



WATERKLOOF BAPTIST CHURCH

LOVE GOD • LOVE PEOPLE • SERVE NATIONS

Philosophy of Ministry

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Introduction

The *contents* of this document are supplementary to our Church Constitution which contains our Statement of Faith, Statement of Principles and outlines our organizational structure and administrative procedures.

The *objective* of this document is to define more comprehensively our philosophy of ministry as a local church. It is our intention that any prospective member should know **why** their church exists, **what** their church is striving to become and **how** their church is going to achieve its God-given objectives. It is also important for any prospective new member to have some understanding as to **where** our church stands on certain important issues.

At **Waterkloof Baptist Church** we believe that God has called us into being for a threefold purpose:

1. **Ministry to the LORD**
2. **Ministry to the CHURCH**
3. **Ministry to the WORLD**

We believe that the above order is scripturally correct and that a healthy ministry to the Lord will result in a meaningful ministry in the body, which in turn will flow into effective ministry to the world.

In the **Great Commandment** outlined by Jesus in Mark 12:30 we are told; *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."* In the words of the Westminster Catechism, "We are created to glorify God and enjoy him forever." Our ministry to the Lord is the **expression** of our worship. Our ministry to the church and the world is the **outcome** of our worship.

In the **New Commandment** which Jesus gave to his disciples in John 13:34 we are told; *"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."* Our ministry to each other in the local church is the means by which we attain the goal of **unity** and **maturity** in Christ and reveal the reality of His love to a lost and dying world.

In the **Great Commission** which Jesus gave to His disciples in Matthew 28:19-20 we are told; *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."*

The purpose then of the church is to equip all its members to **magnify** our Lord, attain the goal of **maturity** in our Lord and become involved in the redemptive **mission** of our Lord.

God has clearly expressed in His word what He wants each of us to do with our lives while on earth.

We are to be **magnifiers** of His Name.

"O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together." Psalm 34:3 NASB. Every believer has a personal responsibility to worship God in Spirit and in truth and to be a part of the Spirit-filled corporate worship of the local church. Ephesians 5:18,19.

We are to be **members** of His family.

Every believer belongs in the living fellowship of the local church. *"You are members of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian."* Ephesians 2:19 LB.

We are to be **models** of His character.

God wants every believer to grow up like Christ in character. *"To this you were called...that you should follow in His steps."* 1 Peter 2:21. *"...and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."* Ephesians 4:13b. Christian maturity is not measured by one's learning, but by one's lifestyle.

We are to be **ministers** of His grace.

"Each one should use whatever gift He has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10. Every member of the body is equipped by God to benefit others.

We are to be **messengers** of His love.

"Life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus - the work of telling others the good news about God's mighty kindness and love." Acts 20:24 LB. Christ has left us on earth to join His mission to the world. It is the responsibility and privilege of every believer to bear witness to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8.

Involvement in these dynamic aspects of the life of the local church provides the people of God with spiritual, emotional and relational benefits they cannot find anywhere else in the world. We therefore recognize that we are **accountable** to God and to each other for the nurture, protection and fulfillment of these divine purposes in our church.

Under the headings which follow we seek to clarify for the prospective member where our particular church stands on these relevant issues. The headings are not intended to be in strict order of priority. The comments made are intended to help the reader understand the heartbeat, purpose and style of the **Waterkloof Baptist Church**.

1. The Absolute Authority of Scripture

As stated in our Constitution we accept the entire Scriptures in their original writing as fully inspired of God and accept them as the **supreme and final authority in all matters of faith, life and conduct**.

God reveals Himself primarily through the pages of Scripture, and that written revelation must be held up as the absolute authority. Scripture is a closed system of truth, complete, sufficient and not to be added to. (Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19). It contains all the spiritual truth God intended to reveal. The cornerstone of our belief on Scripture is *Sola Scriptura*, the principle that God's Word is the **only basis** for divine authority. God's revelation is complete for now, and that there is no new revelation or visions outside of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit does lead us into God's truth and

direct us into God's will for our lives. But He does it **through** God's Word and never apart from it.

2. Worship Style

We place great emphasis on our corporate worship, for it is a major part of our ministry to the Lord. We believe worship must be characterized by total sincerity and reality, freedom and spontaneity, dignity and variety, a wholesome balance between formality and informality, the pattern of Ephesians 5:18, 19 and 1 Corinthians 14:26.

