



A 5-session OCBC
Discipleship Study

Welcome!

If you are reading this, I am assuming that you are interested in joining OCBC as a formal member. Church membership is an important step in joining yourself to a body of believers for growth, accountability and mission. While every true believer is united in the global body of Christ, we believe that our unity in Christ is most tangibly and visibly expressed through our involvement in a local church.

On multiple occasions in the Book of Acts the church's growth in membership is tallied and recorded. These early Christians devoted themselves to the fellowship [Acts 2:42]. Wherever the message of the gospel went, churches were founded of believers binding themselves to one another in community.

Becoming a member of OCBC helps our leadership know which of our attendees view themselves as part of our church family. Membership provides an opportunity for discipleship and an accountability. OCBC members can participate with greater involvement in the ministry of the church, vote on important church matters, and become part of our church and ministry leadership teams.

To prepare you to become a member of OCBC, your mentor will lead you through the five studies in this booklet. The purpose of these studies is to introduce you to some of the core values that we seek to emulate in our fellowship with one another.

The five sessions are as follows:

- 1) Our Mission: Establishing Believers in the Way of Christ
- 2) Our Vision: Building Up the Family of Families
- 3) Our Core Beliefs: Proclaiming the Essential Truths of the Gospel
- 4) Our Core Practice: Grounding Believers the Apostle's Teaching
- 5) Our Leadership and Structure: Overseeing and Equipping the Saints

Our Mission discussion

To Establish Believers in the Way of Christ and the Apostles

Read Acts 13:1–3 and 14:24–26 and discuss the following with your mentor.

- 1) The above passages mark the beginning and the end of what is generally referred to as the apostle Paul's first missionary journey. Notice the use of the term "the work" in both passages. What does this tell you about the clarity with which the missionaries completed their task? Do you think churches today operate with similar clarity?

- 2) Read Acts 14:21–23. This section may be understood as Luke's summary of "the work". What elements of the work of the ministry can you identify in this short passage?

Please read the commentary on the following page and discuss the following with your mentor.

- 1) What is required from those further along in the Way in terms of their relationship to those less established?

- 2) Where do you see OCBC as being strong in our establishment of people along the Way?

- 3) Where do you see yourself as fitting into the Way at OCBC?

Our Mission commentary

To Establish Believers in the Way of Christ and the Apostles

OCBC was planted as a church in the spring of 1976 to reach Mandarin-speaking immigrants in the Ottawa region. Over the years, God has blessed our congregation with people and resources to continue serving as a light to this community. Today, our Mandarin and English congregations strive to work together as one family united in one mission.

The Pauline Cycle: The missionary teams sent out in the book of Acts did not go out aimlessly into the world, but went out with a clear mission. They were set apart by the Holy Spirit to complete a task, and had a clear enough understanding of that task so that they could know when they had completed it. Acts 14:21–23 is a summary of their missionary task. This missionary task has been referred to as “The Pauline Cycle” or “The Way of Christ and the Apostles.”



The Pauline Cycle provides clarity to our church as we work together in mission. Every member can locate themselves at some point along the circle, striving to advance in their own maturation as a Christian while pouring into those behind them in the cycle.

The cyclical nature of the work of the ministry reminds us that the task is never fully completed. The work must be extended outward geographically and downward through the generations.

Our Mission Project

To Establish Believers in the Way of Christ and the Apostles

Discuss with your mentor where you see yourself fitting into the Way at OCBC. How could you build into people less established? Through what means could you possibly become more established yourself?

For Further Study

- 1) First Principles Book #3: Participating In the Mission of the Church
- 2) First Principles Book #10: Unfolding the Great Commission
- 3) OCBC Leadership Course: Acts

Signature of Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Our Vision discussion

Building Up the Church as the Family of Families

- 1) How a person acts as a member of a church is determined to a great extent how a person views the church. What are the responsibilities of membership if a church is understood as 1) a country club? 2) a corporation? 3) a lecture series? 4) a theatre? 5) a counseling centre? 6) a political activist group?

- 2) How do each of these passages draw upon a household model in making direct application for the church?
 - Ephesians 2:11–22

 - 1 Timothy 3:1–7

 - 1 Timothy 5:1–16

Please read the commentary on the following page and discuss the following with your mentor.

