

# Elder and Staff Guiding Principles



*Our Guiding Principles are based on honest intentions, grace, love and mutual respect. They reflect our priority of being and becoming healthy, whole people, and that this requires self-awareness and God-awareness. We don't want to micromanage each other's lives. We trust one another to attend to our guiding principles consistently, not perfectly. We celebrate the mystery that despite our diversity and brokenness, it is by grace that we are unified.*

## 1. Take Responsibility

**We take responsibility for our words, actions and assumptions.** We take ownership of how we are impacting the room and bring our full, honest selves into community. We do this by managing our own reactivity and anxiety rather than projecting it onto others. We do not blame, fix, or withdraw. Instead, we ground ourselves in prayer and truth, refusing to let urgency or fear set our tone. In doing so, we can lead from a non-anxious presence.

## 2. Practice Vulnerability and Trust

**We practice emotional honesty with kindness.** We speak the truth in love, even when it's uncomfortable. We resist avoidance and sarcasm in favor of clarity and compassion. We offer feedback with humility and receive it with openness, recognizing that being challenged can be an act of care.

**We trust one another with our real selves.** We choose to bring not just our work, but our hearts. We practice vulnerability, trusting that this is where real connection forms. We cultivate an environment where it's safe to be known, and we handle one another's stories with care.

**We value unity without demanding uniformity.** We resist comparison, competition, and sameness. We honor the image of God uniquely expressed in each person. We believe unity is built through trust, not control. We stay committed even in disagreement, listening well and seeking to understand. We remember that love is what binds us together in Jesus.

## 3. Invite Feedback

**We stay curious and listen without defensiveness.** We invite others to tell us how they experience us or what they notice about our words or behavior that seems out of alignment with the way of Jesus. We receive others' perspectives as a gift—not a threat. In this way, we can listen to understand.

**We walk in mutual submission.** We recognize that no one is above feedback. We submit to one another out of reverence for Jesus, recognizing that leadership in the kingdom is not about power or control, but about humility and service.

**We commit to growth, not perfection.** We are people in process. We welcome correction without shame and extend grace for mistakes. We celebrate progress and stay open to the Spirit's invitation to form us through all that comes our way, especially trials and suffering.

## 4. Pursue Repair

**We repair what gets ruptured.** Conflict and missteps are inevitable in real relationships. When trust is strained, we move toward one another, not away. We do not triangulate or isolate. We pursue one another with grace, believing that the Spirit can hold tension and foster healing. Because of this, we can practice confession, forgiveness, and restoration as a normal part of healthy team life.

## 5. Honor Limits

**We honor our human-sized limits without shame.** We respect each other's emotional, spiritual, and practical limits. We encourage rhythms of rest, Sabbath, and renewal as vital to our shared health.