



Hilltop Urban Church

Membership: Being a Disciple

God has changed me:

- **from life being about me to it being about Him.**
- **from life being about me to being about our life together in Christ.**

2 Cor. 5:15 Christ died for everyone. He died so that those who live should not live for themselves anymore. They should live for Christ. He died for them and was raised again.

Disciple is our word for people who have been changed like that. Disciples have made the life-turning, die to self, decision to make Jesus their Master -- and so have entered into the shared life of Jesus' body.

It's not about me, it's about us and it's about our lives **bringing honor to the One who loves us.**

- Daily we surrender our lives to Jesus because we love and trust Him:

Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

- Because we love each other, we care and share all we have with one another:

1John 1:3 We are telling you what we have seen and heard, so that you may *share in this life with us*. And we share in it with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

(Disciples are the voting membership of the church, for legal purposes. But that's not why we become Disciples. We are disciples because He has saved us and we want to honor Him!)

We commit to one another:

1. We will be a wholehearted member **of a house church or other small "honest" community group**¹ such as a triad, and share our life together. In fact, that needs to be true before making a public commitment to be known as a **Disciple**.
2. A house church shepherd or group leader will know us **personally** before we become a Disciple.
3. We have in our heart an honest desire and commitment to **live in a way that brings honor to Jesus**. That doesn't mean we won't sin or waver, but with God's help, we'll get back up. And we won't stay in our sins.
4. We will confess, **admit** where we have struggles in keeping our commitment to Jesus. We give our body **permission** to bring up areas of sin that we might not see. This isn't to judge us, but to help us face our junk, for Jesus' sake and honor.
5. Our house church shepherds or triad partners should be able to **observe in us fruit that indicates a genuine turning from self to God**. *(That is not defined - it is a matter of heart and is different for each person. But Jesus clearly teaches that such fruit can be observed.)* If that fruit seems lacking, our leader will prayerfully bring it up to us with Biblical references and explore the issue with us. Gently, please!

Baptism: If we have never been baptized as a believer, **we are strongly encouraged to do so**, publicly identifying ourselves as Jesus' Disciple and wanting to honor Jesus by our life. It is an obvious and natural time for us to do so, as baptism signifies the process of dying to self, living to God, and being incorporated into Jesus' body. Jesus commanded it. So we obey.

¹ Honest group: a small face to face group with open heart level sharing, regular confession of sin, confidentiality, prayer for one another - a place of "open heart surgery" where life transformation is taking place.

Disciple Commitment

Having turned from my brokenness and self to God and His Kingdom, having experienced God's Grace, having trusted Jesus Christ as my King and Savior, and having entered into the life of His family at Hilltop Urban Church, I believe God wants me to publicly commit myself to Jesus and his body at Hilltop:

With the Lord's help, I commit to:

1. Surrendering my life and will to Jesus Christ, living for Him, not myself.
2. Be honest with myself, God, and others in our body about the state of my heart and soul and humbly ask God to work inside me that I might become like Jesus. I invite others who know and care about me to support, guide, and even correct me.
3. Remain a committed part of this family of God in a house church or other such honest group². I will share my life with them, serving, giving, helping, and laughing together. I will be honest about my struggles and work to build trusting, loving, and honest relationships with other members and work through conflicts and differences.
4. Do my part, using my gifts to help the body grow in love.
5. Live out together in our community the Three Loves: Loving God, loving one another, and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Bylaw regarding membership, showing steps:

I.C. Steps to Admission to Membership, termed a *Disciple*

1. Identify themselves as wanting to be a *Disciple* at Hilltop Urban Church.
2. Be a regular part of a house church or other small honest group such as a triad.
3. Go through a face to face oral explanation ("*orientation*") about the church - it's calling, "DNA," & mission - and what is involved in being a *Disciple*.
4. Give a clear testimony of brokenness, repentance, surrender, and faith in Christ with one or two leaders who know them personally - one being their shepherd or group leader. The shepherd/group leader will talk with the potential *Disciple*, asking them to honestly confess the challenges they are facing in living as a *Disciple* and honoring Jesus, and what steps they are taking to strengthen their life with God and His community. That leader should have seen evidence in their life of the "fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins." (Mt 3:8)
5. After understanding what it means to be a *Disciple*, commit to the ***Disciple Commitment*** by signing the *Disciple* application.
6. The Elder Board (*or Shepherd Team*) approves applicant as a *Disciple* after the leader(s) from step two give witness to the fruit they have observed in the applicant's life.
7. Attend a ceremony presenting, celebrating, and welcoming them as *Disciples* in their public commitment to live for Jesus as a part of our body. Their baptism, if appropriate, will be a part of this ceremony.

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