- 1) Consider how the concept of **Church as Big Family** might in look like terms of:
 - Evangelism
 - Ministry participation
 - Children and Youth Ministry
 - Discipleship
 - Giving
 - Conflict
 - Church Leadership
- 2) Consider how the concept of **Family as Small Church** might look like in terms of:
 - Marriage relationship
 - Parenting
 - Family devotions and times of prayer
 - Christian Education
 - Evangelism
 - Knowing Christ

Our Vision commentary

Building Up the Church as the Family of Families

We believe that there is a biblically prescribed model for the local church and we refer to this model the “Family of Families”. Many people refer to the church metaphorically as a family, but we believe that this model is more than a metaphor. We see both logical and scriptural support for this idea. The logical support is as follows:

- Every Christian is an adopted child of God (1 John 3:1–3)
- Christians are brothers and sisters of one another (1 John 3:10–18)
- If both the above are real (not merely metaphorical) relationships, then would it not be that case that a local church be in a sense a real (not merely metaphorical) spiritual family?

Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians to reveal the nature of the church. To the Ephesian church struggling with ethnic tensions, Paul declared in Ephesians 2:19 that Jesus has torn down the wall of separation so that the Jews and Gentiles are “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” In a later letter to the Ephesian church that we know as 1 Timothy, Paul draws upon this household model in instructing the church in how to select leaders and care for widows. “I am writing these things,” Paul states in 1 Timothy 3:15, “so that you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God.”

The local church is a large extended family comprised of individual households. In accordance with this reality, it is our vision that OCBC can be built up as a family of families. This will happen as we seek to implement two core truths:

- **Church as Big Family:** The local church should resemble and function as a large extended family. This has implications for how we select leaders, care for one another, administer programs, disciple youth and children, resolve conflict, etc.
- **Family as Small Church:** Every Christian family should resemble and function as a small church. This has implications for how we disciple our children, use our finances, enjoy entertainment, pursue vocations, honour our spouses, evangelize our neighbours, etc.

Our Vision project

Building Up the Church as the Family of Families

Discuss with your mentor the idea of the local church as a family of families. You can write out your ideas below. Record some initial thoughts on how this concepts affects some of the areas above.

For Further Study

- 1) First Principles Book #2: Belonging to the Family of Families
- 2) First Principles Book #12: Catching God's Vision for the Church
- 3) OCBC Leadership Course: Pauline Epistles

Signature of Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Our Core Beliefs discussion

Proclaiming the Essential Truths of the Gospel

Read 1 Timothy 1:3–11 and discuss the following with your mentor.

- 1) What was the error of the teachers at Ephesus?

- 2) What is the danger of going beyond the core of sound doctrine?

- 3) What is the connection between being built up in sound doctrine and love?

Please read the commentary on the following page and discuss the following with your mentor.

- 1) What are the benefits of this “two-handed” approach to our core beliefs? What might be some drawbacks to this approach within a local church?

Our Core Beliefs commentary

Proclaiming the Essential Truths of the Gospel

Teaching Toward Love

In I Timothy 1:3–8 we are warned of what may happen when a church ceases to hold fast to sound doctrine. It seems that teachers were going beyond the core of sound doctrine that was laid down by the apostles, leading to idle theological speculations, which did not build up the church in love. Sadly, in our day Protestant Christianity has been divided by such an emphasis on peripheral matters.

A “Two-Handed” Approach

In 2006, OCBC joined the Evangelical Free Church of Canada (EFCC) after a meticulous process in which many denominations were considered. Perhaps the most defining distinctive of the Free Church is its emphasis on gathering around the core essentials of our faith, while maintaining the autonomy of the local church to decide on matters of secondary importance. This focus on core doctrine, allows us to take a charitable stance toward Christians who may disagree with us on secondary issues, without violating our core beliefs. As the EFCC motto puts it: “In essentials, unity, in non-essentials, charity. In all things Jesus Christ.” In other words, we hold on to gospel essentials tightly in a closed fist, while extending an open hand to other Christians who might disagree with us on other positions.



Statement of Faith

God's gospel originates in and expresses the wondrous perfections of the eternal, triune God.

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine¹ Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

God's gospel is authoritatively revealed in the Scriptures.

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavour should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

God's gospel alone addresses our deepest need.

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan². In union with Adam³, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God⁴, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work⁵ in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

God's gospel is made known supremely in the Person of Jesus Christ.

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah⁶—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

God's gospel is accomplished through the work of Christ.

