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# BRANCH BASICS

A Ministry of The Branch Church, San Bernardino, CA

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# Branch Basics

WELCOME!

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*"Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed." Proverbs 15:22*

## The Purpose of this Class

This study is an overview of the structure and strategy of The Branch Church. While our church is ever evolving, and will no doubt change over the years, this class will serve as the foundation for the understanding you have about your church home at The Branch. This class will provide a "summarized" view of what our church is about, and how you fit in God's plan for growing it.

There is no doubt that God has brought you here for a purpose. If you are taking this class, it is hopefully because you have a strong desire in your heart to grow deeper in your walk with God, grow more connected with your church, and find out how you can better serve God in ministry. We hope we can help facilitate these goals by sharing how our church is shaped and by leaving plenty of room for you to ask questions and give helpful comments.

## Class Objectives

At the conclusion of this class, the participants will:

1) Be familiar with The Branch's perspective on the important basics of Christianity.

- **Rooted** -

2) Be able to recognize what the characteristics of a growing believer are.

- **Growing** -

3) Be familiar with our church's belief statements and doctrines.

- **Branching Out** -

4) Be familiar with The Branch's Serving Our World strategy and other church ministries, and be able to evaluate their place for service at The Branch.

- **Bearing Fruit** -

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# Branch Basics Part I

“ROOTED” IN SALVATION

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## The Basics of Christianity

Usually when people visit a large people venue like a mall or theme park, one of the most important assets to these places are the "You are here" maps. At The Branch, our "You are here" map is a four-fold roadmap we call "Rooted, Growing, Bearing Fruit, and Branching Out." These are all key words that will help you understand what are the "basics" of Christianity and will also help as you navigate through your Christian life.



*"Salvation comes through a cross and a crucified Christ." - Andrew Murray*

### Rooted – Our Salvation

At The Branch our first and foremost claim to who we are, is founded on "whose" we are. If the question is what is the chief emphasis of our Christianity? The answer is that it is on "Who" we belong to. We are rooted in Jesus.

*"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."  
Galatians 3:26-28 (NASB)*

We believe from the bible that Jesus is the source and foundation of our faith. He is the Christ and the total embodiment of \_\_\_\_\_.

The bible speaks of Jesus in so many different ways, that it is incredibly difficult to try and put together a written snapshot of just who Jesus is. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, Jesus is described in the most magnificent ways, and ultimately as being the one true Way to having \_\_\_\_\_ and entrance into heaven.

At The Branch, we want you to know that your true journey in life, your true identity in life, and your true purpose in life all begin with knowing Jesus personally.

*"God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him may not be lost, but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NCV)*

## **How does a person become rooted in Jesus?**

In your personal opinion, what do you understand it takes for a person to go to heaven?

Some people say that it is by doing good things.  
Some say if the good they do out weighs the bad.  
Some say it is by being religious or being a member of a church.

How does the Bible answer this question?

There is a word that can be used to answer this question: FAITH.

### **F is for \_\_\_\_\_**

We cannot have eternal life and heaven without God's forgiveness.

*"In Him (meaning Jesus) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV)*

### **A is for \_\_\_\_\_**

Forgiveness is available.

It is - AVAILABLE FOR ALL.

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16 (NKJV)*

It is available for all - BUT NOT AUTOMATIC.

Jesus said, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 7:21 (NKJV)*

### **I is for \_\_\_\_\_**

It is impossible for God to allow sin into heaven.

GOD IS LOVE.

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16 (NKJV)*

But, GOD IS ALSO JUST.

*"For judgment is without mercy." James 2:13 (NKJV)*

MAN IS SINFUL.

*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23 (NKJV)*

## **But how can a sinful person enter heaven, where God allows no sin?**

The answer is found in T.

### **T is for \_\_\_\_\_**

If you were driving down the road and someone asked you to turn, what would he or she be asking you to do? (Change direction.) The Bible uses the word repent to mean a turn or a change in direction.

Turn means repent.

TURN from something - sin and self.

"But unless you repent you will all likewise perish." Luke 13:3b NKJV

TURN to Someone: trust Christ only.

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." 1 Corinthians 15:3b-4 (NKJV)

"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV)

### **H is for \_\_\_\_\_**

Heaven is eternal life . . . HERE . . .

