Belong



HEALING
GROUPS
SERVING
PARTNER

PARTNERING WITH GOD'S PEOPLE

GLOBAL CHURCH

The "Church" is God's family of practicing believers around the world. Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did you find out about Petra Church?
2. Do you have any experience with churches in the past? If so, what is one thing you've appreciated about a church you used to attend?

WHY THE LOCAL CHURCH MATTERS?



LOCAL CHURCH

The "local" church is a community of Jesus followers who gather together regularly and are committed to walking out their faith in relationship and common mission. God's design is for every believer in Jesus to be a participant in a local church family where they do these three things:

- worship together
- build each other up to maturity (using truth and grace)
- use their collective resources to complete Jesus' mission

Local church communities are the environment where our theology is practiced in relationships. In committed relationships, we must learn how to defer to one another, worship in unity, repent, love, forgive, protect, serve, and sacrifice for the wellbeing of others.

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.
EPHESIANS 4:15–16

PETRA CHURCH

MISSION

We are empowered to bring Jesus' love, healing, and hope to the world!

PETRA CHURCH BEGINNINGS:

Petra Church began as a church plant in 1983 by founding pastor Lester Zimmerman. It was sent out by Hopewell Elverson Church of Anabaptist background but influenced by the charismatic renewals.

Resource: A Barn for the Harvest

HOPEWELL NETWORK:

The network consists of about seventeen churches stateside and ten international networks in Kenya, Haiti, Mexico, India, Thailand, Ghana, Uganda, Costa Rica, and Dominican Republic, plus one partner network in Mexico. The network also partners with numerous ministries to advance the gospel.

hopewellnetwork.org/us-churches

PETRA CHURCH CORE VALUES

These are the non-negotiable priorities that drive everything we do here at Petra Church. We are passionate about these seven values!

1. **FATHER HEART OF GOD**

   We love seeing people awaken to the fatherly love of God. God, the infinite creator, and perfect judge, loves each one of His children uniquely. This revelation of His goodness helps us relate to His healing, affection, and friendship as well as His instruction, protection, and government.

2. **DEVOTION TO JESUS**

   We're passionate about every person encountering Jesus and experiencing personal salvation and relationship in Him. Our goal is for everyone to follow Him, grow in Him, love like Him, serve like Him, and lead like Him.

3. **EMPOWERMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

   We want to abide in the Holy Spirit and participate in His ongoing ministry, gifts, and power to grow as Jesus' disciples and complete the mission He entrusted to us.

4. **COMMITMENT TO SCRIPTURE, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER**

   We prioritize the authority of God's Word in our lives and cultivating habits of worship and prayer, both personally and in communal gatherings. These are essential to our connecting to God's presence and Lordship.

5. **LIVING IN COMMUNITY**

   We express loving relationships as a church family by connecting, caring, serving, growing, and leading in healthy groups and teams.

6. **HEALING AND FREEDOM**

   We are devoted to developing a culture of compassion and healing. Freedom comes through God's gracious love and redemptive truths, and through loving and committed relationships. These are essential ingredients to the restoration of our lives, families, and communities.

7. **SHARING JESUS AND SERVING OTHERS**

   We are committed to sharing Jesus' love, healing, and hope through personal relationships and intentional outreach locally and globally. We build God's Kingdom through practical and spiritual gifts to meet needs and serve others.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you appreciate about Petra Church?
2. What interests you about participating in Petra Church's mission?

PETRA PRACTICES

Here are some ways we may do things differently than other churches.

1. **PERSONAL SALVATION**

   We believe everyone needs to experience their own personal salvation and relationship with Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:11; Matthew 16:16–18

   Other churches may believe that being born a Christian, or born into a Christian family, or believing that "going to church" is what makes us Christian.

2. **BELIEVERS' BAPTISM**

   We believe every believer is baptized into God's global family based on their own confession of relationship with Jesus Christ. Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19

   Other churches may believe in being baptized as a child or equating baptism into God's global family with a commitment to their church through membership.

3. **EVERYONE IS A MINISTER**

   We believe that God equips every believer in the community to be a minister of His love, grace, and truth. 1 Peter 2:5–9; 2 Corinthians 3:6

   Other churches may believe that only clergy can do ministry work.