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute⁷, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death⁸ and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

God's gospel is applied by the power of the Holy Spirit.

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners⁹, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ¹⁰ and adopted as heirs¹¹ in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

¹ Equally divine: having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfection, and are worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence and obedience (AFD2).

² By Satan: Satan is a person, the Father of lies, a murderer from the beginning and the great deceiver of all the nations; that he will be overcome by the Lord Jesus Christ as the seed of woman and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, and finally committed to the Lake of Fire with all his angels to be tormented forever and ever (AFD20).

³ In union with Adam: his spiritual death, total corruption of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire race of man, the man Christ Jesus alone excepted; and hence that every child of Adam is born into the world with a sinful nature (AFD6).

⁴ Alienated from God: the threatened penalty of death was then and there inflicted, so that he totally lost all spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and subject to the power of devil (AFD5).

⁵ Only through God's saving work: that sinners are saved by Grace through Faith alone and that not themselves, it is the gift of God, not of works ... every saved person is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses (AFD7).

⁶ Israel's promised Messiah: all the Scriptures from first to last centre about Him, His person and work, His sacrificial death upon the cross and His coming again (AFD3).

⁷ Representative and substitute: was made to be sin, and made a curse for us, dying in our room and stead, a Sacrifice acceptable to God and effectual for every sinner who receives Him (AFD8).

⁸ Atoning death: The suffering and death of Christ according to the New Testament was substitutionary, penal and vicarious. Divine healing of the body is not in the Atonement in the sense that salvation and forgiveness of sins are in the Atonement. It is nowhere taught in Scripture that Christ died for the effects of sins but for sin (AFD14).

⁹ He regenerates sinners: owing to the universal depravity and death in sin, no one can see or enter the kingdom of God unless born of the Spirit whereby he becomes a new creation (AFD9).

¹⁰ Baptized into union with Christ: the New Testament distinguishes between being indwelt by the Spirit, which is true of all believers, and being filled with the Spirit which is the believer's privilege and duty. There is one baptism with (in) the Spirit, and it is into the body of Christ, but there are many fillings (AFD13).

¹¹ Adopted as heirs: We believe in the Eternal Security of all who are actually born again by the Spirit of God through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, and that it is the privilege of all such to be assured of their present salvation and eternal safety (AFD10).

God's gospel is now embodied in the new community called the church.

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ¹², of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism¹³ and the Lord's Supper¹⁴, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

God's gospel compels us to Christ-like living and witness to the world.

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose¹⁵. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith¹⁶ with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

God's gospel will be brought to fulfillment by the Lord Himself at the end of this age.

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return¹⁷ of our Lord Jesus Christ with His holy angels when He will bring His kingdom to fulfillment and exercise His role as Judge of all. This coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

God's gospel requires a response that has eternal consequences.

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily¹⁸ and judge the world¹⁹, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

¹² United by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ: [The Spirit] is now, throughout this age of Grace, here present in the true Church, having been sent for the express purpose of revealing Christ Jesus to the members of the Church. We believe when the Holy Spirit came upon the whole body of believers on the Day of Pentecost, it was the fulfillment of the announcement made by John the Baptist and the promises of Christ to His own during His earthly ministry, and that then the disciples were individually endued with power to witness concerning Christ, and collectively baptized into one body, which was the formation of the Church, which is His Body. We further believe since the time the Gospel went to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, and the believing Gentiles received the Holy Spirit, without delay, tarrying, praying, laying on of hands or any other condition save faith, all who believe in Christ are born of the Spirit, sealed by the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit, and by (in) the Holy Spirit baptized into the body of Christ. Pentecost is an historical event and is not repeated (AFD13).

¹³ Baptism: the simple rite of Baptism by immersion as a symbol and proclamation of the sinner's death to sin and his resurrection in newness of life in Christ Jesus (AFD21).

¹⁴ The Lord's Supper: a memorial of the Lord's death to be kept by His disciples until he comes again (AFD22).

¹⁵ Sanctifying power and purpose: are perfected as to their standing forever by the one offering of the blood of Christ, and are one with Christ in Sanctification. As to their state, they may be sanctified with the constant washing of water by the Word, by the blood of Christ, and by the in-working presence and power of the Holy Spirit (AFD12).

¹⁶ Live out our faith: all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Saviour and Lord; and that the separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded by God (AFD11).