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

John 10:10 (NKJV)

And HEREAFTER.

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." John 14:3 (NKJV)

### **HOW?**

How can a person have God's forgiveness, heaven, eternal life, and Jesus as personal Savior and Lord?

FAITH can also mean . . . "\_\_\_\_\_."

"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV)

**Understanding what has been shared with you, would you like to receive this forgiveness by trusting in Christ as your personal Savior and Lord? If you haven't done so already, you can take this important step by praying a simple prayer of commitment to God:**

*"Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for my sin. Thank you for forgiving me and loving me when I didn't deserve either one of those things. Jesus I believe you exist and that You rose again after your death so that I can have true forgiveness. I admit to You now that I have sinned against you, and I am sorry. I ask You to come into my heart and life, and become my Savior and Lord. I thank You, that You have made me Your child. In Your Name, amen."*

**Perhaps you have prayed a prayer like that before in your life, but you feel you have not "lived" your Christianity out the way God intends for you to do so. If you are ready and you would like, you can pray for recommitment to God:**

*"Dear Jesus, thank You for saving my soul. Even though I have acknowledged You at one time in my life, I haven't been living for You. I ask that You would forgive me now, and set me back on Your path. I know You have a plan for my life, and I know You have never taken Your eyes off of me. Help Me not to waste any more time. I want to live for You. In Your Name, amen."*

Now What!?! Congratulations, if you've prayed that prayer for the first time and meant it, it means you are now a child of God...you are a Christian. You are a member of God's family, and He is no longer just your Creator, He is Your Father. If you prayed a prayer of recommitment, congratulations to you as well. What you will find is that although you may have not been feeling close to God, He never moved. He's been right there and will be there for you for the rest of your life



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# Branch Basics Part II

## "GROWING" IN FAITH

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God is interested in YOU! "You Matter To God!" The next fundamental steps of the Christian life after you have met Jesus personally, is to begin to learn to "walk" with Him. Much like an infant who is getting his legs under him for the first time, the process of growing in faith is a fun and challenging one. God watches over you as you learn to take steps with Him...and He is smiling while you do.



*"By a Carpenter mankind was made, and only by that Carpenter can mankind be remade."*

*- Desiderius Erasmus*

The important thing to remember is that a person needs Jesus first, then the steps of "Christian behavior" will follow. It's never the other way around. Often a person may say, "I will get my life together, and then I will find God." That sort of thinking is as backwards as someone saying, "I'm going to cure my illness first, then I'm going to see a physician."

Maybe you are new in the faith, or maybe no one ever took the time to help you learn to walk with God. Whatever your particular situation, God is ready to meet you where you're at. Steps to spiritual growth are everywhere.

In fact, the next step goes hand in hand with your first step which was salvation, and it is called **Baptism**.





# Baptism

## The Importance of Being Baptized

There are two important reasons to be baptized following your commitment to Jesus.

**1. To follow Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_**

*"Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?' But Jesus answering said to him, 'Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'" Matthew 3:12-17 (NASB)*

**2. Because Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ it.**

*"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20 (NASB)*

## Frequently asked questions about baptism:

### Q – What is the meaning of baptism?

**A** – Baptism is an outward illustration or picture of the inward transformation in your life. Participating in a public baptism service is your public declaration to the world that you are a follower of Jesus, and that you are not ashamed of Him.

*“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB)*

**A** – Baptism also best **symbolizes** the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Whenever a believer is baptized, the picture of what Jesus went through to die for our sins becomes threefold: A person is asked if they have accepted Jesus into their life – this symbolizes the death of Jesus because a person is declaring “death” to their old way of living. Next, the person is dipped completely under water – this symbolizes the burial of Jesus. Finally, the person is brought up out of the water – this symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus.

*“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4 (NASB)*

### Q – Why be baptized by immersion under water? What if I was already sprinkled with water?

**A** – Some churches practice “baptism of confirmation” for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on the behalf of the child. This is different from the baptism talked about in the bible, which was only for those old enough to believe.