4. **A TRANSFORMED LIFESTYLE**

   We believe every believer is trusting in God's grace while daily being conformed to Jesus' perfect love and truth. Acts 2:42–47; Matt. 16:24–25

   Other churches may believe in relying on creeds, communion, or ideology to affirm "right standing" with God.

5. **BIBLICAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

   We believe New Testament leaders operated within a team of elders who collectively discerned God's vision, strategy, and wisdom for the community. Acts 15, 14:23, 16:4

   Other churches may practice voting on church decisions or imparting authority with no accountability.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are there any differences in how Petra Church functions and how you're used to a church functioning?

WHAT WE BELIEVE

A. We believe in one God, eternally existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Matt. 28:19, Heb. 11:6, Deut. 6:4

B. We believe in Jesus Christ as God who became flesh, born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life, was crucified for our sins, was resurrected from the dead, and ascended, sitting at the Father's right hand the exalted Lord and head of the church. Phil. 2:5–8, Rom. 1:4, Col. 1:15–19, Eph. 1:22–23, Jn. 1:14, Heb. 1:1–6

C. We believe in the deity and person of the Holy Spirit, His indwelling presence, regenerating work, empowering baptism, spiritual gifts, and equipping ministry in the church today. Ezk. 36:26, Acts 1:4–5, 2:1–18, Joel 2:28–29, Jn. 14:26, 16:7–10, 13

D. We believe that all Scripture is the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God and is fully reliable and trustworthy. It is inerrant in the original text. 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20–21, Jn. 10:35 Gal. 1:11–12, Prov. 30:5, Heb. 4:12

E. We believe God created the heavens and earth and all that is in them. God has created human beings in His divine image with a special dignity accorded to them out of all the works of creation. They were designed for relationship with God. Human life, personhood, and value all begin in the mind of God and are established as scientific and moral facts at conception. We believe all human life is equally valuable and worth saving, healing, protecting, and preserving from conception to final breath. Gen. 1:1, 26–27, 31, 3:8–9, Jn.1:3, Ps. 8:5–6

F. We believe, beginning with Adam and Eve's sinful rebellion, that we have all received a sinful nature and have been given over to the enslaving powers of evil, eternal death, and separation from God. Gen. 2 & 3, Rom. 1:21–32, Rom. 5–7, Ps. 14:2–3, Eph. 2:1, Rom. 3:12, 23

G. We believe that only through Jesus Christ God offers salvation from sin and a new way of life. We receive God's salvation and are born again by the Spirit of God when we repent and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is by faith, through God's grace, that we are saved. Jn. 3:16, Acts 4:12, 1 Jn. 4:14, 2 Cor. 5:19, Matt. 26:28, Eph. 2:5–9, Rom. 3:20–31, Rom. 5:1–21, Heb. 2:14–15, Col. 2:13–15

H. We believe the church is a community of redeemed people worldwide under the Lordship of Jesus who meet regularly to be discipled, worship, share communion, fellowship, and carry out the great commission together. Jesus established the local church to function with ordained leaders and a form of governance that protects, guides, and releases people in their gifts to minister. The church functions under the theocratic rule of God with clearly defined elders. Local churches are accountable to apostolic leaders. Eph. 4, Acts 2, Acts 11, 1 Cor. 12:12–13, Gal. 3:26–29

I. We believe the mission of the church is to take the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the nations, making disciples of them, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things as commanded by Jesus Christ. The mission of the church

includes ministry to the poor and helpless. Acts 1:8, Matt. 28:18–20, Mk. 1:15, 2 Cor. 5:14, Eph. 2:17–20

J. We believe that the baptism of believers with water is a pledge of their covenant with God. It identifies them with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is a sign of their cleansing and freedom from sin and their commitment to walk in the way of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Immersion is our primary mode of baptism. Rom. 6:1–6, Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:22–24, 36–41, 8:26–39, Gal. 3:26–29, Col. 2:10–15

K. We believe that through the Lord's Supper, the church renews its covenant with God and with each other and participates in the life and death of Jesus Christ until He comes. 1 Cor. 10:16–17, 1 Cor. 11:23–32, Lk. 22:15–30, Jer. 31:31–34

