



# Ministry Distinctives of Grace Bible Fellowship of Silicon Valley

## Preface

Every church is known for something. Each local fellowship has a reputation. In New Testament times, the church of Ephesus was known for sound doctrine. Smyrna was known for suffering. Corinth was known for spiritual gifts. Laodicea was known for compromise.

Today, churches are known for being “purpose-driven,” “seeker-sensitive,” “emerging,” “personality-driven,” “felt-needs-driven,” “consumer-driven,” “program-driven,” “contemporary,” or “traditional.” Other examples abound.

What a church is known for is determined by its **distinctives**. The distinctives of a church include the sum total of its theology, philosophy of ministry, methodology and purpose of existence. Distinctives are usually distilled down into “core values” and are the talking points that characterize a church.

Grace Bible Fellowship (GBF) values the Bible as the inerrant, sufficient, authoritative, perspicuous, relevant, living Word of God. We are committed to letting the Bible determine what our distinctives should be. As a result, we are committed to doing biblical ministry, because we make a priority of what God wants us to do, not what man wants us to do. GBF wants to be known for doing the “ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4). That means we are fixed on being “biblically- driven.” We want the Bible to guide every area of ministry.

Following are twenty of our key ministry distinctives. These distinctives result from basic mandates that God has issued to the Church as found in Scripture.

- **God-Centered—God’s Glory Comes before all Human Agendas**  
*“seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33)*
- **Biblically-Driven—All Ministry Flows from Scriptural Mandates**  
*“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*  
*“do not exceed what is written” (1 Corinthians 4:6)*
- **People-Focused—Relationships Come before Programs and Facilities**  
*“love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39)*
- **Expository Teaching and Preaching**  
*“preach the Word” (2 Timothy 4:2)*
- **Continual Corporate and Personal Prayer**  
*“pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)*
- **Maintain Balanced Ministry Priorities:**
  - **First, Exaltation (Worship)—toward God**
  - **Next, Edification (Word)—toward the saints**
  - **Then, Evangelization (Witness)—toward the world**

*“And Jesus said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND’” (Matthew 22:37)*

- **Nurture of the Whole Family & the Whole Person**  
*“We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ” (Colossians 1:28)*
- **Every Believer Discipled**  
*“make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19)*
- **Biblical Counseling**  
*“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another” (Colossians 3:16)*
- **Every Member Accountable to the Body**  
*“let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds...encouraging one another” (Hebrews 10:24-25)*
- **Every Believer Equipped and Contributing**  
*“He gave...pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12)*
- **Elder Shepherding—Called and Qualified Servant-Leaders**  
*“An overseer, then, must be above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:2)*
- **Biblical Church Discipline**  
*“Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him, if he repents, forgive him” (Luke 17:3)*
- **Partnership Ministry with Other Biblical Churches**  
*“Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you” (2 Corinthians 8:24)*
- **Every Sheep Matters and is Highly Significant**  
*“Shepherd the flock of God among you...those allotted to your care” (1 Peter 5:2-3)*
- **Biblical Hospitality**  
*“My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism” (James 2:1)*
- **Small Group Ministry**  
*“I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teaching you...from house to house” (Acts 20:20)*
- **Globally Minded**  
*“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15)*
- **A Sense of Urgency as God’s Stewards**  
*“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16)*
- **Pursuing Excellence in All Ministry**  
*“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31)*