

# GROWTH TRACK

# WELCOME HOME

Welcome to Growth Track! Growth Track is the best way for you to learn about Praise Church and what it looks like to be a part of Praise Church. Here's why Growth Track is so important:

1. It is an opportunity to learn about Praise Church in order to make the right decision for your family.
  2. If you choose to be a part of Praise, you become one of the parts that make the whole. You become Praise Church and should know what you are a part of and how to participate in moving the vision forward.
- We define the church as a people not a building. We believe that everyone who is a part of Praise Church should be invested in the reason we exist.
  - We believe that the collective efforts of this people should effect Godly change, not maintain the status quo.
  - We believe that those who make up the church are participants, not spectators. And we want every person at Praise to experience a dynamic & growing relationship with Jesus... to grow in their love for God, for others, and to make a difference.
  - We believe that if the parts are growing, that the church as a whole will have a strong influence...and will accomplish the mission that Jesus intended. Simply put, we don't go to church, we are the church.
  - We believe that growth for the follower of Jesus should be the expectation, not the exception.

*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.  
(Matthew 16:18)*

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ....  
(2 Peter 3:18)*

## CONNECT TO THE VINE

At Praise Church, we want everyone to stay connected to the Vine and bearing fruit. And if we have one teaching that instructs us the most, it would be from John chapter 15.

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.<sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. (John 15:1,4-5,8)*

- **Jesus** is the Vine
- **God** is the Vinedresser (Gardener)
- **You** are the branches
- **Bearing Fruit** glorifies God
- **Connection** = production

## HISTORY

Praise Church began in 1974 with a small group of people (most who still attend Praise) in a home here in Beaumont. This small group was hungry to know more about God and soon outgrew the home where they met and rented a conference room at the Ramada Inn off of 11<sup>th</sup> street. They secured a pastor to shepherd them and continued to grow.

In 1975 they purchased an old Jewish synagogue off of McFaddin Street. The church continued to grow. After the church experienced some tough times, Pastor Reg's father, Pastor Reggie Lloyd Sr, was invited to speak on a Sunday morning..... then another Sunday morning... then another... and was eventually invited to become their pastor.

Pastor Reg was invited by his father along with his sister to start and lead a youth ministry, and again the church began to grow. Praise eventually outgrew the old synagogue and in 1995, relocated to Walker Road. Praise Church was forward thinking and also purchased the 10 acres behind the property for the future of Praise Church and stories yet to be told.

Pastor Reg remained youth pastor for 13 years, and in 2005 officially became Lead Pastor. As with most transitions, the first 2 years were shaky, but we soon began experiencing growth again. Praise began to outgrow our Walker Road facility and started making plans to build a larger facility on the unused 10 acres facing Major Drive.

In 2017, our Walker building was devastated by Hurricane Harvey and received 5 feet of flood waters. After restoring our Walker building, we continued construction on our Major Drive building and moved into our new location in October 2019.

# VISION

Our vision, the reason why Praise Church exists, is to lead others to love God, love people, and to make a difference!

## **Love God, Love People (Great Commandment)**

*And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)*

## **Make a Difference (Great Commission)**

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)*

A **commitment** to the **Great Commandment** and the **Great Commission** will make a **Great Church**. But vision is not enough...there has to be a clear path and strategy to make the vision a reality.

# THE BIG 5 STRATEGY

Just like it's frustrating to be a part of a team/organization that doesn't have a clear vision, it's equally frustrating to be a part of a team/organization that has a vision, but no clear strategy in fulfilling the vision.

## 1. **Sundays are a BIG deal!**

Sundays are the starting point, the front door to the life of the church. And when people want to pursue God, they usually start at a church on Sunday. And if we do anything well, it better get the starting point. What do we think Sundays should be like?

- Connecting people to the Vine through **Worship**
- Connecting people to the Vine through **Scripture**
- Connecting people to the Vine by creating an Irresistible **Environment**

*Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name. (Psalms 29:2a)*

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

## 2. **Discipleship: Spiritual growth best happens in the context of a Small Group.**

Small Groups bring people together to intentionally build deep-meaningful relationships centered around Jesus. Small groups are a place for you to grow and a place to help others grow. Praise Church is not a church with small groups, but rather a church of small groups. Small Groups are designed to provide 3 things:

- A place to **connect**
- A place to **one-another**
- A place that helps a big church feel **small**

*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17)*

*Bear one another's burdens... (Galatians 6:2)*

*And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God*

*and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:46-47)*

### **3. We value and invest in the Next Generation.**

We value the the NextGen as the church of today, not just the church of tomorrow. Young people don't have to wait to be an influencer. We believe that the best way to change the world is to invest in the youngest among us. We also believe that it is our God-given responsibility to invest in youth... that's how God set it up. *"Since it is likely that children will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage"* – C.S. Lewis

- Praise Kids (birth – 5<sup>th</sup>): Sundays
- Praise Youth (6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>): Wednesdays
- Praise Young Adults (18-25): First Tuesday (and weekly small groups)

*Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)*

*One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. (Psalm 145:4)*

### **4. We use our gifts to serve inside and outside the church.**

Everyone at Praise serves! God has given every one of us gifts to be used for His purposes. We want to help you take what He has given you and provide you the opportunity to use those gifts.

Think about the church. The church is the best resourced organization on the planet to meet the needs of our world (skills, knowledge, networks, passion, compassion, pain, money, love, etc). If we could direct those resources in a focused & strategic way, we would make a big difference. We want to match what you have been given or acquired with a need, either inside the church (volunteering) or outside (outreach).

