

ARTICLES OF PRACTICE

1. Divine Healing

In the redemptive work of Christ provision has been made for man's physical healing. This benefit may be realized by God's children on the basis of the conditions set forth in God's Word.

Gen. 3:16-19; Job 2:7; Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 8:16-17; Mark 6:13; Acts 10:38; James 5:13-16; 1 Pet. 2:24; compare Mark 16:17-18

2. The Lord's Day

The Lord's Day is of divine origin. The Jewish Sabbath was obligatory upon those who lived under the Jewish economy. Desecration of this day invoked the wrath and judgment of God. In this present age the first day of the week has been set aside as the Lord's Day for rest and worship. This observance is commended to the followers of the Lord Jesus in commemoration of His glorious resurrection. The first day of the week has been kept as the Lord's Day by the church from apostolic times. It is imperative that with great care and godly fear we honor the Lord's Day.

John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; compare Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Num. 15:32-36

3. Christian Stewardship

a. God's ownership of all things creatively and redemptively is unquestioned in the Scriptures. Since we are saved by grace and the death of Christ provided our ransom, our whole being, body, soul, and spirit should be freely given to God, which is our reasonable service.

b. Not only does God claim our love and devotion, but He has made us stewards of what we have in time, talent, and temporal goods. Since giving of our means to support the Lord's work is a scriptural injunction and an act of worship received and memorialized by our Lord, and since tithing antedates the Mosaic Law, was confirmed in the Law, and was approved by our Lord Jesus Christ, and since the New Testament clearly indicates that our giving is to be proportionate, believers are encouraged to adopt the system of tithing their income as a minimum expression of their stewardship. Our stewardship in material things is to be motivated by the spirit and example of our Lord who freely gave Himself for us all.

Gen. 14:20, 28:22; Mal. 3:8, 10; Matt. 23:23; Acts 4:32; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:9, 9:6-7

4. Dedication of Children

We believe that the Scriptures teach the divine concern for the well-being of little children and their commitment to God. We, therefore, heartily encourage the formal dedication of little children in a public service of the church.

1 Sam. 1:24-28; Matt. 19:13-15

5. Marriage and the Home

a. Marriage is a sacred institution ordained of God and is an indissoluble union of one husband (born male) and one wife (born female) until parted by death. Marriage, which is the foundation of the family and the Christian home, should only be entered into in the fear and will of God. Accordingly, a believer should not be united in holy matrimony with an unbeliever.

Gen. 2:24; Deut. 7:3; Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 7:7, 39; 2 Cor. 6:14-17

b. Ministers and parents have an obligation to teach the sanctity of marriage and to warn against believers being yoked with unbelievers. Ministers should not knowingly officiate at the marriage of a believer and an unbeliever.

- c. Ministers are forbidden from encouraging, blessing, or officiating same sex “marriages” or unions.

Gen. 2:24; Lev. 18:22; Matt. 19:4, 5; Rom. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10

- d. The home is a divinely ordained institution in which the husband is the head but serves its members by the law of love. Filial obedience is to be rendered by children in the spirit of mutual respect and love. The home is the most important institution in which to nurture children in the faith, and great care is to be exercised by pastors and parents in building homes that are genuinely and consistently Christian.

Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 78:4-6; Eph. 5:22 and 25, 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21

6. Divorce

Divorce is viewed in the Scripture as contrary to God's will. Christians shall seek by forbearance and forgiveness to preserve the marriage bond.

Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:15-16; Matt. 5:31-32, 19:3-12; Mark 10:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:10-16

- a. Persons divorced and remarried who give evidence of being genuinely born again are eligible to be received into membership of the church.
- b. Divorce between members of the church is an occasion of great tragedy. Such conduct brings the teaching and reality of Christian reconciliation under reproach and offenders are to be disciplined.

The church board shall direct the deacons or a special commission to counsel with the offenders and recommend proper disciplinary action to the church board, giving consideration to appropriate aspects of Article XVII.B.3.

Care should be exercised that such action be as redemptive as possible for all parties involved.

- c. Ministers are to refrain from performing marriage ceremonies where one or both parties are divorced, except where adultery of the previous marriage partner is involved. Where such persons are recognized as living genuine Christian lives, and where there is good evidence that a true Christian marriage is intended, ministers are permitted at their discretion to solemnize the marriage.
- d. See Article XVI.E.2. on qualifications of ministers.

7. Practices and Conduct

The Scriptures clearly command that believers are not to be conformed to the worldview and lifestyle of the world of which they are a part, but, on the contrary, are to function as salt to prevent the spread of moral corruption and as light to dispel spiritual darkness. It is therefore imperative that they set high standards for their personal and collective life including the following:

- a. Their disposition and attitudes be characterized by godliness and the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control;
- b. Their social relationships bear witness to Christ, their entire conduct reflecting the spiritual ideals of Christianity rather than the world; they shall not marry unbelievers, shall not hold membership in oath-bound, secret societies and shall not compromise Christian principles in partnerships; and
- c. Their bodies be treated as temples of the Holy Spirit thus making it inconsistent with both Christian testimony and sound principles of health to injure their influence or bodies by the use of tobacco, intoxicating beverages, narcotics and other harmful products.

Isa. 5:22; 1 Cor. 6:12, 19-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Gal. 5:18-26; 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:2-4

8. Attitude toward Civil Government

We believe that civil government is ordained of God for the welfare of society to promote and protect the good and to restrain and punish evil. Therefore, we consider it the duty of Christians to pray for rulers and for those that are in authority over them and to give due loyalty, respect, and obedience to them. Christians are also encouraged to take an active interest in government at all levels. Where the demands of civil law would militate against the supreme law and will of God, Christians should “obey God rather than men.”

Dan. 4:17; Matt. 22:17-21; Acts 4:19, 5:29; Rom. 13:1-4; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-14

9. Attitude toward Strife and Military Service

- a. We believe that the teaching of Scripture enjoins believers to love their enemies, to do good to them that hate them, to overcome evil with good, and inasmuch as possible, live peaceably with everyone. Therefore, we conclude that it is not fitting for the Christian to promote strife between nations, classes, groups, or individuals.
- b. We recognize that sincere Christians have conscientious differences as to their understanding of the teaching of the Word of God with reference to their responsibility as Christian citizens to human government both in times of war and times of peace. We therefore exercise tolerance and understanding, and respect the individual conscience with regard to participation in war.
- c. We further urge upon all the responsibility of searching the Scriptures with open heart and mind that their position may truly be one of Christian conviction and not of expediency.
- d. Pastors are advised to instruct their churches and particularly their youth on the teaching of the Scriptures regarding war and its evils, and to seek to give guidance in the Word to those subject to call in the service of their country. Matt. 5:43-44; Rom. 12:18 and 20-21, 13:1-14

10. Oaths

We believe a Christian's life should be so transparent in its honesty and integrity that one's word can be fully trusted without the swearing of a formal oath. A judicial oath may be taken without violation of the Scriptures; however, affirmation is encouraged.

Ex. 20:7; Matt. 5:33-35, 37; Jas. 5:12; compare Rom. 1:9, 9:1-2; Heb. 6:13-18