

Foundational Words of Living Hope Fellowship

*The Basics of Who We Are
& Why We Do What We Do*

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Introduction

We Are A Family...

*L*iving Hope Fellowship began with the dream of a Church functioning as a **family!** There is no other word that describes our hope of experience together than the word family. We understand our Heavenly Father is the head of our family and we seek to honor Him in all we do.

Our purpose is to provide a family experience in Christ aimed at welcoming new believers and helping all believers who come to mature in Jesus Christ!

Because of the country we live in, our "Church Family" must be registered with our government in order to receive 501c3 tax exemption. Because of our founding pastor's long relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention we constituted and registered our fellowship through the Southern Baptist Convention. We do want it to be understood, however, that we function in a non-denominational way, seeking to follow only our Lord not a denomination. Because family is the primary word that describes how we function our structure is set up to reflect a **family**. Our intention is to downplay our differences and promote our unity. We are an Elder led Church, meaning that our Elders are the Spiritual Overseers and the governing body of our fellowship. Decisions are made by the Elder Body and the delegated leadership teams of the fellowship. We believe this promotes our unity.

We are not a voting Church. Just as most unified families are not "voting" families.

Voting tends to create conflict. At LHF we "vote" on nothing. However, the Elders and Leadership Teams pray about everything. We seek the insight from everyone, both individually and through corporate family meetings.

When there is unity, we move forward as a family. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

What Does It Mean For A Church to Function As A Family?

Family starts with a lifetime covenant commitment. We believe that those who choose to become "partners" in the family of LHF should do so with an intention to live life together. At LHF we want to promote the concept of living the Christian life together.

Over the years we will know one another, we will build deep relationships, and we will know how to minister to each other because we know each other. Family is a place to grow together, learn and fulfill responsibilities together, respect one another, maintain relationships together and invest our lives in one another. We welcome all committed followers of Jesus Christ to become “partners” in the goal of living life as family in the Living Hope Fellowship.

Foundational Words We Live By

At LHF we believe that a good foundation is the key to building a wholesome family life together. The following six foundational words are building blocks for us as a fellowship...

- *Liberty*
- *Love*
- *Growth*
- *Service*
- *Relationship*
- *Faithfulness*

This document serves to outline and explain how these six words guide Living Hope Fellowship as we engage with one another in a covenant family relationship. Each word is carefully submitted in light of Scriptural exhortation to the church to engage with one another to pursue unity in the bond of peace.

Foundational Words of Living Hope

1. Liberty

Liberty from the bondage of Sin.

God does not want His creation to be controlled by anything or anyone other than Himself.

Sin is the most powerful opponent of liberty.

The reality is that all have sinned and are being controlled by its power. Romans 3:23

The greatest work of God on behalf of mankind is to provide liberty from our sin through Jesus Christ. Romans 5:8

Liberation from sin happens when a person...

1. Acknowledges their own bondage to sin.

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23)

2. Personally Trusts in God's provision for liberty.

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8)

3. Submits to Jesus as the Lord (boss) of their life.

“Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (From the penalty of sin which separates us from God) (Acts 4:12)

Acknowledgement and Submission are the key points. If you have never acknowledged you need for forgiveness from sin and your need to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, I invite you to do so right now! Stop what you are doing and pray!

Liberty Over Legalism

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1

When the Israelites were freed and met God at Mount Sinai, they received guidelines from God on how to live with Him that were aimed at them coming to understand their need for His deliverance in their lives. They eventually saw their way of life as a superior lifestyle compared to the world and began to live in condemnation of others and even each other when someone would fall short of the plan. They were proud in their flesh and missed the point of their need of a Redeemer. This is what Paul is referring to when he says;

"You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion is not from him who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole lump. ¹⁰ I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. ¹¹ But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. ¹² I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!" Galatians 5:7-12

1. In the essential beliefs - we have unity!

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:4-6)

2. In the non - essentials - we have liberty!

"Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions." (Romans 14:1)

"Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand." (Romans 14:4)

"So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)

“The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.” (Romans 14:22)

3. In all our beliefs - we show love!

“And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:2)

Liberty, Not Universalism

Even though Liberty frees us from Sin and its inadequacy, it is not a ticket for anything goes or universalism.

