



Position Statement

As followers of Jesus, our lives are to be led by the Holy Spirit.¹ Similarly, the worship services of the gathered church are also guided by God's Spirit. While it is helpful to acknowledge that we are Spirit-led in our worship, it is more helpful to have clarity in both what we believe as well as how those beliefs are practically worked out in our worship gatherings (see endnote defining Fellowship's various worship gatherings). We hope to provide clarity around our belief and practice of Spirit-led worship gatherings in this position paper.

Guiding beliefs and practices for Spirit-led worship gatherings:

True worship is "spiritual" in nature.

In Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman in John 4, he tells her "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."² Jesus is revealing to the Samaritan woman that true worship involves more than what meets the eye. In this case, he's teaching that worship is not confined to certain *places* or *things* but is now available any time and any place. Williams Barclay explains it this way, "Genuine worship does not consist in coming to a certain place, nor in going through a certain ritual or liturgy, nor even in bringing certain gifts. True worship is when the spirit, the immortal and invisible part within us, speaks to and meets with God, himself immortal and invisible."³ To put it simply, the Holy Spirit relationally and experientially connects us into the life of the Trinity.⁴

Therefore, when we gather to worship, it's important that we as a church family recognize and emphasize that it is the Holy Spirit who connects us to God. It is the Spirit, therefore, who leads us to exalt Jesus and to glorify the Father in our gatherings. That's not all that the Spirit does in our worship, however, the Spirit also connects us to one another as the unified body of Christ.⁵ Because of this, we seek to be sensitive to the Spirit's presence among us as we gather, that we may be led into genuine worship to God and fellowship with one another.

¹ Romans 8:14

² John 4:24

³ Barclay, W. (2001). [*The Gospel of John*](#) (Rev. and updated., Vol. 1, p. 188). Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press.

⁴ In Christ, we are connected to the Trinity positionally, through His death and resurrection to atone for our sins. When Christ ascended He assumed the position of High Priest and advocate at the Father's right hand, and the Holy Spirit was sent to indwell us and guide us as a continuous helper.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:12



Spirit guided planning and leadership.

When it comes to actually preparing for and leading our worship gatherings, we believe the Holy Spirit is present and active in the planning of our worship gatherings, and also leads us “in the moment” during our gatherings. Because of this, we ask for the Spirit’s help and direction as we prepare. At the same time, we recognize that the Spirit, like the wind, blows wherever it pleases, therefore, we lead with an appropriate openness to the new and unplanned movement of the Spirit in our gatherings.⁶ When we discern the Spirit is leading us to deviate from our original order of service, we follow with sensitivity, humility, and order; intentionally following the Spirit’s leading while also leading our congregation to do the same. Much of the time this looks like slight adjustments to our songs, sermon, or overall order of service that is not even noticeable to the congregation. From time to time, the Holy Spirit may lead us in a way that is more obvious to everyone in the room; when those occasions happen, our elder team and the on stage leaders are prepared to make the appropriate adjustments necessary to both follow the Spirit’s leading and provide explanation and leadership to our congregation.⁷

Spirit empowered ministry.

With Jesus as our example, we desire to lead and minister in the power of the Holy Spirit.⁸ As a church family, we believe that the Holy Spirit indwells and gifts every member of God’s family (please see our position paper on [Spiritual Gifts](#) for a more in depth look at how and why God gifts his people). We believe that the Spirit empowers his people with a variety of gifts, services, and workings so that we can worship God, serve His people, and fulfill our mission of making disciples of all nations. In order to minister in the power of the Spirit we desire to see the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit exercised in our gatherings in love by following Biblical principles and guidelines.⁹ Because there are a variety of ways the Spirit empowers his church, this rarely looks the exact same from week to week. The gifting of the Spirit can look like a teaching pastor delivering an impactful message through the Spirit’s power, a member of our church family sacrificially caring for children in Fellowship Kids, or it could also look like someone sharing a word of prophecy that has been given by the Holy Spirit. In each scenario we see the work of the Spirit is unique, it appears to be quite ordinary in many situations, and yet can also be quite extra-ordinary in others. Our desire is to value each way in which the Spirit gifts and empowers His people in our church family.

⁶ John 3:8

⁷ 1 Corinthians 14; Acts 15; 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21

⁸ Matthew 12:18; Luke 4:14, 10:1

⁹ 1 Corinthians 13-14



SPIRIT LED WORSHIP

Therefore, we do not favor the “extra-ordinary” works of the Spirit (often displayed through the sign gifts) by overlooking the “less sensational” works. At the same time, we do not despise the supernatural works of the Spirit by limiting or controlling His activity among us. A guiding principle for our elders and leaders is to eagerly desire the gifts of the Spirit while also following Biblical principles and guidelines to maintain the edification of the church during our gatherings.

*Fellowship “worship gatherings” include any worship service or event that officially represents Fellowship Bible Church, including Sunday morning services, ministry events (men’s ministry, women’s ministry, FSM, FSK, Midweek), mission trips, and D-group meetings.