

What drives the ministry of Providence Church?

Session 1: Introduction

This past year the elders of Providence met for an extended time of prayer and planning for the ministry of Providence. Our desire going into this meeting was to have a clear picture of how the church would move forward in a way that is consistent with our *mission to glorify God by treasuring Christ, loving people, and making disciples*.

As we prayerfully sought that end, we considered the core values of the church. In our time of prayer and discussion, we reflected on *who we are* as a church and *what makes us who we are*—not so much defining the church theologically but who Providence Church is *distinctly*. At the conclusion of our time together, we walked away with the following thoughts, proceeding from a single question:

Q: What drives the ministry of Providence Church?

→ The Word of God

- We willingly submit to the inerrant Word as the sufficient authority in all decisions related to life and ministry.
 - o *This includes a commitment to sound doctrine (and particularly the Doctrines of Grace), expository preaching, the public reading and private study of Scripture, and purposeful prayer that is informed by Scripture.*

→ The Community of Grace

- We joyfully celebrate the value and strength of diverse and caring relationships in the body of Christ that reflects God's heart for the nations.
 - o *This includes preserving unity in diversity and seeking the edification of the body through gracious relationships.*

→ The Discipleship of the Saints

- We actively strive to live as followers of Jesus and build others up in his likeness, maintaining integrity throughout the Christian life and equipping the saints for ministry.

→ The Planting of Reproducing Churches

- We eagerly collaborate with churches locally and globally, depend on the Holy Spirit, and commit to multiplication of reproducing churches both locally in areas of need and globally among the unreached.

Over the course of the next 4 weeks, we will be engaging in discussion on each of these values so that we can reason together, as a church, as to how we will live this out. Essentially, the goal of this discussion is for us to be on the same page and excited about the mission because we share the same core values.

Course Objectives:

1. Understand the 'what' that influences much if not all of what we do as a church.
2. Gain clarity on 'why' we do the things we do, seeing our goals as a church clearly.
3. Become aware of the culture that ties us together and gives meaning and purpose to the mission of our ministry; understanding who we are as a church.
4. Provide a sense of awareness for evaluating and keeping us on track in our pursuit.

"A ministry based on clearly articulated core values drives a fixed stake in the ground that says to all, "This is what we stand for; this is what we are all about; this is who we are; this is what we can do for you.""¹

¹ Quote from "Look Before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture" By Aubrey Malphurs.