We place a high value on the participation of all our people in praise, prayer and the ordinances of Believers Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The format of the church's different services will be determined by their objectives, e.g. teaching services, youth services, family services, evangelistic services.

3. Music Ministry

The church will strive for excellence in its ministry of music with the sole objective of bringing glory to God by helping the congregation to worship through an increasingly meaningful range of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. The music ministry will be contemporary and relevant to the primary purposes of the church and its outreach to the lost. Due consideration will always be given to both **content** and **quality**.

4. Preaching Style

Proclaiming the Word of God is a primary function of our church, and therefore preaching is a **priority**. Nothing can supersede or take the place of the proclamation of the truth, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, for the edification of the Body and the evangelism of the lost. We hold to the apostolic injunction to '*preach the Word*' (2 Timothy 4:2). The church cannot possibly exist without preaching the Word. Preaching has power like nothing else the church has or does.

The Pastors shall be free under God to engage in the style of preaching that is natural to them. The preaching ministry may range widely from e.g. teaching to evangelistic, expository to topical; governed always by the conviction of what the Spirit is saying to the church through the Word.

5. Leadership Style

We recognize that it is essential to have a leadership team of Pastors, Elders and Deacons who share the mutual conviction that God wants to establish his Kingdom through our local church according to the patterns and goals he has given. The leadership must be unafraid to give visionary and dynamic leadership that will motivate the entire church into action for growth. We must seek to be led, not by mere majority consensus, but by **Faith** in what we believe God has revealed to and confirmed among His people, especially His appointed leaders.

We believe that true leadership arises out of the process of discipleship, therefore leaders are appointed by the church on the basis of their recognized ministry and spiritual maturity. Natural talent is not a sufficient qualification for spiritual leadership.

Our style of leadership is 'service', not authoritarian sway over the Body, but authentic servanthood to the Body. However, in every area of our ministry it must be stated that the Pastors and Elders are to exercise oversight and leadership. It is their **duty** to carefully weigh all that is said and done in the body, supplying positive guidance, direction and correction, as well as checks and balances.

6. Fellowship Structure

To help the church develop in its ministry to the Lord, its members and its community, we consider it one of our priorities to see that every member of the congregation is a faithful and active member of a Life Group. The Life Groups are to exercise the threefold ministry of exaltation, edification and evangelism, under coordinated and committed leadership.

7. Mission and Evangelism

We believe we are called to establish the kingdom of God on earth by taking the **whole** gospel to the **whole** man, ministering according to our ability to the total need of humanity.

This is our ministry to the world and a primary reason for our existence.

Every Christian is obliged to help fulfill the **Great Commission**, (Matthew 28:19-20) to make disciples who will live out the teachings of Christ.

We will strive to be a church that is genuinely **mission-minded**, a body with a missionary heart. We are committed to supporting missionaries, especially those who are sent out from our membership.

We accept all forms of evangelistic strategy that can be supported by the New Testament principle and practice e.g. crusade evangelism, pulpit evangelism etc. But we feel particularly called to make disciples who are equipped to disciple others also. 2 Timothy 2:2.

Our goal is to equip **all** our members for ongoing life-style evangelism.

Mission is a priority in our philosophy of ministry.

Waterkloof Baptist Church is a **mission's** church.

8. Attitudes towards Social/Ethical issues

Inherent in our ministry to the world is being **salt and light** where there is depraved behaviour and spiritual darkness.

It is our duty to speak with clarity and authority of scriptural principle to the broad and specific social/ethical issues facing our society at any given time e.g. racism, injustice, immorality, drunkenness, abortion, pornography, avarice etc.

Our stated position will be dictated by Scripture, not by society, but we shall endeavour at all times to be relevant to our society and its needs.

Whatever our stance or mutually agreed course of action, we are to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are encouraged to **demonstrate** our philosophy towards social/ethical issues by our individual and corporate **lifestyle**.

9. Attitude toward other Churches

We see ourselves as just one of many churches which seek to present the Good News concerning God's love for man revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, we co-operate with evangelical churches both inside and outside our own denomination.

