

# Antioch Community Church of Waco

## Statement of Faith

### THE BIBLE

We believe that the Bible is the eternally reliable Word of God that is inspired, authoritative, living, equally in all parts and without error in its original manuscript, absolutely infallible, and our source of supreme revelation from God, superior to conscience and reason, though not contrary to reason; and it is therefore our infallible rule of faith and practice and necessary to our daily lives (II Timothy 3:16-17; I Peter 1:23-25; Hebrews 4:12).

### THE GODHEAD

We believe in one God who has revealed Himself in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all co-eternal, all stand equally superior to time, free from the temporal distinctions of past and future (FATHER - Psalm 90:2; Psalm 102:27; I Timothy 1:17; SON - John 1:1-2; John 8:58; Hebrews 1:8; I John 1:2; Revelation 1:8; SPIRIT - Hebrews 9:14).

We believe in God the Father, creator of all things visible and invisible (Genesis 14:19, Isaiah 40:28).

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, who came into the world to reveal the Father, and was the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person; that Jesus Christ was the Creator of everything, for by Him all things were made (Colossians 1:15-16).

We believe that in Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and that He was very God and very Man (John 1:1-2 & 14; I Timothy 3:16).

We believe in Jesus Christ's pre-existence, incarnation, virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, substitutionary and atoning death, bodily resurrection, bodily ascension into heaven, exaltation, present rule at the right hand of God, coming personal return in power and great glory, and in His everlasting Kingdom and dominion (Luke 22:19; Acts 1:11; Daniel 7:14; Revelation 20). We acknowledge His Lordship -- that Jesus Christ is Lord over all things in heaven and on earth, and under the earth (Philippians 2:9-10).

We believe in the Holy Spirit, His present ministry, His indwelling, His empowering, His impartation of gifts for today, and His transforming power in the lives of all believers (I Corinthians 12:4-11; Galatians 5:22-23; Acts 2:4; Acts 1:8).

### MAN AND SALVATION

We believe that man was created by a direct and immediate act of God (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:4).

We believe that man by transgression fell from a state of righteousness and holiness in which he was first created into total spiritual depravity, a state of death in trespasses and sins in which he is held as a slave of sin and an enemy of God. As such, he is unable to attain divine righteousness by his own efforts but must be redeemed and delivered by the power of the gospel (Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:1-4).

We believe that repentance and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ is an integral part of God's work of justification of the believer. Through faith in the shed blood of Christ, he or she is justified and made a partaker in the death of Christ. (Romans 5:1, 9).

We believe that "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). We further believe that the emphasis for a continuous walk in grace should be on demonstrating righteousness and purity of heart, believing in the keeping power of God, walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh, living a lifestyle that demonstrates the character, standards and convictions of Jesus Christ, and not being conformed to the world (Jude 24; Galatians 5:16-25; Romans 4:1-5, 12:1-2).

We believe that repentance is a necessary step in salvation. Repentance means that the way that we think and act is purposefully and intentionally realigned with the truth of God's word as we are convicted by His Spirit (II Corinthians 7:10; Psalm 51; Acts 11:18; II Timothy 2:25; Matthew 9:12-13).

We believe that in the final judgment, which will accompany the return of Christ, every person will give an account to God of every aspect of this earthly life. The Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema Seat) is the judgment of believers in reference to rewards or lack thereof. The Great White Throne Judgment is the judgment of unbelievers who will be eternally separated from God and in torment (I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:10; John 6:40; Revelation 20:11-15).

## **THE LORD'S COMMANDS**

We believe in the Lord's Supper and believer's baptism as acts of our obedience, a testimony of our faith, and a place to encounter God (Matthew 3:6; Mark 16:16; I Corinthians 11:23-29).

We believe that water baptism is an obedient response to the command of Jesus. Baptism is to be performed only upon repentant believers in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20).

We believe in being baptized (or filled) with the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6. We hold that the real evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is one's response to the Word of God (John 16:13), a Christ-like life, showing forth Christ's character, and experiencing and manifesting the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26, 16:14; Galatians 5:22-23; I Corinthians 12:4-11).

## **THE FAMILY**

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption (Genesis 1:27-28).

