

Our Mission and Core Commitments

As the church of Jesus Christ, we recognize the absolute necessity of corporate unity. One of the greatest hindrances to the church's effectiveness is a lack of practical oneness. This is what Jesus meant when He prayed in [John 17:21](#) "that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me." The church's external witness in the world is directly affected by its internal unity. So, a lack of unity within the church will result in a lack of evangelistic effectiveness without.

Paul fleshed out what this unity might look like by writing to the Philippian church that they could make his joy complete "by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose" ([Philippians 2:2](#)). The church is united when we are of one mind, one love, one spirit, and one purpose. How sad it is when we hear of yet another church divided, sometimes even over seemingly petty issues. When the church is divided God's glory is muted, Christ's redemption is sidelined, the Holy Spirit is grieved, and the believer's joy is squelched.

Why then is a lack of unity within the church more often the rule rather than the exception? I believe there can be several reasons for this. First, sin and its accompanying selfishness when left unchecked and unconfessed will fester and become a life-threatening cancer within the Body of Christ. James says that this is the ultimate source of all quarrels ([James 4:1-3](#)). This is why we must be ever vigilant to confront one another in love ([Gal. 6:1](#), [Matthew 18:15-20](#)) especially when it comes to the sin of factiousness ([Titus 3:10](#)).

While I am convinced that the root of all division is to be found in the soil of our sinfulness and its accompanying selfishness, I also believe that there is another "soil" which promotes this noxious root's growth and multiplication. That division-nurturing "soil" is a church's unarticulated purpose and an unexpressed distinctiveness. Oftentimes interpersonal friction and corporate disunity are unintentionally encouraged when the purpose and distinctives of the church go unspecified or uncommunicated. People will always join a church with a preconceived idea as to what the church should be doing, and how it should be doing it. These ideas are often in direct conflict with the view of the church's leadership, but because the leadership has either not defined or not

communicated its purpose and distinctives, this conflict goes undetected until it reaches a boiling point. The result is never a good one.

This is why we have tried to clarify what we believe to be our church's central mission and core commitments.

Unity is very important to us because we believe it is important to God. Paul prayed in [Romans 15:5-6](#) that the church at Rome would be "...of the same mind with one another...so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (emphasis mine). Our desire is that we as a church would be of the same mind so that we might glorify God with one united, harmonious voice. This oneness of mind will be nurtured and enhanced by a clear statement of our common mission and our core commitments. Let us begin then, and see what it is that God has called us as a church to be and to do.

Our Mission

Cross & Crown Church is a gospel-centered community, committed to making disciples who love Jesus Christ and love others in Jesus' name.

Our Desire

"To see unbelieving people become committed followers of Christ through the proclamation of God's Word."

Our united desire is ***"to see unbelieving people become committed followers of Christ through the proclamation of God's Word."*** This is what we want to see happen. This is the desired outcome of all our actions, that as we seek God's glory, we would also see men and women, boys and girls, submitting their lives to Christ and growing in Him through the regular and clear teaching of the Bible.

Our Core Commitments

Having understood rightly our fundamental mission, it is also important to define our church's "Core Commitments." Core commitments are those foundational values that determine all we do. While our Mission Statement serves to identify the destination which we all want to arrive at, our Core Commitments act as the compass, keeping us on the right course. Core Commitments are guiding principles which determine both what we do as a church and how we will do it. As a church, we have identified eight Core Commitments. We believe these Core Commitments are practical expressions of thoroughly biblical principles which will help ensure that we maintain a truly biblical ministry.

*Pursuing the Glory of God | Maintaining the Centrality of Scripture
| Exercising Prayerful Dependence | Reproducing Reproducers |
Following Godly Servant Leadership | Cultivating Biblical
Relationships | Remembering Faithfulness Equals Success |
Ensuring Excellence in All Things*

1. Pursuing the Glory of God

God is great and deserves to be honored, praised, and glorified ([1 Chronicles 16:29](#)). The Scriptures are clear that we are to do all things to the glory of God. Paul says in [1 Corinthians 10:31](#) that "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." He says the same thing in a slightly different way in [Colossians 3:17](#). Our lives are not to be lived for ourselves, but for the constant pursuit of the glory of God in every word, every thought, every decision, every relationship, every endeavor ([2 Corinthians 5:15](#)).

