2:10-11); putting on the armor of God's truth, righteousness, readiness to share the gospel, faith, salvation and prayer (Ephesians 6:11-20); demonstrating faithfulness to the Lord by enduring trials (Revelation 2:10; Revelation 2:13; Revelation 3:9-10)

## COUNSELLING PHILOSOPHY

The Lord changes lives and accomplishes His purposes directly through reading and applying the Scriptures, meditating on the truths of the Scriptures and prayer. The Lord also uses those who minister His Word as they encourage, exhort, admonish, edify, implore, reprove, rebuke, console and support others toward godliness.

God needs no new or unique insight into the human condition in order to change lives, regardless of whether that insight is gained through psychology or some other tool of human origin. Psychological theories that may help people live healthier and more effectively are embellishments of principles already revealed in the Scriptures. Although some forms of human wisdom are true, they are not the Word of God. They are infinitely subordinate to, and not to be compared with, the matchless value of the Scriptures (Psalm 119:160; Isaiah 40:8; John 17:17).

Problems that are approached by integrating the Scriptures with psychological theories tend to deceive individuals into diminishing the God of the Scriptures and into believing that He has not provided and cannot provide sufficient truth, insight and wisdom to change their lives (Colossians 2:8-10).

There are occasions when a medical doctor may diagnose a physical problem that manifests itself in attitudinal, behavioral or emotional struggles. In those occasions, the use of medications may be appropriate. However, when psychology and other social sciences step beyond observing human behavior and seek to explain the causes of that behavior, they enter spiritual territory. Only the omniscient God can explain such causes and offer solutions that lead to godliness and a fruitful, joyful life.

God has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). He changes us as we discipline ourselves through obedience to the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Peter 1:5-11). Each Christian's passion should be to become more like Christ (Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2) and fulfill the Great Commandment to love the Lord with the entire heart, soul, mind and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:37-38). The Christian who learns and applies the Word becomes mature and, in turn, can help others mature (2 Timothy 2:2).

The Lord's church is a community of faith—a living body with Jesus Christ at the head (Colossians 1:17-18)—that influences, supports and helps bring men, women and children into healthy relationships with the Lord and with others of the church. A healthy church body applies biblical principles to relationships at all levels, i.e. the overall church context, ministries within the church, families within the church and individuals within the church. God-honoring application of biblical principles throughout the church leads to healthier relationships at all levels (Ephesians 4:14-16; Hebrews 12:12-13). This application also helps ensure the integrity of the church's corporate and individual witness to a watching world (1 Peter 2:12).

## CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Hope Church Mississauga is a non-charismatic, conservative, evangelical body that welcomes all who know Jesus Christ as their Savior and all who are seeking Him. Those who claim to possess the gift of tongues and other sign gifts are welcome to worship and fellowship with us if they are willing to be a source of unity rather than division within our church body.

We believe that the Christian life is supernatural and that the Lord continues to perform miracles. We also believe that current displays of the gift of tongues distract from the main task of the local church, which is to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Current displays of the gift of tongues: give unwarranted prominence to the gift, which is described in the New Testament as being only one of many spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12); emphasize speaking in tongues as the primary manifestation of the Spirit's work in a person's life, while minimizing the Spirit's work in producing a holy life (2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 2 Timothy 1:9) and a life that displays the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22); often suggest that speaking in tongues is a required proof of being Spirit-filled or of possessing salvation in Christ, even though the Scriptures do not teach this.

Hope Church Mississauga seeks to prevent the propagation of doctrines that would cause divisions within an individual church. Therefore, members to and adherents of Hope Church Mississauga are not to propagate the teachings and emphases of the current charismatic movement. Although we do not control personal, individual interactions with the Lord, the expression of tongues and other sign gifts are not to be overtly expressed at meetings that are under the organization and authority of Hope Church Mississauga.