

## **REAL LIFE MINISTRIES DOCTRINE – WHAT UNIFIES US AS A TEAM**

We have tried to glorify Christ in all we do. Our church has sought to be unified on doctrines we hold essential. Jesus said that the world would know that we are His because we love one another and because we are one (John 13:35; John 17:21-22). Real Life Ministries has people with many different church backgrounds, but we are a family. Real Life Ministries strives to be in complete agreement and unified on beliefs essential for salvation, while permitting differing interpretations on beliefs not essential for salvation.

John 17:20-22 (NIV)

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one. Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

1 Corinthians 1:10 (NLT)

Now, dear brothers and sisters, I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to stop arguing among yourselves. Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

1 Timothy 4:6 (NIV)

If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

(NOTE: good teaching = sound doctrine)

1. Doctrine forms right beliefs about God, ourselves, and others.
2. Doctrine unifies and aligns us to live out the Vision, Mission, and Process of Jesus' Church.
3. Doctrine affects how we live out our faith in every area (sphere) of our lives.

We start this doctrinal document with the foundation for all the rest. Because Scripture is given by God and thus infallible, we seek to understand it according to the Holy Spirit's intended meaning by using proper hermeneutical tools. Our understanding begins with the clear understanding of the first church as our guide.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: The BIBLE**

We believe the Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because it is inspired by God, the Bible is infallible, inerrant, and absolute truth. It is the ultimate and final authority for Christian beliefs and living.

Supportive Scripture: Psalms 12:6, 119:105, 160; Proverbs 30:5; 2 Timothy 1:13, 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

*The following are doctrines essential for salvation:*

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: GOD**

We believe God is self-existent, and by nature He is eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere. God has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are in agreement and unified with each other's role in the Godhead. We believe these three are co-equal and are one God.

Supportive Scripture: Genesis 1:1, 26-27; 3:22; Deuteronomy 6:4; Job 38, 39, & 40; Psalm 90:2, 139:1-4, 7-10; Isaiah 40:13-17, 45:18; Matthew 19:26, 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2. John 1:1, Colossians 1:15ff

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: GOD the FATHER**

We believe that God the Father holds all the attributes of God while exercising a unique role in the Godhead. He is the father of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and yet still one with both as God. God the Father adopts believers in Jesus Christ into a relationship with Him as their Father (see Salvation).

Supportive Scripture: John 15:1-4; Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 9:6, 63:16; John 20:17; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: GOD the Son – JESUS**

We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and He is God. He is coequal with the Father and Holy Spirit, present and participating in creation. Jesus took on human flesh in the fullness of time so

that He could live a sinless human life and offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He was raised from the dead, after three days, victorious over the power of sin and death. He ascended to Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead and to make all things new.

Supportive Scripture: Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:1-5; 8:58; 14:10-30; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:3-4; I Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 1:15-23; I Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 4:14-15; Revelation 1:8.

#### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: GOD the HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe the Holy Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make all people aware of their sin and their need for Jesus Christ. His purpose in our time is to bring glory to Jesus and to intercede with God the Father on our behalf. He dwells in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He gives gifts to believers providing them with power to grow in Christlikeness, to understand spiritual truth, and to serve the mission of the church.

Supportive Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2; Psalm 51:10-12; John 14:16-17, 16:7-13, 17; Acts 1:8; Romans 5:5; I Corinthians 2:12; 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 1:13, 5:18; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

#### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: SALVATION**

We believe that all have sinned (willful disobedience to God). We believe that the wages of sin is death and eternal separation from God. Salvation is a free gift of God. Jesus Christ's death and his resurrection is the only sufficient payment for our sins. It's only by grace through faith that one can receive this free gift. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their life. This is evidenced by repentance, confession, baptism by immersion, and a life submitted to Christ. We believe a baby or a young child cannot understand sin or the need for Christ and are under God's grace until an age of accountability determined by God (2 Samuel 12:23; Matthew 18:2-3; 19:13-15).

Supportive Scripture: John 1:12, 14:6; Romans 5:1, 6:23; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5, Romans 10:9-13, Acts 2:38-40.