¹⁷ Glorious return: the personal, imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His millennial kingdom (AFD17).

¹⁸ Raise the dead bodily: Jesus Christ rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, in bodily form, and thus became the firstfruits of them that sleep; that upon His return He will raise out from among the dead those that have died in Christ, this being the first resurrection; and that, after the thousand years, He will raise them that have died in unbelief from their graves to receive their sentence (AFD18).

¹⁹ Judge the world: that the attitude either of reconciliation or enmity toward God is fixed eternally at death, and that the saints of all the ages will be forever with the Lord and will become joint heirs with Him as their Redeemer in His inheritance. We further believe that there is an appointed day for the judgement of the wicked when they will be cast into the Lake of Fire, there to remain forever and ever in varying degrees of torment according to their works (AFD19).

Our Core Beliefs project

Proclaiming the Essential Truths of the Gospel

Read through the Statement of Faith and discuss the following with your mentor. If you have questions that your mentor can't answer, please discuss with a pastor or leader in the church:

- Are there things that you do not understand or have questions about?
- Are there things that you are not comfortable with or disagree with?
- Are there other beliefs under certain topics that you feel should be included?

Signature of New Member: _____ Date: _____

For Further Study

- 1) First Principles Book #1: Becoming a Disciple
- 2) EFCC publication: Welcome to the Family
- 3) OCBC Leadership Course: Essentials of Sound Doctrine

Signature of Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Our Core Practice discussion and projects

Grounding Believers in the Apostle's Teaching

Giftedness: Read Romans 12:3–8 and discuss the following:

- 1) Why is keeping sober judgment of oneself so important in the exercise of giftedness?
- 2) How is the individual exercise of one's giftedness related to the corporate functioning of the church?
- 3) Do you think that the list of gifts in verses 6–8 is an exhaustive list?

Notes:

Project: What talents, experiences, passions, or skills has God given you that could be used in building up the church?

Generosity: Read 2 Corinthians 9:6–15 and discuss the following:

- 1) What is involved in becoming a cheerful giver?
- 2) What promise is made in the passage, which allows us to think generously as we decide how much to give?
- 3) How is giving related to the mission of the church?
- 4) How much should you regularly give? Should you just plan to give 10%? What guidelines should you use to decide a regular amount?
- 5) Besides giving to the church, what are other ways in which you can live a life marked by generosity?

Notes:

Project: Record your convictions on giving and your commitment to give.

Conflict: Read Matthew 18:15–20 and discuss the following:

- 1) Why is it necessary that the church must at times confront its members?
- 2) What responsibilities are upon every believer in order to ensure that there is minimal conflict within the church?
- 3) What role does forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration play in this process?
- 4) Do you think these instructions are cultural guidelines or something that every church must strictly follow? If you see these specific instructions as being primarily cultural, what universal principles must be followed in order to obey this instruction?

Notes:

Project: Write out your plan of action detailing what you would do to resolve conflict in the church.

For Further Study

- 1) First Principles Book #2: Belonging to the Family of Families
- 2) OCBC Leadership Course: Essentials of Sound Doctrine

Signature of Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Our Core Practice commentary

Grounding Believers in the Apostle's Teaching

In addition to the core gospel, the churches planted by the apostles were also grounded in a core set of teachings relating to how they were to live out the Gospel in their lives and within the family of God. Part of Jesus' great commission is that we go "teaching them to obey all that I have commanded."

Some of what we've already talked about in this course would be considered as part of this teaching. We believe that our mission of the church (the Pauline Cycle) and vision we laid out (the church as Family of Families) are both part of the apostolic teaching and practice. While we are not able to lay down the entirety of the Apostle's teaching in this short class, we will address three areas that are especially important for new members.

Giftedness: In Romans 12:3–8 each believer is encouraged to use measured judgment in regards to how they can best contribute to the building up of the body of Christ. This list, though not exhaustive, provides a good starting place to help us understand that God has given each of us talents, abilities, opportunities, responsibilities, and cultivated skills to use in serving one another and extending God's kingdom.

Generosity: In 2 Corinthians 9 Paul is encouraging the church at Corinth to supply funds for the ongoing expansion of the kingdom. Through generous giving we "increase the harvest of our righteousness", "supply the needs of the saints", and "produce thanksgiving to God." While the New Testament encourages us to live generous lives that extend beyond the scope of the local church, as members of a local church family we have a responsibility to meet its household needs as well as extending the mission of God through it. The New Testament family model replaces the temple/tithe model of the Old Testament. Those who can give much should give generously and cheerfully, while those who can give little should do what they can.