L. We believe in practicing discipline in the church to liberate erring brothers and sisters from sin and to restore them to a right relationship with God and to fellowship in the church. Matt. 18:15–22, Jn. 20:23, Gal. 6:1–2, Deut. 19:15, Eph. 4:15, 1 Cor. 5:3–5, 2 Cor. 2:5–11

M. We believe that God created humankind in His image, intentionally male and female (Genesis 1:27), with each bringing unique qualities to sexuality and relationships. Sexuality is a wonderful gift from God to be expressed in marriage for procreation, union, and mutual delight (Hebrews 13:4) or in celibacy in devotion to God (I Corinthians 7:35). We believe that marriage, as described in the scriptures, is the union of one biological man and one biological woman and is a sacred covenant designed by God to be a lifelong relationship and commitment between a husband and a wife (Matthew 19:4–6). We will teach and uphold God's marriage design as described in scripture between a biological male and a biological female but also seek to minister to the aforementioned who suffer the consequences of its brokenness. We also affirm, believe, and will teach the Scriptures, which state that…

    Fornication, which is sexual relations prior to marriage, is sin. (I Corinthians 6:18, I Thessalonians 4:3)

    Adultery, which is sexual relations outside of marriage, is sin. (Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:27)

    Homosexual behavior, which is sexual relations between the same sex, is sin. (Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26–27)

    Gender Dysphoria and Transvestic Disorder can lead to sinful behavior where one chooses to identify as a gender other than their innately assigned-at-birth biological sex, which is contrary to the sacredness of God's creation when He made Adam and Eve as distinctly male and female. (Genesis 2:21–24)

    Entertaining thoughts or involvement in pornography, pedophilia, lascivious conduct, and any altering of one's innately assigned-at-birth biological sex is sin. (Psalm 101:3, Matthew 5:29)

    Any kind of other sexual perversion is sin. (I Corinthians 6:9, Galatians 5:19)

All of these are outside of God's blessing and design for sexual expression. We further believe that sexual sins can be forgiven by God's grace when those involved repent, turn from, and seek deliverance from these sins. (I Corinthians 6:11) We, as a church, including our counseling department, will not support or affirm anything that...

Promotes sexual immorality, or;

Promotes the acceptance of homosexuality or any altering of an individual's innately assigned-at-birth biological sex as a lifestyle approved by God, or;

Defines marriage as anything other than God's design of one man and one woman for life.

N. We believe that Jesus Christ calls us to discipleship, to take up our cross and follow Him. Phil. 3:10, Rom. 12:1–2, Matt. 5–7, 1 Peter 2:21, 2 Tim. 2:11–12, Mic. 6:8

O. We believe it is God's will for Christians to refrain from violence in human relationships. This includes how we treat the unborn and elderly. Led by the Holy Spirit, we will follow Christ in the way of peace and the sanctity of human life. Isa. 2:2–4, 11:1–9, Hos. 2:18, Matt. 5:8–12, 38–48, 6:14–15, 26:52, 1 Peter 2:21–24, 1 Cor. 6:1–16, Rom. 12:14–21

P. We place our hope in the reign of God and its fulfillment in the day when Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead: the unsaved into the everlasting punishment of hellfire and the saved into eternal bliss with Christ. We await God's final victory, the end of this present age of struggle, the resurrection of the dead, and a new heaven and a new earth. Judg. 8:23, Mk. 1:15, Phil. 2:8–11, Rev. 11:15, 15:3–4, 21 & 22, 1 Cor. 15:12–58, Jn. 5:28–29, Matt. 10:28, 23:33, Matt. 9:43–48, Lk. 16:23

SCAN FOR A DIGITAL COPY

PETRA CHURCH DIGITAL RESOURCES

Technology and media are tools to connect believers and provide discipleship throughout the week. They do not replace the need for genuine relationships and community, but they do provide clear communication and digital resources to help us grow in wisdom and knowledge.

www.petra.church

CHURCH APPS

Petra Blog: Devotions, essays, and written content from the Petra Family equipping you for faith and life. *www.petra.church/blog*

Petra News: Get up-to-date information about events and community life every week through an EMAIL subscription. Click on "Petra News" under Media. *www.petra.church*

Petra App: Watch online content, view and register for upcoming events, give online, connect with group chats, and much more. Available via Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

My Petra Church: Connecting our church community, My Petra Church allows you to manage your personal information, who is allowed to see it, control your giving, and keep in touch with the groups that matter to you.