10. Charismatic Position

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

We believe the Holy Spirit empowers all Christians to serve God and He gives spiritual gifts to believers to enable them to undertake the service He desires them to fulfill in ministry to the **Lord**, to the **church** and to the **world**. It is essential for the ministry of the local church that Christians understand Spiritual Gifts. No local congregation will be what it should be, what Jesus prayed that it should be, what the Holy Spirit gifted it and empowered it to be, until it understands 'Spiritual Gifts.' These gifts are to be discerned and developed according to the biblical pattern, with the necessary oversight and caution.

There are a number of passages in the Bible which speak of the gifts, probably the most well known is 1 Cor. 12:1-11. From this passage we need to note the following:

- Gifts are distributed by the Spirit as He wills! (v11). Not as you or I will!
- Gifts are given, not for our personal benefit, but for the benefit of the Body of Christ! (v7). It is thus wrong to exercise any gift for personal gain or benefit. It is equally wrong to fail to exercise one's gift, for by not doing so, we are denying the Church the benefit due to it and thus preventing it from operating as effectively as it should.
- The motivation for exercising a Spiritual Gift is love (v31 and 1 Cor. 13). The gifts of the Spirit operate best in Christians who are controlled by the Spirit and demonstrate the clear fruit of the Spirit.

One of our goals is steady development in this area, undergirded by clear teaching, mutual understanding, wisdom and love. We are to excel in gifts that genuinely edify the body.

Our total commitment to Christ and His body demands that our love for each other and the **unity** of the Spirit transcends peripheral differences in doctrine and practice. On the fundamentals of the **Person and work of the Holy Spirit** we are in wholehearted agreement.

Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9 reveals that this is the distinguishing mark of the Christian. It separates the Christian from the non-Christian. (See also 1 Cor. 6:19).

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the initial receiving of the Holy Spirit into our lives and takes place at conversion. This baptism with the Holy Spirit is therefore

experienced by all believers. On the day of Pentecost, the initial advent was accompanied by special signs which were not meant to be repeated.

After the initial receiving of the Holy Spirit at salvation the Word of God requires that we are to be continuously filled with Him. To be filled with the Holy Spirit simply means that at any particular point in time the Holy Spirit is in control of one's life. If He is not, that person is not filled with the Holy Spirit. The lives of those who are filled with the Spirit of God will certainly reflect that by the demonstration of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25).

Charismatic Phenomena.

In the light of certain strange phenomena being propagated in some church circles today the approach of the **Waterkloof Baptist Church** to these would be as follows:

- The need to avoid practices which would not glorify the Lord.
- The importance of and the need for the leadership team to be seen as willing and able to counter ungodly and unbiblical practices should they occur.
- The importance of evaluating all occurrences of the so-called "Toronto Blessing"; "Slaying/Falling in the Spirit" and other such phenomena by their fruits as set out in the Scripture.
- Unity in the Church is a Biblical imperative, and as such takes precedence over practices and behaviour which are neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture.
- Ensuring that everybody in the Fellowship is adequately informed on the Biblical truths surrounding the activity of the Holy Spirit so as to better understand the context of developments in the ministry.
- The need to keep the leadership as well as the congregation informed of any developments of this nature which would appear to impact on the "culture" or perceived practice of the Fellowship, in order to allay fears/concerns before they develop into potentially divisive issues.

11. Size

God is committed to building his church in numbers and maturity. Under God we are therefore committed to **church growth** as a means of advancing the kingdom of God.

This means we will constantly structure for growth in the manner we believe God wants growth to take place.

By the same token we will conscientiously overcome all "non-growth factors".

We do not believe any church, if it is the Body of Christ, can be too big to minister to the Lord, to its members and to the world. The fact is that many large churches do this far more effectively than small churches.

We are never too large to be personal, friendly, caring, serving, praying, witnessing or to be doing **any** of the things God wants us to do.

We understand that growth is costly and will endeavour to serve the Lord and his Church with selfless diligence and generosity, a prayerful and cheerful spirit which says, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

We see as a vital factor in church growth the equipping ministries of Ephesians 4:11, 12. To equip all the members of the church family so that the entire body grows to maturity as each member functions according to their giftedness.

Our prayer is that every member of the Body at **Waterkloof** will be a functioning, maturing, reproducing disciple of Jesus Christ.