*The following doctrines are essential for unity: though non-salvational, we must have understanding and agreement.*

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: MANKIND**

We believe people are made in the image of God, male and female He created them, to be in relationship with Him, to become like Him in character, and to bring Him glory. We believe all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Sin separates people from God, thus affecting all areas of life, resulting in suffering and hopelessness apart from Jesus Christ.

Supportive Scripture: Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3; Psalms 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6; Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 3:23.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: THE CHURCH**

We believe the church is the body and bride of Christ and also serves as the household of faith. It is a living temple where God dwells in each of His people. We believe that everyone that has been saved by Christ is a member of His church and called to be a connected and beneficial part of His body. We believe that the church is commanded to love God and others, thus relationship is the primary vehicle through which we share the gospel, and through which the church will grow to maturity. We believe that His church exists throughout the world, and is witnessed and experienced in local autonomous gatherings of believers that are overseen by Elders. We believe submission to God's authority and the authority of the appointed Elders in the local church is essential for unity and reveals our spiritual maturity.

Supportive Scripture: Ephesians. 4:16; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 5:24-32; Galatians. 6:10; 1 Peter 2:4-5; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Acts 14:23; Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:3-10; Colossians 3:14-15. Romans 13, Hebrews 13.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: THE ELDERSHIP MODEL OF THE CHURCH**

We believe Christ is the head of the church. We believe the local Church should be governed by a plurality of male elders (who have been appointed by existing Elders) to oversee the carrying out of His will in the local assembly of believers.

We believe men who have aspired to a Pastoral role and have been confirmed through character and gifting by our existing Eldership and Pastoral staff must go through an ordination process before they are publicly set aside and ordained as Pastors at Real Life Ministries. Ordained

Pastors have both the authority and the expectation to perform sacerdotal functions and ministerial services such as Weddings, Funerals, Preaching/Teaching, Baptism, Communion, Shepherding, Disciple-making, Pastoral Counseling and other ministerial services as needed.

Supportive Scripture: Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 5:17; Ephesians 5:23-25; 1 Peter 5:1-4. Acts 13:1-3, 20:26-31; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 4:14, 5:17, 22.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: BAPTISM**

We believe baptism, by immersion, was both modeled and commanded by Christ. We believe baptism is only for those who believe in Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior. We believe one who has believed, confessed and repented should be baptized, in a timely act of obedience.

Supportive Scripture: Matthew 28:18-21, Acts 2:37-38, Acts 8:35-39, Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12, 1 Corinthians 12:13.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: COMMUNION**

We believe celebrating communion was both modeled and commanded by Christ. We believe communion is a memorial, a proclamation, and representative of the new covenant in Christ Jesus as defined by Scripture;: “For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25 NIV).

It is a distinction of our church that we take communion every week. We do not believe you have to take communion every week; however, when you do partake in it, do so in a correct manner. (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:25–28) We believe communion is a sacred event for those who have received salvation. When we take it, we do so in a distinctive manner.

“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” (1 Corinthians 11:27–28)

We do this by self-examination.

- Do I have any sins to confess? (1 John 1:9)
- Do I have any relationships to repair? (Matthew 5:23–24)
- Do I need to recommit my life? (Romans 12:1)

Who should take it?

- Only those who believe should take communion.
- We do not recommend young children, who do not understand salvation and relationship with Christ, take it.

Supportive Scripture: Matthew 26:26-28; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30, 10:16; 1 Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: PRIESTHOOD OF EVERY BELIEVER**

We believe we have been given direct access to God through Jesus Christ, the great high priest. We believe it is God’s design for every believer to play a role in the priesthood, living out the ministry and mission of His Church.

Supportive Scriptures: Ephesians 4:11-13; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-30; 1 Peter 2:5,9; 1 Peter 4:10-11; Hebrews 4; Hebrews 10.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

We believe there are a variety of gifts, given by the Holy Spirit, to be used to serve and build up the body of Christ and bring glory to God. We believe God has designed the local church like a physical body, consisting of many members, with Jesus Christ as the head. We believe we are interdependent on each other and, a clear demonstration, as St. Paul writes, “...that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.” Therefore, we believe all believers must be the part God has designed and gifted them to be, if not, the body suffers.

