

WESTMINSTER FELLOWSHIP DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus said: “Go and make disciples of all nations . . .” (Matthew 28:20)

The church is for worship and discipleship.

The marks of a true church are doctrine, sacraments and discipline.

Doctrine is based on the historically cumulative insight of the pastor-teachers.

Westminster Fellowship (WF) holds to historic Christianity as it has been summed up in the Westminster Standards (see Westminster Fellowship Affirmation [here](#)).

Sacraments are to be understood according to the doctrine of the church and administered to those who have a credible profession of faith.

Discipleship is based on membership vows, in order that members may grow and be corrected in doctrine and life, and come to maturity, fruitfulness, unity and fullness of life in God.

Discipline has several requirements:

1. It requires preparation for membership vows (see [here](#)) and oversight in the keeping of those vows.
2. It requires an understanding of sanctification: the difference between forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9), and the condition of the human heart requiring cleansing (see: the [promise and curse](#) in Genesis 3; Jeremiah 17:9; WCF 5.5).
3. It requires transparency (relevant self-disclosure) for accountability to those closest to us. If there is transparency with another person, that person can know what to expect in the transparent person's life.
4. It requires the input of oversight which is called to discern the unmanifest root of manifest sin. Oversight should know what to anticipate in the sanctification of each member and act where there are concerns.
5. It requires respect for the authority of the word of God in knowing the truth by which we are sanctified. In our fallen autonomy the word of God is often compromised by holding to other authorities.
6. It requires respect for the authority and discipline of the church (vow #4 – see [here](#)). One who takes the vows must be willing to have their claims to know be examined by oversight through discussion. Unwillingness to discuss reveals a false claim to know and to be corrected (John 3:21).
7. It requires treating others as rational beings with responsibility for their choices. There is a spiritual war between belief and unbelief (see [here](#)); upon withdrawal of membership without discussion a person will attempt to avoid the inherent consequences of their choices by blaming others. The church's response to slander is to make the truth known in appropriate ways.