If you are a regular attender or member, sign up for My Petra Church by going to *www.petra.church/mypetrachurch/*

RightNow Media: Video-based content, thousands of Bible studies, children's videos, leadership, marriage, and financing taught by church leaders across the U.S. is a FREE resource to you through Petra Church's subscription. *www.petra.church/rightnowmedia*

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PETRA CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS A PETRA CHURCH MEMBER?

Membership at Petra means that, as you pursue Jesus, you partner with our community to fulfill our common mission in Christ.

It is a commitment to...

a. relationship and unity
b. to adhere to our values
c. to honor our practices and leadership
d. to contribute to our mission

WILL THE CHURCH TRY TO CONTROL MY LIFE AND MAKE DECISIONS FOR ME?

Membership does not give church leadership the right to control you or dictate your life decisions (e.g., jobs or marriage). Membership is a sign of your free participation and commitment to our community. The church holds everyone to the same standards of Biblical conduct while respecting the other God-given authorities in our lives such as marriage, family, government, business commitments, personal autonomy, etc.

WHAT IF I DON'T BECOME A MEMBER?

Petra Church is an open community free for anyone to come in and receive the life and ministry of Jesus. Regular attendees who do not become members can continue to join groups, attend events, and be ministered to on Sunday mornings in our public services. Non-members who are followers of Jesus can also participate in baptism and communion. Your status as a follower of Jesus is not tied to your commitment level within our relational fellowship.

WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER? HOW DOES IT BENEFIT ME?

A higher level of trust and responsibility is extended to those who have committed themselves to the community. Members have access to more relational investment from leaders, a wider range of opportunities to serve, and ministry development to grow in their calling and gifts.

AM I A MEMBER FOR LIFE?

Petra Church doesn't set term limits on membership. Members may remove their membership at any time as lives and commitments change seasonally and according to God's direction.

WHY IS TITHING REQUIRED?

See the next page.

TITHING

A standard practice in the ancient world was to give 10% of your income to the deity you served. This was a demonstration of thanksgiving, an act of worship, and an act of submission to that deity's lordship and provision. Abraham, for example, tithed to God before the Law of Moses required it (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:1–10). Jacob, too, practiced the tithe in Genesis 28:20–22. The Mosaic law clearly instructed tithe on all their cash, crops, and animals (Leviticus 27:30–32; Deuteronomy 14:24–25; 26:1–15; 2 Chronicles 31:4–14). Jesus taught that it was proper and correct to give the "tenth" (Matthew 23:23) as a sign of living in the spirit of justice, mercy, and faithfulness to God.

TITHE = 10% OF A PERSON'S INCOME

The tithe gives God 10% of any supplies flowing through our hands. That might include special gifts, salary, inheritance, or family business income. The tithe was different than alms to the poor or a special gift to a missionary. It was—in one sense—like a temple tax that furthered the economy of God's institutions of worship. It was a demonstration that we are God's citizens. By not tithing, God warned His people that they were robbing from Him what belonged to Him (Malachi 3:8).

PRIORITIZING GOD FIRST

All organizations and endeavors need money and resources to achieve their purposes: the federal government, the advancement of science, endowment for the arts, and alms to the poor all need money to function. You prioritize God's mission and purposes by tithing the first 10% of your income.

WHERE TO GIVE THE TITHE

God instructed that the tithe be brought into the "storerooms" and not given elsewhere (Nehemiah 10:37; 13:12; Malachi 3:10). The storeroom was part of the centralized institution of worship to God—the temple. Today, the local church is the rough equivalent of the centralized institution of worship. As a rule of thumb, the tithe is given to the local church.

WHAT DOES THE TITHE CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS?