Some in our church believe all the ‘extraordinary’ spiritual gifts are for today, others believe some of these gifts are for today, while others believe none of these gifts are for today. We believe you can hold any of the views below and still be a Christian.

The non-negotiable regarding the ‘extraordinary’ spiritual gifts:

- You can believe some of the gifts are for today, and be wrong, and still be a Christian.
- You can believe that all of the gifts are for today, and be wrong, and still be a Christian.
- You can believe that none of the gifts are for today, and be wrong, and still be a Christian.
- For those who believe that the gifts are present today: Remember, the Spirit of God does not work contrary to the Word of God.

At Real Life, it is okay to believe differently on this issue, but we will act in this way:

- Because this is a non-salvation area of contention between believers, we will not have a place in our church where the gift of tongues is encouraged.
- We will not allow the discussion of a non-salvation issue to destroy the Lord's work.
- We do believe God performs miracles and answers our prayer, and, through the work of the Holy Spirit, empowers us to serve Him and do good works.

For churches where the gift of tongues and prophecy are used, there are rules for their use:

- If someone speaks in a tongue, it will be one at time. (1 Corinthians 14:27, 33, 40)
- There must be an interpreter. (1 Corinthians 14:28)
- There must be one who discerns whether it comes from God. (1 John 4:1)
- If it is a prayer language, there is a place to pray. (Matthew 6:6)
- All the gifts must be used to edify the church, not the individual. (1 Corinthians 14:4–5, 26)
- No one has all the gifts, but the church is to be a body. (1 Corinthians 12:27–30)
- For those who believe prophecy is a gift active today, then the rules of a prophet apply. (Deuteronomy 18:20–22)

Supportive Scripture: Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Peter 4:7-11.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: STEWARDSHIP & GENEROSITY**

At Real Life Ministries Silver Valley, we have been called to reach the world for Jesus one person at a time. We exist to make disciples who makes disciples. One of the ways to foster discipleship is the stewardship of our lives. Here at Real Life, we practice generous giving. We believe we should give of our talents, finances, and time.

Why we financially give to the local church: The church is the bride of Christ, established by Him to be used to reach a lost and dying world. The church has material needs, much like each one of us does. Real Life pays its pastors and staff according to 1 Timothy 5:17-18 “Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain.” And another place, “Those who work deserve their pay.” The Elder position at Real Life is not paid as this is an appointed volunteer position.

How much to give: God expects us to be good stewards of our time, gifts, and money. Old Testament law required a tithe or first fruit. Tithe actually means 10%. They were also required to give offerings for sacrifices during certain times or festivals. With both the tithe and offering it combined to equal about 23%. While Old Testament tithing was done out of obedience to the Law; we are now under grace. (John 1:17) Through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are now free to give according to the heart, which does not limit us to just 10%. 2 Cor 9:7-8 “You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. ‘For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.’ And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need, and plenty left over to share with others.”

Time, Talents & Resources: 1 Peter 4:10 “God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.” See also 1 Corinthians 12. At Real Life, we believe that each person is given special talents and gifts from God to use in the body and for the community. We want each person to grow up in their faith realizing the responsibility and privilege of stewardship. Everything we have comes from God and there is no way we can ‘out-give’ God.

We have too much debt to give at this point, can we still become members? Yes. Part of the discipleship process is to grow up in our faith. As we grow up, we learn more about what Jesus wants for our lives. We start to see things differently. We become less “us” centered, and more “others” centered. We start to care more about what God cares about. We begin to re-structure our personal lives and live biblically. As we grow it begins to be reflected in what we do, what we share, and what we give.

Scripture References: Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:7-12; Acts 4:32-5:11; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15; Mark 12:43; 2 Samuel 24:24; Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42



## **RLM Doctrinal Statement: MARRIAGE, GENDER & SEXUALITY**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25, Matthew 19:4-6). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity, of any kind, be engaged in outside of marriage.