We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime (Genesis 2:20-25; Matthew 19:5-6). The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27). A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19). A wife is to submit herself

graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ (Ephesians 5:24; Colossians 3:18).

We believe that children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3, Psalm 139:13-15; Matthew 19:14). Parents are responsible for training their children in the ways of the Lord through encouragement, teaching and discipline (Deuteronomy 11:19; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21; Proverbs 13:24 & 19:18).

## **THE CHURCH**

We believe that the Church (the people of God) is God's instrument to distribute His glory on the Earth. The Church is a gathering of believers, meeting and experiencing God together, caring for one another in unity, and displaying His goodness wherever they go (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Peter 2:4-9; Ephesians 3:14-19; Ephesians 5:25-31; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Acts 2:42-47).

# Antioch Community Church of Waco

## Process for Resolving Offenses and Church Discipline

### Resolving Offenses

If any member of this church feels that there is an offense or misunderstanding with another member, he should go to that other member promptly with love in order to resolve any differences. If a man and a woman have an offense, they should meet in the presence of the other's spouse or other covering to resolve the difference.

If any member has an offense or misunderstanding with any person in leadership, including the Pastor, he should go promptly to them in the same manner as with any other member. However, if the member would feel uncomfortable in approaching a person in leadership, he may request that another member of church leadership accompany him for support.

Members of leadership who have an offense with one another, should go directly to the other person. If the situation is not resolved at this level, the leaders should meet with the Pastor and/or appointed Elders to resolve the offense.

If an offense cannot be resolved on an individual basis, the two members should meet together with their respective church leaders in order to resolve their differences. Should this effort be unsuccessful in bringing resolution, the members and their area leaders shall meet together with an Elder or the Pastor to resolve the offense. Church leaders should keep the Pastor informed of offenses that have been brought to them for resolution.

Should this process for resolving offenses reveal a situation that may require church discipline, the discipline process set forth in this document shall be followed.

### Process of Church Discipline

#### *Purpose of Discipline*

Discipline in the church is not for the purpose of punishment and will not be administered as such. Discipline, correction, reproof and rebuke have as its primary purpose the good of the person who has been taken in a fault. It seeks to restore such a person and to help them overcome the problem, sin, or fault that has hindered their place in the Body of Christ.

Discipline also has the purpose of maintaining the purity and unity of the Body of Christ in its local expression as this church.

Finally, discipline has the purpose of discouraging others from committing like actions.

Members who are under church disciplinary action may be suspended from church membership. Further disciplinary measures or reinstatement shall rest with the Elders. The purpose of discipline in this church is never to humiliate or embarrass; however,

one who forces the church to take disciplinary action may, in the process, be humbled or even embarrassed. Therefore, the purpose of the discipline as well as the prayer and motive of the leadership, is that discipline and correction will result in first the restoration of the one in error, second the purifying of the church either by restoration or separation and finally, the edification of the church and the exhortation to purity by the example of discipline.

### ***Process of Discipline***

Church discipline is a body ministry. All members of the body should be involved in it according to the following procedure. One who has knowledge of the sin or fault of another should first go to him and meet with him privately. If the member is restored or reconciled, then the matter should go no further and should be kept in confidence between the two members involved. It is recognized, however, that the church cannot guarantee or be responsible for the confidentiality of such information between members.

If the first step does not work, the one who has the complaint or knowledge should then go to appointed leadership, the Pastor or a member of the Elders so that the matter can then be dealt with in the presence of witnesses. In the event that all efforts at restoration fail, the one erring may be brought before the Elders or before the congregation for their judgment and possible termination from membership.

A member attempting to withdraw their membership so as to avoid such action will not prevent the matter being presented to the Elders or the congregation for judgment. Termination of membership will not be recognized by the Elders if the process of discipline has not been completed.

#### ***First Stage***

When one member of the body has knowledge of another church member's sin or fault, then the offended or knowledgeable member must go to the erring member and meet with them one on one in private to try to reconcile the matter and restore the erring member. If the church member is restored, then the matter should go no further and should be kept in confidence between the two members involved. If that step does not succeed then the knowledgeable member must report the matter to appointed leadership or the Pastor. Leadership of the church may initiate the first step of discipline on behalf of any member of the church.