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)

1. All of the Bible is the inspired Word of God, without error.

“All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, Rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

See Also 2 Peter 1:20-21; Revelation 22:19.

2. There is one true living God, as represented in the Trinity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

- 2.1. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the one true living God and is the Creator of all things and reveals Himself as **Father**. (See Exodus 3:6 & 14-15.)

“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.’” (Matthew 6:9)

God created all things. (See Genesis 1:1; John 1:3.)

- 2.2. Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), the **Son of God**, the salvation of the world; by His death He paid the price for the sins of all people and by His physical resurrection He provided the hope of eternal and abundant life.

“. . . without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Hebrews 9:22)

Jesus is the Word that became flesh. (see John 1:1-14)

Jesus was born of a virgin. (see Luke 1:34-37)

Jesus was tempted like we are, but was without sin. (see Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 2:22.)

Jesus is the Savior, sent by God. (see 1 John 4:14; John 3:16, 11:25-26)

In fulfillment of prophecy and God's plan, Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. (see Matthew 27:50, 28:6-7; Mark 15:37, 16:6-7; Luke 23:46, 24:6-7; John 19:30; 20:13-14)

Jesus has commissioned His followers to share the Gospel. (see Matthew 28:19-20)

2.3. God sent His **Holy Spirit**, who resides in the hearts of God's people.

God sent the Holy Spirit to be a help and comfort to believers. (see Acts 1:5, 8; John 14:16-17)

God's Spirit resides in the believer's heart. (see 2 Corinthians 1:22)

The Spirit helps the believer. (see Romans 8:26-27)

3. All people have sinned and require the redemption of God from sin, provided through Jesus Christ alone, God's Son, in order to inherit the promise of His Holy Spirit.

(see Romans 3:23; 6:23; John 14:6)

4. Salvation is received by faith through grace, and not by the works of man.

It is faith, not works, which is counted as righteousness. (see Romans 4:2-3 & 5)

Salvation comes by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, not by works. (see Ephesians 2:8-9)

"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." (Romans 10:9-10)

5. God has set apart His believers as a royal priesthood, for whom no other intercessor is needed besides Jesus.

God has made His people into a holy priesthood, whose spiritual sacrifices are made acceptable to God through Jesus. (see 1 Peter 2:5 & 9)

Jesus is our intercessor with God, and no other intercessor is necessary. (see Hebrews 10:19-22)

6. Jesus will return again to establish His kingdom.

(see Revelation: Chapters 19, 20 & 21)

Foundational Words of Living Hope

2. Love

– We are called to live a life of LOVE! –

To know God is to know God is love.

*“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He **loved us**, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made **us** alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),” (Ephesians 2:4)*

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God. (Ephesians 3:14-19)

The Nature of God’s Love

What kind of love is the love of God and how does He show it?

1. It is a Fathers' Love.

We understand the “Fatherhood of God” under the idea of God’s love for us.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” (1 John 3:1)

2. It is a love shown through the sacrifice of Jesus.

God’s demonstration of love:

“By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:9-10)

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

The Power of God’s Love

The love of God is powerful. It is the most powerful love in creation.

1. His love covers a multitude of sins

“Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)

2. His Love constrains us

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:” (2 Corinthians 5:14)

3. His love has been for all time and will be for all time

“Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24)

4. His love transforms us

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (1 John 3:1)

5. His love motivates us

The kindness of God leads us to repent of sin

“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4)

We are motivated to serve and love others because of the love of God placed in us.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (John 13:34)

We love because he first loved us

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)

When a person understands how much they need forgiveness then they love more.

"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." (Luke 7:47)

Returning Love to God

Consider a couple questions... Can you receive the love of God? or Are you allowing others to hinder you from receiving the Love of God?

1. Walking in love with God and man is at the core of the purpose for which we were created.

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. These are known as the greatest of the commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40)

Is it really possible to love God without loving Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?

2. Your love is what God has always desired!

"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul," (Deuteronomy 10:12)

3. To love God produces life!

"And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." (Deuteronomy 30:6)

4. To love God means to obey His commandments

There is this crazy idea today that you can love God yet not obey His commandments. This is simply not true.

Jesus said if you love Him, you cannot avoid keeping His commandments.

"If you love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

Showing Love To Others

Being loved by God and loving Him in return should spill over into how we treat and love others...