Likewise, the glory of God should be the pursuit of the church as well. Paul writes in [Ephesians 3:21](#), "to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." (emphasis mine). Of all the places and all the contexts in which God should be glorified, certainly the church should be preeminent. F. F. Bruce says, "The heavens declare the glory of God' but even greater glory is shown by [God's]

handiwork in [the church,] the community of reconciliation.” If God’s glory is to be our pursuit as a church, then what will this mean? It means that our worship, our preaching, and our ministries will be God-centered rather than man-centered. We will always start with the question “what will bring God the greatest glory” and not with “what will bring the biggest crowd.”

This commitment serves as a kind of “umbrella commitment” for it is the source from which all the other commitments flow. But how can we be certain that God is glorified in our church? Is there any definitive way of knowing what will bring God the greatest glory? The answers are found in our next commitment.

2. Maintaining the Centrality of Scripture

God has revealed Himself to us in His word. As the revelation of God, the God-breathed 66 books of the Bible serve as the singular source for answering the question “What is it that glorifies God?” The Scriptures serve as our only authoritative guide for arriving at the glory of God. This is why maintaining the centrality of Scripture is the next logical commitment. God’s glory is our destination, and God’s Word is our inerrant guide.

The Psalmist said in [Psalm 138:2](#), “you have exalted above all things your name and your word” (NIV). God has exalted above all things, not only His name, but His word as well. Does this mean that we are to worship the Bible as we worship God? No. But it does mean that God has given the Bible a special place and special significance over all things because it is the special revelation His name. If God has given His word such an exalted place the church should surely do the same.

Giving God’s word its rightful place is exactly what Paul had in mind when he told Timothy that the church is “the pillar and support of the truth” ([1 Timothy 3:15](#)). The church is to so lift up the Scriptures in the community so that they are clearly “on display” for all to see and hear. We are not to “hide it under a bushel” in the name of being “user friendly” or “culturally sensitive.” If God’s Word is not given its rightful place of importance within the church, then where on Earth will it?

As was said before, we do not simply want to have “Bible-based” ministries, and “Bible-based” preaching, but rather we want our ministries and our preaching to be Bible-saturated. That is, we want both the “what” and “how” of our ministries to come

from the bedrock of Scripture and not from the shifting sands of our own desires. It was this sure foundation of God's Word that Peter had in mind when he wrote in [1 Peter 1:24-25](#) that "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord endures forever.' And this is the word which was preached to you." We want to be like the wise man who built his house upon the rock ([Matthew 7:24-27](#)) by ensuring that God's Word remains central to who we are and to all that we do.

Maintaining the centrality of the Scriptures will ensure that we are doing God's work, God's way and therefore, that we are bringing God the glory He so rightly deserves. God has given us, in the pages of His Word, all the information we need in order to have a ministry that is pleasing to Him ([2 Peter 1:3](#)). We need no outside information, no supplemental techniques, no additional methods other than what is outlined for us in the pages of the Bible. God's Word is powerful and it is sufficient to both convict and convert. There is no method, no message, and no messenger that has more power or is more effective than the Word of God ([Luke 16:27-31](#)).

Giving the Scriptures such a central place also means that we value edification over entertainment. The church gathers in order to worship God according to the Scriptures and to grow in the knowledge of God as revealed in the Scriptures, and not merely to be entertained and amused. We do not want to draw a crowd of spectators who have come to have their fancies tickled, but rather we want to call together a congregation who has come to fully and actively participate in ascribing to God the glory due His name by giving His Word its rightful place of prominence.

Maintaining the Bible's central place will also mean that our preaching will be Scriptural preaching. While there is most certainly a place for good, solid, topical preaching, the regular pattern of our pulpit ministry will consist of the systematic, consecutive exposition of God's Word. Expository preaching (preaching that carefully unpacks and passionately explains the text of Scripture in a verse by verse, chapter by chapter method) is the surest way to guarantee that God's Word is central to our preaching and not just supplemental. Where the word of God is central, God is glorified. Where the Word of God is merely peripheral and supplemental, the glory ascribed to God is diminished. We want to faithfully follow Paul's exhortation to "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" ([2 Timothy 4:2](#)).

3. Exercising Prayerful Dependence

We believe that prayer is an essential element for an effective ministry. Without prayer, you may have a building, you may have a crowd, you may have a ministry, but no real work of God. We believe that prayer is the primary channel for the blessing of God ([Matthew 7:7](#); [John 14:13-14](#), [15:7](#); [James 4:2-3](#); [1 John 3:22](#), [5:14-15](#)). Every genuine revival that has come to Christ's church has always come as a response to the faithful, sustained prayers of God's people.

