



## Where do I fit ?

### **Use your spiritual gifts**

The Church has often resembled a football match – everyone wants their team to win, but a small number of individuals play whilst the vast majority sit in the stands and look on. There are some who enjoy sitting in the stands and just watching the game...but there are others who long to be on the field playing, but who have never been picked! The good news is that Jesus created His team (the Church) so that we all get to play!

Paul used the metaphor of a body to describe how the Church works. Like a body, we all have different functions but together make one body – so the fact that somebody has one gift and somebody else has another doesn't mean that either is more important (if the body didn't have a little toe, it wouldn't be able to balance as easily). All of us are equally important and without any one of us, the body would be weaker. So a healthy body is one where every part is doing its job.

At Hope Church, we believe that every member should be in ministry – that is, that every believer is gifted by God to serve others and be a blessing. We all have at least one spiritual gift [spiritual gifts are God-given abilities and talents that we can use to build one-another up in the things of God]. The motive for using these gifts should always be love.

God won't share His glory with anyone, so there is no room in Hope Church for spiritual superstars. Spiritual gifts are given freely by God, and aren't necessarily a reflection of our spirituality (character and gifting are two separate things) so we have no reason to become proud and feel superior to anyone else. In *humility* we use the gifts God has given us to serve others, demonstrating God's love and bringing Him glory!

If you aren't sure what your spiritual gifts are, please download the 'Spiritual Gifts Inventory' from the church website. Once you begin to get an idea what gifts you might have, look for opportunities to start using them. Just like our muscles, our gifts grow in strength as they are exercised. A great way to begin using your gifts is by joining a Life Group and looking for opportunities to serve others in a safe and supportive environment.

## **Be a missionary wherever you are**

J. John loves to say that 'a missionary is not someone who crosses the sea, but someone who sees the cross'! In other words, every believer is part of the mission to see the lost saved, the needy helped and the hurting healed. Not all of us are evangelists, but all of us can show love through our words and actions; all of us have a story to tell of what God has done in our lives; all of us should be able to communicate the message of forgiveness and new life in Jesus.

We want to encourage the Hope Church family to think of themselves as missionaries wherever they are. There is no sacred/secular divide where church stuff is sacred and other stuff is secular – whatever you do because you love the Lord becomes sacred. So your workplace, your street, your family, your friendship groups are places where you can worship God by living-out your faith and building relationships. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He was deliberate about loving people and sharing His message of forgiveness and hope. That is our job too! In order to do that, we need to be where non-church people are and be deliberate about building relationships. We might so that be joining a football team, hanging out with parents from our children's school, offering to do shopping for an elderly neighbour, having a barbeque for people in our street, offering to help a colleague who is under pressure at work. The opportunities at limitless and non-church people are everywhere! We just need to make the first move and watch as God opens doors for the Gospel.

We don't want to be a church where people are so tied-up attending Christian meetings that they have no time to build relationships with non-church friends and family. We would encourage you to go out of your way to spend a good proportion of your time investing in such relationships. Pray for opportunities. Be normal! Have fun!!

## **Join a Life Group**

In Acts, the Jerusalem church met in the temple courts (corporate gatherings) but also met in each others homes for fellowship and encouragement. Our whole church meets together for worship on Sundays, but we also encourage everyone to be part of a group that meets in somebody's home during the week. We call these 'Life Groups' and, as the name suggests, this is where we hope to see 'life' happening – expressing real community and growing in the things of God. These groups are an opportunity for people to get connected and experience being part of the Hope family. They are a safe place to use our spiritual gifts and show love to each other in practical ways. Life Groups usually include prayer, worship, sharing our stories and learning together from God's Word.

There are currently three Life Groups that meet on the Oakley Vale estate - two meet on a Thursday evening and one meets on a Wednesday evening. Shortly, we are hoping to have a daytime group for those who find it difficult to go out in the evening.

## **Form a prayer triplet**

Everyone is on a journey with the Lord and we all need people to draw alongside us to help us on the way. The Lord is in the business of 'making disciples' and every believer is called to be a disciple (follower/learner) of Jesus. One of the best ways to grow as a disciple is to meet together with one or two others to pray to be accountable and to encourage one-another. So why not think about who you can meet with and then take a real interest in each-other's spiritual progress. As a starting point for discussion, there are some accountability questions that can be downloaded from the church website.

# Become a Church Partner

Paul talked about being 'partners' in the gospel. Some churches use the term 'membership' to talk about covenanting with a local church. Instead of the term 'membership,' we use the term 'partnership'. We feel this more closely communicates the heart of being part of a local church – i.e. a community 'on mission'!

Partnership does not create a two-tier church of those 'in' and those 'out'. It is simply an opportunity to covenant with the Hope Church family. For those who are not Partners, they will still be able to play a full and active role in the life of the church. The only thing they will not be able to do is to be on the Leadership Team, oversee an area of ministry or vote at our church meetings.

In order to become a Partner with Hope Church, we would expect you to align yourself with the vision and values of the church, be accountable to the leadership of the church and be determined to sow your time, talents and resources into the life of the church. If you would like to become a Church Partner, please fill in the Partnership Form below and hand it to Damian or Trish. These will then be brought to a Leadership Team meeting and a date will be set to receive people into Partnership during one of our Sunday gatherings.

# Church Partnership

Application Form



Having been born again by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, I would like to be recognised as a Partner of Hope Church.

I understand that Partnership involves a commitment to:

- **loving the Lord** (actively following Jesus)
- **loving His church** (actively serving my Christian brothers and sisters)
- **loving His world** (actively reaching-out to those who aren't yet Christians)

I also understand that Partnership involves being accountable to the church leadership and aligning myself with the vision and values of Hope Church.

**NAME:** .....

**EMAIL:** ..... **TEL:** .....

**ADDRESS:** .....

.....

**DATE:** ..... **SIGNED:** .....

When completed, please return to Trish Jakes (Church Administrator).