1. Your love for God is confirmed by your love for man.

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20)

2. Our love for man is not contingent on their kindness to us.

“Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.” (Luke 6:28)

3. Love is a sign of spiritual growth and maturity.

“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.” (1 John 2:10)

Think of some things that reveal your love for man!

4. Our love reveals that we belong to Christ.

*“By this shall all men **know** that ye are my disciples, if ye have **love** one to another.” (John 13:35)*

Foundational Words of Living Hope

3. Growth

Our lives must be lived with a commitment to Spiritual Growth

“...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18)

Spiritual Growth can be measured by three things:

1. *The fullness of the Spirit*
2. *Study of the Word*
3. *A commitment to obedience*
- 4.

The Fullness of The Spirit

... Fullness – What is it?

1. Living in the fullness of the Spirit is living under the control of the Holy Spirit!

“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.” (Galatians 5:13–18)

2. When there is fullness there is Boldness

“And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:31)

3. When there is fullness there is Spiritual understanding

“But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him,” (Acts 13:9)

... Fullness – Who has it?

1. Only the Children of the Father can have the fullness of His Spirit

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Luke 11:13)

2. Those who are full of the Spirit demonstrate it by the fruit of the Spirit

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:19–23)

... Fullness – How do you get it?

1. You are reborn with it!

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

2. You must desire it!

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,” (Ephesians 5:18)

3. There must be a commitment to walk under Spirit control and crucify the flesh!

“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (Galatians 5:24)

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,” (Ephesians 5:15)

We must be careful that we do not grieve, quench or resist the Holy Spirit of God!

4. There must be Constant surrender for re-filling!

*“And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”
(Acts 13:52)*

5. There must be a request!

*“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”
(Luke 11:13)*

Study of the Word

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)

The primary work of Holy Spirit is to teach you and ground you in the Words of God.

A Commitment to Obedience

“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” John 15:10

“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.” 1 Corinthians 7:19

*“By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴
The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;” 1 John 2:3*

“The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.” 1 John 3:24

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” 1 John 5:3

Maturity is the goal

*“until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”
(Ephesians 4:13)*

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10)

Foundational Words of Living Hope

4. Service

We are called to live for the sake of others...

“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 20:28)

At the moment that you became a follower of Jesus, you were given a gift by the Holy Spirit to be used in the Body of Christ, for the good of the entire Body...

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.” (1 Corinthians 12:4)

“Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Keep in mind we are a family. We are not a business, therefore we are limited in our ability to enforce fulfillment of responsibilities.

Every person in the Body is good at something!

“For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.” (1 Corinthians 12:14-18)

Find your passion! Some things we need to all do together. Many times we need to simply fulfill the gifting and passion placed in us!

Every Task is important!

“But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these

we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.” (1 Corinthians 12:20-25)

All should be done to God’s glory...

*“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
(1 Corinthians 10:31)*

When you keep in mind who you are truly serving you will be able to find joy in the most menial task!

"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' (Matthew 25:40)

Every partner is a servant minister

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10)

*“For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”
(James 2:26)*

Ministry is an act of love

*"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
(John 1*

Foundational Words of Living Hope

5. Relationship

– “No man is an island...” –

One of the most common mistakes in the Christian life is that believers try to go it on their own.

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:19–22, NASB95)

God has revealed Himself through the relationship between the representations of Himself in the Trinity. The Father seeks to Make Himself known as Spirit who seeks to call all to the Son who then seeks to bring Glory to the Father. The constant revelation is one of blessing and honoring the other. That is God's goal for us in relationship to one another.

The second most common mistake in Christian relationships is that of walking only with those who are exactly like ourselves.

Our first Relationships in life are formed in the context of family.

Family is made of many different individuals. That is a good thing!

“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where

would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Corinthians 12:12–26)

The bonds we form in family strengthen us to function in the world with success. Those in life with a handicap in family life, struggle much more than those with a healthy family life. Healthy family life creates an atmosphere of unconditional love.

God uses the Church family to nurture His Children.

Christians are part of a family we call the Church.

"I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father." (1 John 2:13)

"Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers," (1 Timothy 5:1)

A Christian without a Church family is a contradiction.

Close relationship with Committed Christians in the Church family facilitates maturity.

When we are with those we are close to, we tend to reveal more of who we are. When this happens we expose the strengths and weaknesses of our character...

