

Why identify and establish values? Clear values help us understand how we can contribute. They affect every aspect of our church's life. Individuals and committees demonstrate the values of St. Timothy's in how we work, how we make decisions, and how we treat each other.

1. We value graciousness

"From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace." John 1:16 (NRSV)

"And now I commend you to God and to the message of God's grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified." Acts 20:32 (NRSV)

Graciousness is the primary way that God relates to the world. In grace, Jesus was sent. In grace, we are given the Holy Spirit. In grace, God chooses us to be God's people... Grace is God's love freely given. It is by grace that our lives are transformed and we are empowered to live in harmony with each other.

Graciousness, therefore, is our primary value in how we live our lives. We are both inspired and challenged to treat one another (and ourselves!) as graciously as God treats us. We also know that perfection is impossible for us. We deal graciously with one another's failings.

2. We value living God's Word

"But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves." James 1:22 (NRSV)

We value not just the words of the Bible, but making it a part of our lives – internalizing it. We believe that God wants truth in action. We believe that God wants doctrine turned into deeds. God's Word was not given to increase our knowledge. It was given to change our lives. Christianity is a lifestyle. Therefore we value the application of scripture – living God's Word. You only believe the part of the Bible that you do. We may say we believe a lot of things but if we don't do it we don't really believe it.

3. We value developing people's gifts

"God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well." Rom. 12:6 (LB)

"Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." 1 Peter 4:10 (NRSV)

"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." Eph. 4:11-13 (NRSV)

Part of the tasks of leadership – of pastors, lay pastors, lay leaders, everybody – is to help people discover and develop their strengths. We value people giftedness. At St. Timothy's we believe in people. We believe that everybody has something to contribute. Churches grow to the extent that they empower the people in the church to be what God meant them to be. The task of leadership is to enable others to express their gifts. Leadership task is finding, freeing, releasing, and liberating the gifts that God has already given people.

4. We value commitment

“You shall have no other gods besides me.” Exodus 20:3 (NRSV)

“They gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us.” 2 Cor. 8:5 (NRSV)

We challenge people to follow the commitments of scripture:

- to give all their life to Christ,
- to have a daily quiet time,
- to share their faith in a tangible way,
- to give sacrificially,
- to get involved a small group, committee, or other ministry

We challenge people to deeper and deeper commitment. We become what we're committed to. The fact is, the world is constantly asking you and everybody else for your time, your money, and your energy. God asks for your first and deepest commitment. God has demonstrated that commitment time and time again, carrying that commitment all the way to the cross. Our commitment is simply a response to the promise that God first made to us.

Another reason why we call for commitment is because we have a mission that matters. There's nothing more significant in the world than what we're doing – building the dominion of God. The Bible says *“Without a vision, the people perish.”* So when you call for commitment, when you ask people to serve with you in your area of ministry, challenge them. Call forth the highest dreams and hopes in them. Ministry that doesn't cost anything accomplishes nothing.

5. We value compassion

“Your attitude must be like My own, for I did not come to be served but to serve...”

Matt. 20:28 (LB)

“... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Matt. 25:40 (NRSV)

Compassion is the quality of putting yourself in the “shoes” of another, to experience what they are experiencing, to feel what they are feeling. Our faith compels us to look to the needs of others – to work to insure that basic needs are met (for food, clothing, shelter, etc.). St. Timothy's is not just here to survive, or to meet our own needs – we are a service organization. We exist to serve. The highest title that you can be given is to be called a servant of God. The most Christ-like thing you can do is to serve others. Jesus said, *“Your attitude must be like my own. I did not come to be served but to serve”* (Mark 10:45).

6. We value respect

“Pay to all what is due them...respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.” Romans 13:7 (NRSV)

We respect every individual that God has made. We don't just accept people who are different. We value differences. That's the key to a successful marriage, for example – not just accepting your husband's/wife's differences but actually learning to celebrate them, to appreciate them, and to recognize that God put them in your life for a specific reason. God has shaped everybody differently for a purpose, for a reason, for significance. In a church, you can have unity without uniformity. The value of respect allows us to have differences without division. God has called us to respect and appreciate the people that God has created and put in our lives.