We believe that God answers prayer and that prayer is God's foreordained means for accomplishing His foreordained end. Thus, prayer is truly effective because God has determined it to be so. The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that we ought to be a praying people.

"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" ([Ephesians 6:18](#), emphasis mine)

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." ([Philippians 4:6](#), emphasis mine)

Paul was clear that we should be devoted to prayer. He rightly understood that the success of his ministry depended upon the faithful prayers of God's people.

"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned" ([Colossians 4:2-3](#), emphasis mine).

If we are to be all that God wants us to be, and do all that God wants us to do, then our ministry must be bathed in prayer. When we pray, we show our dependence upon God's power and our understanding of our own insufficiency for the task at hand.

4. Reproducing Reproducers

God's plan for His church includes evangelism and discipleship. We are to share the gospel with unbelievers, and continue to apply gospel truth to our lives. Christ did not tell us to simply "make converts" but rather "make disciples" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)). This involves not only sharing the gospel, but sharing all that Christ taught as well.

God's plan for growth in the church is a plan of multiplication. As each person hears and trusts in the gospel, they then share that same gospel message with others. As each person is discipled in the truth of God's Word, they in turn disciple someone else. Discipleship need not seem daunting. Discipleship is simply learning from someone who is farther along in the faith than you, and then teaching someone else what it is that you have learned.

"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. " ([2 Timothy 2:2](#))

We believe that biblical evangelism is primarily a function of the church "scattered" (i.e. "scattered" into the community throughout the week) and that the primary function of the church "gathered (i.e. "gathered" for worship) is discipleship and edification. This does not mean that evangelism does not take place on Sundays or that discipleship does not take place throughout the week. It does mean that we do not design our services for unbelievers in an effort to "draw them in" so that we can preach the gospel to them. Rather, in planning and conducting our corporate services, we seek to exalt God and edify the saints so that they will live lives transformed by the Word of God and which testify of the transforming power of the Gospel before a watching world.

We are committed therefore to "reproducing reproducers." We are committed to seeing "unbelieving people become committed followers of Christ" through biblical evangelism and the ongoing process of discipleship.

5. Following Godly Servant Leadership

God wants the church to have clearly defined leadership. His design was not to have a church in which everyone and yet no one had authority. He wants the church to have clearly defined, godly servant leadership.

The leaders that God wants are not the leaders the world produces. The world knows leadership primarily in terms of power and position. God wants His leaders to be known for humility, gentleness, deference, and service. This is the pattern that Christ Himself left for us ([John 13:12-17](#)).

“...whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” ([Matthew 20:27-28](#))

Further, God wants the church’s leaders to be godly. They are to be examples of the flock ([1 Peter 5:3](#)), blameless in their conduct ([1 Timothy 3:2](#)), and righteous in their behavior. The Bible is clear that those who are to lead the flock of God are to be men ([1 Timothy 2:12](#), [3:2](#)). The Scriptures call these leaders elders, pastors, and overseers. Each of these three key terms is used interchangeably in the Scriptures ([Acts 20:17](#), [28](#)) and all refer to the same office. The term “elder” refers to the individual’s spiritual maturity, “pastor” has reference to their shepherd’s heart, and “overseer” refers to their task of leading. The elders are to be godly, and this godliness is described in the lists of qualifications given in [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#), [Titus 1:5-9](#), and [1 Peter 5:1-3](#). Each and every one of these characteristics is a mandatory qualification for those who would lead Christ’s church. One chief reason why so many churches experience significant problems is because of unqualified leaders who are neither servants nor godly.

The Bible is also clear that these godly, servant leaders are to be followed.

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.” ([Hebrews 13:17](#))

We live in a society that teaches us to question authority, demand our rights, and achieve our own desires at all costs. This is in direct conflict with what God wants for His people. While Christ is ultimately the Head of the church, He administers His authority

through His Word which has clearly outlined that Godly men called elders are to lead ([1 Timothy 5:17](#)), oversee ([Acts 20:28](#)), shepherd ([1 Peter 5:2](#)), have charge over ([1 Thessalonians 5:13-14](#)), guard ([Acts 20:28](#)) and manage the affairs of ([1 Timothy 3:4-5](#)) the whole church. Therefore, we as a church are committed to following godly servant leadership.

6. Cultivating Biblical Relationships

At the moment of our salvation, we are placed into the body of Christ. As fellow members of the body of Christ, we also share a unity with one another ([John 17:22-23](#)). This spiritual, invisible unity is to show itself in the form of relational, visible unity. God wants us to not only to “get along,” but to proactively love one another sacrificially. This means we are to place the interests and concerns of others ahead of our own ([Philippians 2:3-5](#)).