#### ***Second Stage***

The knowledgeable member and the Pastor or his designee shall then meet with the member who has erred for the purpose of restoration. If restoration is accomplished at this stage, the matter should go no further and should be kept in confidence between the church members actually involved and the church leadership. The Pastor may, at his sole discretion, inform the Elders of the discipline. If the meeting with the Pastor or the appointed leadership and the members involved does not succeed, then the matter will be referred to the Elders. Leadership actually involved in the process may inform other members of the leadership of the church of the matter, as the leader at his sole discretion deems necessary. The Senior Pastor shall be informed of all discipline that

reaches this stage by the Elder involved, prior to the meeting with the offending member. The Senior Pastor may, at his sole discretion, inform other Elders of the discipline. The Senior Pastor may, at his sole discretion, participate in any meeting held at this level of discipline.

### *Third Stage*

The Elders may consider disciplinary matters at any meeting. The church member that is the subject of the discipline shall have the right to appear before the Elders and to speak in defense, justification, or repentance. The Elders shall judge the situation. They may institute discipline as they see fit in each individual circumstance and shall tailor the discipline to the aim of achieving the purposes of discipline as herein before set forth. The Elders may remove the member of the congregation from any or all of the privileges of membership for any period, or permanently, if such is deemed by them to be appropriate for the achievement of the purposes of discipline.

The form of discipline imposed may include, but is not limited to, barring a person's participation in any ministry or other activity of the church; barring a person from participation in the Lord's Supper; barring a person from attendance at any church service or small group meeting; removal of a person's membership in the congregation of the church; or any other discipline which may, at the sole discretion of the Senior Pastor and the Elders, be appropriate to the circumstances. Such measures may be either permanent or temporary as may be determined in each instance by the Pastor and the Elders. The Elders may require at their discretion a period of probation or supervision as part of any discipline imposed.

### *Fourth Stage*

In the event that a member is removed from membership in the church due to discipline and the member's refusal to abide by the judgment and correction of the Elders, then the membership of the church may be informed of the action of the Elders and instructed pursuant to Matthew 18 in regard to the disciplined member. The details of the disciplined member's sin or error may be revealed to the membership of the church at that time if, at the discretion of the Pastor and the Elders, such revelation is necessary to the health of the church.

## ***Grounds for Discipline***

### *Principle of Harmony*

Inasmuch as no Christian institution can comply with the plain teaching of Scripture unless unity and harmony predominate within it, no member of the congregation may use any means to incite or engender strife, but shall work in harmony with the other members of the congregation and the appointed leadership. If there is cause for dissatisfaction, it shall be called to the attention of the Pastor or a member of the Elders. At the discretion of the Pastor or the Elders, necessary adjustments shall be made.

### *Unscriptural Conduct*

Any unscriptural conduct or doctrinal departure from the tenets of faith (Statement of Faith) held by this church shall be considered sufficient grounds for which any church

member may be asked to submit to adjustment, reproof, rebuke, correction, or discipline (Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 16:17-18; I Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 1:8-9; Titus 3:1-5).

### *Members*

Grounds for discipline will be determined by the Elders of the church. In general, it shall be grounds for discipline if a member of the church is involved in conduct that is contrary to the Scriptures. More particularly, three types of unscriptural conduct shall be disciplined:

1. Unscriptural conduct that obscures the truth of God by false teaching or doctrine in an area of cardinal truth;
2. Unscriptural conduct that mars the holy character of God and His Church by unholy, immoral living, action or lifestyle; and
3. Unscriptural conduct that hinders the work of God by bringing confusion or division to the body.

### *Leadership*

People involved in ministry leadership of the church or any of its departments shall be subject to discipline as members of the church. In addition, they shall be subject to discipline for departure from leadership qualifications as set forth in scripture in I and II Timothy and Titus.

### *Consent of Members*

Each member of the congregation consents to the exclusive jurisdiction of the church in resolving any matter involving church discipline, and such consent shall include but not be limited to a consent to the announcement of such discipline, including the reasons therefore, to the leadership of the church and, if deemed necessary by the Senior Pastor and the Elders, to the congregation or any portion of the congregation.