As in the ancient temple, tithing today supports the worship of God, the ministry of growing God's people in their faith, and the mission to take the gospel to the nations. Practically speaking, it pays for the buildings we worship in, the staff that equips the community, missionaries, caring for the poor, counseling, discipling our children, and strategic resources needed to accomplish our mission.

IT TAKES FAITH TO TITHE

Tithing is a choice we make to honor God and trust Him with our money. We don't often feel like tithing or that we are making enough money to give 10%. Yet, when we follow God's principles and trust Him to care for us, He promises to provide for us and even pour out His blessings on our lives (Proverbs 3:9–10; 2 Corinthians 9:6–11; Luke 6:38).

YOUR MONEY REVEALS WHAT YOUR HEART LOVES

Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Tithing is God's way to free us from insecurity and greed and partner with Him to build His Kingdom. If you invest your money in God's Kingdom, your heart will love His Kingdom more than money. Suppose you prioritize your own needs, wants, and concerns. In that case, your heart will continue to be weighed down by worry, anxiety, and accumulation and will be reluctant to give towards God's purposes. Tithing trains us to prioritize God and love others joyfully, generously, and sacrificially, including financially.

SUMMARY

Tithing is a life posture of obeying the Lord, trusting Him with our finances, partnering with a mission-centered church, and training us to love others generously.

PETRA CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS AND COMMITMENTS

REQUIREMENTS

- **Salvation in Jesus:** I have personally received Jesus Christ as my Savior.
- **Water Baptism:** I have been publicly baptized as a believer and am at least ten years old.
- **Belong:** I have completed all four Belong topics *and* a "Next Steps" conversation.

COMMITMENTS

Growing Spiritually: I commit to...

- growing my personal relationship with Jesus through regular habits of worship, prayer, and reading His Word

Upholding the Community's Values, Standards, and Practices: I commit to...

- supporting the values, vision, and unity of my church and its leadership
    - especially the full authority, inspiration, and practice of the Scriptures as the source of ultimate truth and accountability for both my life and the church
    - also the affirmation of the Holy Spirit's ministry and authority in the church's life today: the Spirit's holiness, fellowship, gifts, and unique baptism of power for every believer
- make every effort to walk in unity with the spiritual authority and accountability of this community, including its leadership as they conform to the Biblical standard and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit

Worshipping in Community: I commit to...

- regularly attending Sunday worship services
- welcoming and caring for those in our Petra Community
- cultivating honest relationships in teams and groups
- striving towards love and forgiveness, as well as truth and accountability
- speaking and acting in ways that build others up (instead of divide or destroy)

Contributing to Petra Church's Mission: I commit to...

- praying for the health of Petra Church's community and mission to the nations
- discovering and using my gifts and talents in service to God and this community
- sharing the gospel with those God has placed in my life
- following the Biblical principle of tithing 10% of my income to God (see above)

I signed my membership commitment on this date: _____ /_____ /_____

COMMITMENT

Are you willing to come under the spiritual leadership of the church and partner in a spirit of unity with what we believe, our values, practices, mission, and terms of membership? If so, sign below.

Your Signature _____

PETRA CHURCH
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Today's Date: _____ Phone Number: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Married: _____ Single: _____ Other: _____ Spouses Name: _____

What is the most recent church you have attended or have held membership at?

Church's Name: _____

Employment: _____

REQUIREMENTS

- Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? (Mark "yes" or "no" below)

  Yes _____ No _____ If yes, at what age? _____

- Have you been water baptized since you accepted Jesus? (Mark "yes" or "no" below)

  Yes _____ No _____ If yes, at what age? _____

  [Note: If you were baptized as an infant, we ask you to be baptized again based on your confession of faith as a believer.]

- Have you completed all four Belong topics? (Mark "yes" or "no" below)

  Yes _____ No _____ Date of last topic? _____

COMMITMENT

Are you willing to come under the spiritual leadership of the church and partner in a spirit of unity with what we Believe, our values, practices, mission, and terms of membership? If so, sign below.

Your Signature _____

Your application will be processed. If the pastor has further questions, he/she may ask to meet with you. A Membership Certificate is sent to those approved confirming their acceptance as a member. New members are then announced in the Petra News. Thank You for showing interest in partnering with us.