We are committed, therefore, to cultivating biblical relationships. Whenever and wherever people come into contact with others, there will be conflict. The church is no different. Sometimes there will be situations in which we are wronged, or in which we wrong someone else. There will inevitably be differences of opinion, differences of approach, and even differences of belief. How are we to handle these wrongs and these differences? We must handle them biblically.

God’s word is clear that we are to “pursue peace with all men” ([Romans 12:18](#)), and “to do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of the faith” ([Galatians 6:10](#)). This means that we must always pursue reconciliation. When we have wronged someone, it is our responsibility to make it right by confessing our sin to God, confessing our sin to the person we have wronged, and seeking their forgiveness. When we have been wronged, it is our responsibility to go to the person who wronged us and, in a loving spirit, tell them how they have wronged us in a desire to have the relationship restored. We are committed to laying aside bitterness, anger, and resentment and putting on love, compassion, and forgiveness.

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” ([Ephesians 4:31-32](#))

When there is sin, we have a responsibility to prayerfully, lovingly, carefully, and humbly confront that sin ([Galatians 6:1](#)). Because we are committed to cultivating biblical relationships, we are also committed to the four step process of restoration found in [Matthew 18:15-20](#). This means that when we have a brother or sister in a pattern of persistent, unrepentant sin, we are committed to faithfully following the process of church discipline prescribed by Christ himself for the purity of the church and for the good of the individual ([1 Corinthians 5:5](#)).

7. Remembering Faithfulness Equals Success

How will we know when we have been a success? Is there anything by which we can gauge our success? The world judges success and failure largely by externals. The number of friends you have, the size of your house, the amount of money in your bank account, the age by which you can retire, the places you have traveled, the level of your influence, the position you have risen to, and so it goes. Sadly, many churches are seemingly using many of these same standards to judge their own success. How big is the budget, how many members, attendance figures, number of ministries, prominence and name recognition within the community, are all used as measurements of success. None of these things, in and of themselves, is wrong and certainly there is a place and time for examining each of these issues in the right way. But are they the secrets to our success?

The Bible teaches that success is not determined by numbers, budgets, or crowds. Success, according to Scripture, boils down to one single word. Faithfulness. God doesn't want our numbers, He isn't impressed with our marketing campaigns, and He is not awed by crowds. What God wants is faithfulness. Paul made this clear in [1 Corinthians 4:1-2](#),

“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.”

That word “trustworthy,” can also be translated “faithful.” Paul says we are to gauge our success according to our faithfulness to God and His Word. Faithfulness is what God wants from all of His “servants” and “stewards.” We long to hear our Lord and Master say “well done, good and faithful servant” ([Matthew 25:21](#)).

Joseph Stowell, has described faithful ministry as “living an undaunted ministry life that is regularly faithful to the tasks of ministry, regardless of whether the outcomes are spectacular, average, or seemingly few and far between.” This is, by God’s grace, what we seek to do. Our tendency as human beings is to always look at external, measurable, quantifiable, tangible gauges for determining value and success, but this is not God’s way ([1 Samuel 16:7](#)). We will need to remain vigilant to not appraise our success according to externals but according to the principles laid down in God’s word. As one faithful pastor has said, “we will ensure the depth of our ministry and let God take care of the breadth.”

8. Ensuring Excellence in all Things

We believe that God deserves our best. This means that we will endeavor to render service unto God in an excellent way. Paul understood this when he wrote,

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.” ([Colossians 3:23-24](#))

In whatever we do, we are to do our work with our whole hearts as unto the Lord rather than for men. In ensuring excellence in all things, we are not simply trying to achieve a “polished look” that will appeal to our modern sensibilities. We are seeking to render excellence in our service in order to give to God what He deserves; beauty, precision, value, hard work, preparation, sincerity, thoroughness, genuine care, etc. We should be distressed and concerned when we see second rate service, shabby maintenance, and mediocre ministry ([Malachi 1:8, 11-14](#)). God is a God of excellence and our service to Him should be par excellence. This of course brings us full circle to our first core commitment of “pursuing the glory of God”. As we intentionally pursue God’s glory we will also be seeking to ensure excellence in all things.

So we have seen what is our common mission, our common desire, and our common commitment. Only as we keep these unifying distinctives at the forefront of our minds will we be able to fully be what God wants us to be. May the Lord bless His church as we seek to worship Him with one voice, one heart, and one mind.