*There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many? Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. (John 6: 9-11)*

## **5. We want to maximize our influence by developing leaders.**

Leadership is influence, and everyone can influence someone. Raising up leaders is the way Jesus sustained His movement, turning followers into leaders and empowering them to carry out His mission.

Praise Church has been intentional about creating a leadership culture throughout the entire organization. A culture that raises up leaders, that raise up leaders. Every leader at Praise has the ability to contribute to the leadership culture by raising up another person (or persons) to do what they do, as well or better than they do.

### **5 Step Coaching Model**

- **I do. You Watch. We talk:** The developing leader watches the coach in his/her setting with the intent to learn. After the event, the two debrief with questions like, “What went well?”, “What didn’t go well”, and “What can we improve?”.
- **I do. You help. We talk:** During this phase the leader gives a small responsibility along with helpful coaching tips. Keep in mind that it will not seem small to the developing leader. This may include opening up in prayer or opening the group with an ice-breaker. Afterwards, talk about his/her interaction.
- **You do. I help. We talk:** During this phase the developing leader takes on most of the leadership responsibilities (like leading a discussion). The leader is present and available to help and may want to open up the meeting by reminding the group about the coaching model. There is a debrief afterwards.
- **You do. I watch. We talk:** The developing leader takes on most of the responsibilities, including sending out necessary communication prior to event, leading the entire group, and following up with necessary administrative responsibilities after the group. It may take weeks (or months) for the developing leader to gain confidence and feel equipped. There is a debrief afterwards.
- **You do. The coach is not present. We talk:** The leader removes him/herself from the setting and allows the developing leader to take all responsibilities. Debrief afterwards.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)*

# LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

As you consider joining in the vision of Praise, investing your heart, time, and finances into the church, it is important to have confidence in the church. Our goal in sharing the following information is that you will understand that we are structured to build and maintain trust, integrity, & accountability.

The Leadership structure of Praise is made up of Pastor, Staff, and Trustees.

1. **Pastor Lead:** one person responsible
2. **Staff Guided:** carries out the vision
3. **Trustee Guarded:** non-staff members who have demonstrated Christian faithfulness and integrity. Guard in fiscal and morality matters.

## Church Finances

At Praise we practice tithing for the support of the vision/mission. We recognize that 10%, or percentage giving is the Biblical standard for giving.

1. God is the giver of **Everything** we have. It's a gift.
2. Not everything **Given** to us is for us, but to do God's work through us.
3. Giving is not a business transaction, but an expression of **Worship**

## Membership

Praise Church does not have a formal membership, but we do have what we like to think of as partnership... partnership in the vision!

Here are the ways you can partner with Praise Church:

1. Regular Sunday attendance
2. Join A Small Group
3. Join a Go Team and serve
4. Financial support

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

## **Our Beliefs**

While untraditional in our approach, we are firmly planted in biblical truth.

## **God**

We believe there is one God – the Creator of the universe. God is not a remote, disinterested spectator – he is bigger, better and closer than we can imagine. He exists eternally in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:26,27; 3:22; Psalms 90:2; 14:1; Matthew 28:19; John 17:3; John 1:1)

## **Jesus Christ**

Far more than a moral man or a great teacher, we believe that Jesus is who he said he was – the Son of God. Jesus is God showing himself to us. He lived a sinless life, willingly offering Himself up as the ultimate sacrifice to cover the sins of everyone who has ever lived. He arose from the dead after three days, showing his power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven and will return again to earth to reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords. We believe that Jesus is the only mediator between us and God, and that we can know him personally. (Matthew 1:22,23; John 14:1-30; Hebrews 4:14,15; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11; Isaiah 9:6)

## **Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is present in the world to draw us towards God and make us aware of our need for Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit, God lives in and through us now. The Holy Spirit lives in the Christian from the moment of salvation, giving us the power for living, and understanding for truth and guidance in doing what is right. We believe that His power and gifts are available to all believers today. (John 16:7-13; 14:16,17; Acts 1:8, 2:4,38,39; 1 Corinthians 3:16)

## **The Bible**

The Bible is God's word, our ultimate source of truth, the foundation of our beliefs and our guidebook for living. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any error. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; Proverbs 30:5)

## **Salvation**

We believe that God longs to be in a relationship with everyone He has created, but sin separates us from that relationship. It's impossible to make up for our sins through self-improvement or good behavior, but God extended His grace to us, through Jesus, to restore what has been broken by our sin. Only by accepting this gift and placing our trust in Jesus can we be saved from the penalty of sin. (Romans 3:23; 6:23; 10:9,10; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6)

## **Second Coming**

Jesus is coming again to be reunited with us. We believe in the literal second coming of Jesus, the literal rule of Christ upon earth and the ultimate victory of the eternal Kingdom of God. (Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 22:7; John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17)

## **Eternity**

Heaven and Hell are real places. For Christians, death is the beginning, not the end. We believe that man was created to exist forever. He will exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with God is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are places of eternal existence. (John 3:16; Revelation 20:15; Matthew 25:31-46)

## SOCIAL ISSUES STATEMENT

We examine life's tough issues through the lens of our infallible guide and divine truth: Holy Scripture (II Timothy 3:16-17).

We believe God's word is the ultimate authority on our Church, related policies and personal conduct. As followers of Jesus, our beliefs must be consistent with His teaching.

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image of God. Rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe the term "marriage" has only one meaning and is sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that sexual immorality is any sexual activity outside of marriage.

We do believe that every person should be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity. We oppose discrimination based on race, age, sex, and nationality.