Conflict: Just like in a harmonious family, communication is very important in the household of God. And, just like in any family, conflict is inevitable. The main principle found in Matthew 18:15–20 is that we must not avoid conflict, but do all we can to reconcile with our brothers and sisters. The goal is always understanding, forgiveness and reconciliation. If at times a brother is being unreasonable or persisting in sin, others may need to be involved to mediate the situation. If a person continues in blatant unrepentance, the church may have to remove him from membership and disassociate with him. Even then, however, the church would pray for repentance and reconciliation.

Our Leadership and Structure discussion

Overseeing and Equipping the Saints for Ministry

Read Acts 20:13–35 and discuss the following with your mentor.

- 1) What function of church leadership is described in this passage (see especially verses 28–29)?
- 2) What are some of the specific ways that the Ephesian elders were to oversee the church?

Read Ephesians 4:11–16 and discuss the following with your mentor.

- 1) What function of church leadership is described in this passage (see especially verses 11–12)?
- 2) Who is to do the work of the ministry according to this passage? What is required of each member in order for the church to mature?

Please read the commentary on the following pages and discuss the following with your mentor.

- 1) What are the potential benefits/pitfalls to the OCBC model in regards to the healthy functioning of the church?
- 2) Why is it important that everyone who serves on a board or ministry is considered a spiritual leader? What does this mean in terms of who is chosen and how they are equipped to serve?

For Further Study

- 1) OCBC Leadership Course: Leaders in the Early Church

Signature of Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Our Leadership and Structure commentary

Overseeing and Equipping the Saints for Ministry

We see two essential functions of church leadership that must be present in every church. In Acts 20:13–35, Paul charges the elders at Ephesus to “oversee” the flock, guarding it from false teaching and caring for its members, especially the poor. In Ephesians 4:11–12, we see that God has given to the church people who focus on “equipping” the members of the body for the work of the ministry. Each member must be healthy and equipped for the church to mature.

There are many different models of church leadership. Some churches are pastor-led, others are led by a group of elders, with various hybrid models as well. At OCBC, the Holy Spirit has led us to a hybrid model in which our church board oversees the church while our pastors focus on equipping the saints for ministry. This division of labour has led to cooperation among our leaders and mutual accountability.

Unity and Diversity (See Back Page)

Having services in two languages lends itself to unique structural challenges in overseeing and equipping the church. Our organizational structure at OCBC can be seen on the following page.

The church board oversees the entire church as one body. Activities that are shared by the congregations or affect the entire church are managed by the board. The board also acts as a mediator between the congregations should any issues arise, and support the entire church in its mission. OCBC board members are elected by the congregation and serve 2-year terms. Every member of the board must meet the guidelines for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8–13, with the board chair meeting the additional requirements for overseers found in 1 Timothy 3:1–7. The board should ideally reflect the multi-cultural makeup of the church (Acts 6:1–4).

At the same time, the pastors of each congregation work with an assembled ministry team who are able to focus on the particular ministry strategy and issues of their own congregation. Ministry team members are appointed by the pastor of each congregation as ministries develop.

OCBC Structure:



Members of the Board

Members of the E.M.T.

- Chair:
- Secretary:
- Treasurer:
- Other:
- Other:
- Other:
- Other:

- Pastor:
- Worship:
- Children:
- Youth:
- University:
- Outreach:
- Other:
- Other:

Membership Checklist

1. I have filled out a membership application, indicating that I have been baptized and have attended OCBC for at least three months.
2. I can articulate the Pauline Cycle and how it defines the mission of the church. I have also reflected on the implications of the PC for their life and ministry.
3. I can articulate the concept of the church as the family of families and its corollaries: church as big family and family as small church.
4. I understand the concepts of sound doctrine as well as the principle of unity around essentials and charity over non-essentials.
5. I have read our statement of faith and agree with our stating of the basic essentials.
6. I commit to using my gifts, talents, time and money to build the kingdom through OCBC.
7. I submit myself to be held accountable in my life, confession and witness by the brothers and sisters of OCBC.
8. I understand the nature of leadership and structure at OCBC and agree to work within that structure as a member of the church.

Signature of New Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Mentor: _____ Date: _____