

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH LORTON

There is One Body (part one)

Various Scriptures in Ephesians

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The Grace Bible Church Elder Team has proposed revisions and additions to the Church Covenant. This week and next, we will look at passages in the New Testament to see the biblical basis for this proposal. This morning we'll focus, in particular, on the book of Ephesians and God's design for His church.

Covenants typically have two main elements:

A statement on the basis for the covenant, often known as the preamble, and
A series of commitments or pledges being made as a result of that preamble.

The model is similar to the biblical model of indicatives (statements of fact) that serve as the basis for imperatives (statements of command and/or instruction).

The proposed GBC covenant adds a number of "We will" statements. The validity of those statements rests on the underlying statements that are made in the preamble about what we believe concerning the local church.

God saves individual sinners and joins them to the church, which is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1).

From the GBC Covenant:

"Believing that the Church of Jesus Christ is the very Household of God on earth; and Believing that Jesus Christ is the Foundation and Chief Cornerstone and Master Builder of His Church."

Ephesians 2:11-22 explains how God's saving work moves people from a state of alienation and isolation to a gracious place in the household of God (the church).

Local churches are God's instrument to declare the greatness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations, and that brings glory to Him.

We have been saved as individual believers in Jesus, so that we can be part of Christ's body where we serve one another by His grace and in His love.

From the proposed GBC Covenant:

We do now, before God and through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, willingly and joyfully enter into covenant with other covenant members of this local church, Grace Bible Church of Lorton:

We are called to grow in our commitment to and passion for the local church because that was:

Designed by God (Ephesians 4:11-16)

Questions to Consider

1. Have you read the current GBC covenant and the proposed covenant? If not, please take time to do so this week.
2. There is a recurring idea throughout Ephesians 1:3-14 that explains the overarching purpose behind God's plan to save a people for Himself. What is that purpose and why is it important?
3. Ephesians 1:22 is the first place in this letter that Paul uses a specific analogy to describe the church. What is the analogy and in what ways does it describe Christ's church?
4. Read Ephesians 2:19-22. What's one of the fundamental changes that happens for a person who trusts in Christ? In other words, he or she goes from what previous condition as unsaved (cf. also 2:11-14) to what new state as a believer?
5. According to Ephesians 3:10, who witnesses the wisdom of God through His church (cf. Ephesians 6:12)? How would this promise of Ephesians 3:10 have been an encouragement to the believers in Ephesus?
6. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What are good works? In what ways does a local church provide the ideal setting for believers to learn about and do good works?
7. In the GBC Covenant, what is the importance of the phrase "through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit"?
8. How does Ephesians 4:11-16 explain God's design of local churches?