

New Bridge Baptist Church Purpose Statement

Matthew 22:37-39 is the biblical foundation for the purpose statement of New Bridge Baptist Church, "At New Bridge Baptist Church, we want every person to LOVE GOD, LEARN TOGETHER, and SERVE OTHERS."

LOVE GOD

Matthew, Chapter 22, tells of Jesus' encounter with a man who asked what was the greatest commandment in all of Scripture. Jesus' reply was very simple and direct – He quoted from God's instruction to Moses in Deuteronomy 6:4, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*" Then Jesus said, "*This is the first and greatest commandment.*" This begs the question, "What did Jesus mean when he stated that it was the *first* and *greatest* command?"

If we were to look at the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy, we'd see that this was not the *first* in a list of commands that God had given. The Ten Commandments are found in Chapter 5, and in actual fact, were not the *first* commands that God had given His people. Before these, God had already given many laws to the Israelite people. So, Jesus obviously did not mean it was the *first* in the sense of being the initial command.

Jesus' statement that day was that the most important thing; the *first* thing that God asks of us all, is to LOVE GOD fully and completely. This command is not necessarily first in sequence, but it is *first* in *priority*. The first and greatest command for the church is to LOVE GOD. For this reason, here at New Bridge Church, we have chosen to make this our ***first priority***.

At New Bridge, we want every person to LOVE GOD, and we will use our worship times to lead people into a saving, love relationship with Jesus Christ.

LEARN TOGETHER

In Matthew 22, Jesus highlights not only the greatest commandment, but He mentions the second most important one as well. "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" At New Bridge, our great desire is to see people come to LOVE GOD by trusting Jesus as Savior, and begin to worship Him as Lord. However, we realize that Jesus also calls us to live in community with other believers. In fact, Jesus said that this was the second most important commandment.

Jesus, Himself, called twelve men to be his close followers. In a sense, these men were the Christian church's first small group. They spent time together learning about God, about each other, and about God's plan for each of their lives. Many among Jesus' disciples already assumed that they knew plenty about God and His plan for them. It was only through deeper time studying with Jesus that they *really* learned what they needed to know.

Jesus' small group had a two-fold purpose; they would LEARN TOGETHER how to love Jesus, and they would LEARN TOGETHER how to love each other. For this reason, here at New Bridge Church, we have chosen to make this **second priority**. In our small groups, we continue to grow in our love for God and we begin to learn how to love one another.

At New Bridge, we want every person to LEARN TOGETHER, and we will use our small groups to lead people into a deeper love for God and each other.

SERVE OTHERS

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." was Jesus' command in Matthew 22:39. He was very clear that this is to be a priority for all those who choose to follow Him as Savior and Lord. Loving one another is not an option for the follower of Jesus, it is a requirement. But, what does it mean to *"love our neighbor?"* In fact, Luke 10:25-37 records the same conversation as in Matthew, but in Luke, the questioner goes further by asking *"Who is my neighbor?"* Jesus responds to the man's question by telling the story of "The Good Samaritan."

While travelling, a man is accosted by robbers and left to die on the roadside. Two religious leaders come by, but choose not to stop and help. Finally, a foreigner, a Samaritan, stops to bandage the man's wounds, carry him to town, and pay for his medical care. At the end of the story, Jesus asks, *"Which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among thieves?"* The man responds, *"The one who showed him mercy."* Then Jesus responded, *"Go and do likewise."*

If we are to fulfill the second greatest commandment, then we must *"Go and do likewise."* We must move beyond ourselves and our needs, wants, and desires, and reach out to others. We must SERVE OTHERS by caring for their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. For this reason, here at New Bridge Church, we have chosen to make this our **third priority**. Through our service and missions ministries, we will continue to love our neighbors by meeting their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs.

At New Bridge, we want every person to SERVE OTHERS, and we will use our service and missions ministries to lead people to meet our neighbors' spiritual, emotional, and physical needs.

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Many people will ask, *"Isn't there more to it than this? Aren't we going to do more?"* In response, we refer people to Jesus' last statement to the man in Matthew 22, *"On these two commands, hang all the law and the prophets."* In other words, *if you can do these two things (LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS) then you have accomplished all that the Bible asks of you.*

What more do we need . . .

LOVE GOD, LEARN TOGETHER, SERVE OTHERS.