We acknowledge that there are some individuals that do not have a physical attraction towards the opposite sex, or who do not wish to marry. We believe these brothers and sisters are wholeheartedly supported and encouraged to remain voluntarily celibate as delineated in Scripture. (Matthew 19:10-12, 1 Corinthians 7:1-8, 32-38, Isaiah 56:3-5)

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Therefore, known or suspected habitual and unrepentant practice of these sexual sins will be reason for denial of membership and/or a revocation of membership and/or employment at Real Life Ministries, together with the benefits that accrue therefrom.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Real Life Ministries.

We believe that neither the federal government, the state, nor the church, nor any other individual possess the authority or jurisdiction to set or alter Scripture's definition of marriage. Therefore, unions or partnerships that do not conform to the Biblical definition of marriage are not acknowledged by Real Life Ministries as marriage.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Real Life Ministries as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to Real Life Ministries members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Real Life Ministries in any capacity, or

who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by Real Life Ministries Doctrinal Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

Supportive Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Corinthians 6:18, 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 15:18-20, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN MINISTRY**

Real Life Ministries holds to the biblical and historical view of women's roles called complementarianism. This view states that men and women have equal value but differing roles within the church. The two sexes (male and female), complement one another when understood, and practiced biblically. Scripture on the subject: 1 Timothy 3:1-8, Titus 1:5-10, 1 Timothy 2:11-14.

Scripture makes it clear that...

1. Males will hold the role of Elder/Pastor/Overseer within the combined male and female church environments.
2. Men will fulfill the ongoing/regular preaching and teaching responsibilities within the combined weekend and teaching environments.
3. Biblical leadership is not a privilege to abuse, but a responsibility to be taken on. Godly leadership is to lay down your life for others. Godly leaders are humble and considerate of others.
4. We as a church rely upon the wisdom of men and women working together to discern the direction God has given us. We work as partners to lead this church in most every respect.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE**

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God, in His image (Genesis 1:26-28). We believe human life is of immeasurable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. Therefore, we believe that we are called to teach about the value of all human life (Psalm 139).

Supportive Scripture: Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 139.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: ETERNITY**

We believe people were created to live forever. People will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or exist eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is eternal death in Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life in Heaven. We believe that Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. We believe that as we walk out our faith we can have assurance of eternal life with God.

Supportive Scripture: John 3:16, 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; 1 Corinthians 2:7-9; Revelation 20:15.

### **RLM Doctrinal Statement: ETERNAL SECURITY**

We believe a person is saved by grace through faith, and faith is evidenced by action and fruit in a person's life. We believe faith in Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior is eternal security. Below we address the most predominate views of this doctrine:

Some that have an Arminian background believe:

- Salvation can be gained and lost (rejected).
- The way you can tell a person is a Christian is by their fruit (growth).
- Arminians do not believe a bad decision means you lose your salvation.

Scripture references: Luke 15; Romans 11:22–23; Hebrews 6:4–7; 2 Peter 2:20

Some that have a Calvinistic background believe:

- Salvation cannot be lost.
- If a person is not showing fruit and growth, they were never saved to begin with.
- Calvinists do not believe you can do whatever you want and be a Christian.

Scripture references: John 10:28; Romans 8:29–30; 1 John 2:9

NOTE: Both views believe a person is saved by grace through Christ, and this is reflected in a life that is bearing fruit of the Spirit. In our church, we encourage everyone to grow in Christ. We believe you can hold either view about this issue and still be a Christian.

Supportive Scripture: Luke 8:13&14, John 10:27&28, Ephesians 2:8-10, James 2:14, Romans 1:5.

**RLM Doctrinal Statement: THE END TIMES (The Return of Christ)**

We believe there will be a literal return of Christ and a judgment day. We also believe there will be a literal rapture (a catching up of the saints). As to the day and the hour, only God the Father knows.

Supportive Scripture: Matthew 12:36; Matthew 24:36; John 5:22, 16:8; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 2 Peter 3:7; Jude 6.