- ... We become more transparent
- ... We can be "ourselves"
- ... Those we learn to trust can see us and help us mature.

An unwillingness to develop closer relationships with other Christians reveals a measure of insecurity or arrogance. Look again at 1 Corinthians 12:12-24.

The best way to develop closer relationships with other committed Christians is through small groups and time together. This is a principle of life. (*ie. bowling, hobby groups, sporting groups*). You can develop bad relationships the same way with non-Christians.

Getting together with other committed believers in small group settings will facilitate spiritual growth!

Relationships are not intended for your benefit only.

Many avoid Church family and small groups under the comment "I don't need it". This is a very selfish statement. You may think you don't need others to mature in faith (if so you are arrogantly deceived) even so others need you to mature. What has happened in your experience with God is used by God to bless and mature others in His family.

... Others need you!

... I need you!

"Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved." (Acts 2:46–47)

Remember, "No Man is an Island!" Consider becoming a part of a small group. Small groups are the best way to develop close relationships with those within the church fellowship.

Foundational Words of Living Hope

6. Faithfulness

Faithfulness is a kingdom principle. It is the way God functions and it is the way God calls us to function. Being faithful carries with it the ideas of stewardship, responsibility and the opportunity to inherit blessings that come to the faithful.

The concept of faithfulness is addressed over 100 times in the Bible. **Matthew 24:45-51 and Matthew 25:14-33** are a couple of passages that cover a lot of territory.

... End Times

... Who really is a servant (sheep and goats)

... The demise of unfaithful servants

... The expectations of God on His servants

“Who then is the faithful and sensible servant whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? “Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. “Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. “But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 24:45–51)

“Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. “For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. “To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. “Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. “In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. “But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. “Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts

with them. “The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’ “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ “Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ “And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. ‘And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’ “But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. ‘Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. ‘Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ “For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. “Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. “All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.” (Matthew 25:13–33)

The overall concept of these passages is **faithfulness!**

Faithfulness is a word used to define who God is.

““Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;” (Deuteronomy 7:9)

“God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:9)

“Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.” (1 Thessalonians 5:24)

“But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” (2 Thessalonians 3:3, NASB95)

The Greek word, “*pistos*,” defines faithful persons as those who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties.

God blesses the faithful one...

“My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me.” (Psalm 101:6)

The normal outflow of the Child of God should be a life of faithfulness with all God has invested in them.

Throughout the New Testament, commendable servants of God are repeatedly referred to as faithful or “the faithful”. Jesus spends a lot of time talking about faithfulness in the gospels. God is obviously interested in faithfulness.

“Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. ‘Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ ‘For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. ‘Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 25:27–30)

1. The issue here is faithfulness with stewardship.

Financial stewardship in the Bible is illustrated by the tithe...

- ... Tithing is giving 10% of the 'first fruits'
- ... Tithing requires faith
- ... Faithfulness in giving is ALWAYS Blessed

2. Jesus clearly calls His Church to faithfulness.

“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.’ (Revelation 2:8–11)

3. We should invest in those who are faithful!

“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)

This is why we regularly support native missionaries in South Africa (Koos Basson) and India (Sudnyan Bansod), along with other faithful missionaries around the globe.

Faithfulness begets opportunities for faithfulness.

Faithfulness is rewarded in the scriptures...

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’” (Matthew 25:23)

“And the Lord said, ‘Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? ‘Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. ‘Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.’” (Luke 12:42–44)

“A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished.” (Proverbs 28:20, NASB95)

“O love the LORD, all you His godly ones! The LORD preserves the faithful And fully recompenses the proud doer.” (Psalm 31:23)

Faithfulness is not about how much you have but what you do with what you do have.

“After looking around at them all, He said to him, ‘Stretch out your hand!’ And he did so; and his hand was restored. But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.” (Luke 6:10–11)

It seems that our Lord understands that faithfulness shows up best in how we handle our resources! What about faithfulness with your life? Have you committed it to Christ?

Conclusion

Though we are aware there are many other areas of truth that our Lord calls us to walk in, we believe if we live together at LHF by the principles of our Foundational Words;

- ***Liberty***
- ***Love***
- ***Growth***
- ***Service***
- ***Relationship***
- ***Faithfulness***

We will be able to walk in unity and fulfill the will of God among us!

May God bless you as you walk with us!