

Our Story

WHERE WE CAME FROM: OUR STORY

Late in the fall of 1983, seven different families met to consider a question that many were asking. The question addressed was simple, yet also complex: *“Was there a need in the Northwest Arkansas area for a new church with a distinct emphasis and approach to ministry?”* After discussion and prayer, the families were unanimous; there definitely was a need for such a church. On December 8, 1983, the seven couples met and committed to spend seven days in prayer concerning two questions. *First, were they willing to become part of a new church? Second, would they be willing to sacrificially give of their time, resources, and skills to help the church get started?*

The following Sunday, the families came together and voted unanimously to plant a church that would become Fellowship Bible Church of Northwest Arkansas. The seven couples first met in the home of Jim and Anne Arkins for worship, teaching, and sharing. Although the church was soon incorporated, it continued to meet privately. Public ministry to the community was to be delayed several months until the proper foundations were laid. Effective February 1, 1984, the first pastor (Dr. Robert Cupp) began part-time ministry with the new church. Beginning February 5, 1984 the church family met each Sunday in the Benton County Public Services Building.

When Fellowship officially opened to the public on Sunday, May 27, 1984, the core of the church had grown to seventeen families and now met each week in the facilities of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Bentonville. Fellowship was engaged in ministry through small groups that met in homes and corporate worship on Sunday mornings.

OUR STORY

Large GATHERINGS

For three years (1984-1987), Fellowship Bible Church met in the rented facilities of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. In June of 1987, the growing congregation moved to Oakdale Junior High in Rogers. For four years (1987-1991), this school was the Sunday home of Fellowship Bible Church of Northwest Arkansas. Many pioneers would arrive early to transform the Jr. High school into a church gathering place for the morning. Sound equipment, portable cribs, and children's ministry supplies were set up and taken down each week. During this time, additional staff were added and the church began to take on a decidedly "regional" feel. In 1990 Fellowship initiated a building project on 27 acres of land purchased south of Rogers on Pleasant Grove Road. On June 16, 1991, the young church held its first service in the new facility. Since that time, Fellowship has expanded the current campus on several occasions to accommodate rapid growth.

Fellowship implemented the multi-congregational approach to ministry in September of 1998 with the addition of our Saturday Night congregation (now called "Fellowship Mosaic"). In May of 2016 Fellowship implemented the multi-campus approach with the addition of our Fayetteville campus (Fellowship Fayetteville). Fellowship has experienced the blessing of God and enjoyed remarkable growth since its inception in 1983. It is our heart's desire to continue down the path established by those first families of Fellowship to fulfill God's purpose for our lives and to make a difference for Christ in Northwest Arkansas and the world.

WHO WE ARE: OUR VISION & OUR MISSION

Our Ultimate Objective is to glorify God.

Our Vision ...

To change the heart and soul of Northwest Arkansas and the world.

Our Mission ...

To produce and release spiritual leaders who know and express the authentic Christ to Northwest Arkansas and the world.

OUR CHURCH STRUCTURE

Fellowship is a multi-congregational church, Elder-governed and led, staff-managed, and people-driven. All congregations share one vision and mission, identical core beliefs and values, financial resources and facilities, and one strategic plan and process. All congregations are supported by Trans-Congregational Support Ministries and BiLD Training Center.

Currently, Fellowship has four congregations and two ministry divisions:

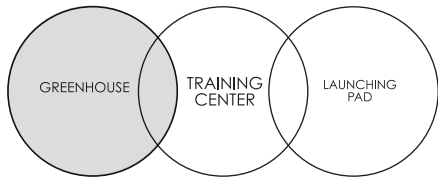
- Fellowship Sunday Morning
 - Fellowship Mosaic
 - Celebrate Recovery
 - Fellowship Fayetteville
-
- BiLD Training Center
 - Trans-Congregational Support Ministries
 1. Finance and Resource Development
 2. Counseling and Care
 3. Human Resources
 4. Buildings and Grounds
 5. Media Resourcing
 6. Information Technology
 7. Connections

OUR STORY

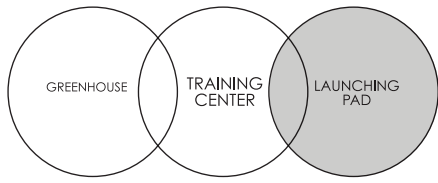
Large GATHERINGS

THREE GUIDING METAPHORS

There are three guiding metaphors that best describe the vision and mission of Fellowship: we are a “greenhouse,” a “training center,” and a “launching pad.”

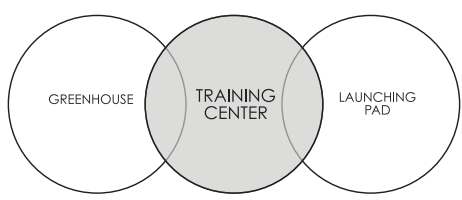


The starting point is the “greenhouse” where birth, growth, healing, and flourishing occur. Fellowship seeks to see life-change in each person that participates in our ministries. The “greenhouse” is geared for new life daily in Christ.



The ending point is the “launching pad” where each person is released to passionately pursue God’s will for their life—to personally embrace a bigger mission, a higher calling, and greater ministry opportunities. Fellowship seeks to fulfill our calling to release spiritual leaders into Northwest Arkansas and the world. We want to be the hands and feet of Christ in a world that desperately needs Him.

Biblical Institute of Leadership Development



OUR STORY

Large GATHERINGS

The BiLD Training Center (Biblical Institute of Leadership Development) is a ministry of Fellowship Bible Church of Northwest Arkansas. BiLD focuses on developing emerging leaders, partnerships with like-minded churches and non-profit organizations, global outreach, and church planting. BiLD is funded by contributions from Fellowship's operating budget and from the Fellowship Foundation.

OUR LEADERSHIP

We are governed and led by a Board of Elders. Fellowship practices "elder rule" in our governance strategy. The Scriptures teach that elders (or overseers or shepherds) are responsible for the health and direction of the church. Our church is not run by any one individual, a select few staff people, or by the proxy of the whole. We are led by our Elder Board through the ministry of the Directional Leader. Elders are nominated by the church body and prayerfully selected by the existing Elder Board. The spiritual qualifications for elders are found in I Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9. The church is to recognize those who are spiritually qualified for church leadership. These individuals are then to minister to the church by godly service and rule. Our staff and community group leaders perform the function of carrying out the functional parameters and policies of the Elder Board.

What is the role of an elder? The Bible gives guidelines concerning the functional responsibility of the office of elder.

Biblical Parameters of Elder Leadership

1. To oversee or rule well

I Thessalonians 5:12; I Timothy 3:1; I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17

The first function of an elder is to direct the affairs of the church (cf. I Tim 5:17—NIV). In a mutual-ministry approach, the shared responsibility of elder rule will minimize individual weaknesses and maximize strengths. Therefore, the proper administration of the church rests with the

elders. The Elder Board may choose to delegate their responsibilities to the church staff, but the authority for the leadership of the church remains with the overseers.

2. To shepherd the flock of God

Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2

A major function of elders is to shepherd the church. “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care ...” (1 Peter 5:2a—NIV). The imagery of shepherding suggests tender care, protection, and feeding. These principles lie at the heart of the shepherd-minister who would serve as an elder. They form a Biblical framework for effective ministry.

3. To be an example

1 Peter 5:3-5; Hebrews 13:7

In emphasizing this point, the writer of Hebrews noted the function in this way: “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” (Heb 13:7—NIV). Elders cannot lead further into spiritual things than they have personally gone. Each elder within God’s church must have the attitude of the Apostle Paul. “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1—NASB).

4. To guard right doctrine

1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9

A critical ingredient to effective overseeing is the elder’s command of Scripture. He is to be one who is “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (Titus 1:9—NASB). Doctrinal purity is a prerequisite to spiritual health and vitality. Elders are charged with the task of maintaining the church on solid, Biblical ground.

5. **To confront and initiate discipline when necessary**
Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; see also 1 Thessalonians 5:12

If the tasks of careful oversight and doctrinal purity are taken seriously, then a proper administration of church discipline will naturally follow. Spiritual discipline is never easy, but it is commanded.

The elders must assume their responsibility for the care of the church. It is no wonder, then, that the local body of believers is encouraged in the following way: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." (Heb 13:17—NASB)

6. **To minister to the sick (or weak) and needy**
James 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:3-16; compare also God's concern for the needy in Psalm 12:5; 69:33; et al.; see also "hospitable" in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8

A part of the elders' responsibility is to shepherd those in need. While there is debate as to whether the "sick" of James 5 are physically sick or spiritually weak (perhaps both), one definite principle is sure. The elders are to evidence their concern for those who are in need by faithful prayer. For certain, an elder's ministry reaches out to those in need.

7. **To appoint and commission leadership**
1 Timothy 5:22; 1 Timothy 4:14; compare with Ephesians 4:11-12ff

As elders oversee and shepherd the church, they will, of necessity, be equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. Not only do elders care for the administrative organization of the church, but they are responsible for the raising up of new leadership as well. Such an ongoing task requires the utmost spiritual discernment and care.

Functional Parameters of Elder Leadership at Fellowship

1. Sustain the Mission
2. Extend the Vision
3. Establish Yearly Staff Parameters and Goals
4. Evaluate and Approve the Staff Ministry Plan
5. Ensure the Resources
6. Oversee the Health of Staff and Congregation
7. Define the Operating Principles
8. Evaluate the Role and Ministry of the Directional Leader

OUR STAFF

Fellowship embraces the concept of team staffing. We use these teams to facilitate and manage ministry. The staff team, under the leadership of the Elder Board and Directional Leader (who also serves as an elder), exists to serve the greater team of our lay leaders. The staff team is here to equip and enable lay leaders to do ministry (Eph 4:11-12). Our desire is to produce and release spiritual leaders.

The staff team concept also keeps Fellowship from becoming a personality-driven church. This is Christ's church and we are here to serve Him. We often say around Fellowship, "we want our name nowhere and our fingerprints everywhere." This is not only true of our church, but also of our staff. Our staff ministers are to be humble servants.

QUESTIONS

In this large gathering, you will be given the opportunity to ask questions about Fellowship. As you "discover" more about our church (your church), please be prepared to ask those questions.