**A** – Immersion was the way Jesus was baptized.

**A** – The Greek word for our word Baptize is *Baptizo* which means “To immerse or dip.”

### Q – When should a person be baptized?

**A** – The sooner, the better! Although baptism does not save you, it does demonstrate your obedience to Jesus. Sometimes people have doubts about getting baptized after they have accepted Christ into their lives. This is normal and usually has to do with a misunderstanding of what baptism is, or the natural fear of doing something in front of a crowd. The bible is clear, that God will not only be with you as you take your step of obedience...He will bless you for it.

*“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?’ And Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.” Acts 8:35-38 (NASB)*

## The Lord’s Supper

Baptism is one of two ordinances (visible symbols) within the church that remind us of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The second one is The Lord's Supper or Communion. Jesus instructed His disciples to remember His death and resurrection by partaking in The Lord's Supper.

The Holman bible dictionary gives the following definition for the Lord's Supper:  
"A memorial celebrated by the early church to signify Jesus' sacrificial death for humankind's sin. The form of the observance was established by the Lord at the Last Supper when He symbolically offered Himself as the paschal Lamb of atonement. His actual death the next day fulfilled the prophecy. Only Paul uses the phrase "Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. 11:20), although implication of it is made in Revelation 19:9 ("marriage supper of the Lamb"). Church fathers began to call the occasion the "Eucharist" (that is, "Thanksgiving") from the blessing pronounced over the bread and wine after about A.D. 100. Church groups celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly as a sign of the new covenant sealed by Christ's death and resurrection."



### **What is the Lord's Supper's meaning?**

*"While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, 'Take it; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, 'This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 'Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.' After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." Mark 14:22-26 (NASB)*

**1. It is a \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them." Mark 14:22 (NASB)*

**2. It is a \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"'Take it; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, 'This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.'" Mark 14:22-24 (NASB)*

**3. It is a statement of \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which 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 He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (NASB)*

### **Is the Lord's Supper for everyone?**

No. Only those who are already believers in Jesus Christ should partake in the Lord's Supper. In the same way someone who is not a believer in Jesus would not get baptized, the same should hold true for someone who is not yet a believer in Christ regarding the Lord's Supper.

*"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly."*

*1 Corinthians 11:27-29 (NASB)*

## Community Groups

At The Branch, the small group is the best place for sustained life change to occur. In a small group, people study God's Word together and discuss the issues and challenges of life. It's also where they pray together, care for one another, and are missed if they don't show up. The bible says:

*"By yourself you're unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third? A three-stranded rope isn't easily snapped." – Ecclesiastes 4:12 (MSG)*



Practically speaking, there is not a way for the staff or leaders to personally minister to everyone who attends or visits our church. That's why we place such a high premium on group life. It's how we minister effectively at The Branch. Community groups are small groups of six to eight individuals or five to six married couples who meet in someone's home for fellowship, Bible study, prayer, and accountability. We offer community groups for college students, singles, married couples, ladies, and men.

# More steps to spiritual growth

**Some other key places of learning to grow in your faith are:**



## **Reading your bible –**

The bible is God's instruction manual for life...and His love letter to us. The bible is God's revelation to humankind and teaches us much about who God is and who we are. Through the bible we are called to be in relationship with God. God's word is of immense importance to Christians as it teaches, rebukes, corrects, and shows us how to live a holy life. It is worth our examination and memorization, as the following verses reflect:

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (God's commands are to permeate our lives); Psalm 1:2-3 (We flourish when we delight in God's word); Psalm 119:9 (God's word keeps us from sin); Romans 1:16 (God's word reveals his salvation plan); 2 Timothy 2:15 (God's word is to be rightly handled); 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (God's word thoroughly equips us for life); Hebrews 4:12 (God's word judges our thoughts and our attitudes); James 1:22 (We are not only to listen to God's word, we are to obey it); 2 Peter 1:21 (God's word is inspired by the Holy Spirit).



## **Times of \_\_\_\_\_ –**

Prayer is simply talking with God as we would with anyone we love and trust. Prayer is essential to our relationship with God. We bring our hopes and fears to the Lord and can be sure that they are heard if we are not hiding sin in our hearts. These verses help us to see why prayer must be our priority and how we are to pray:

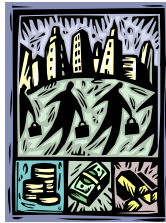
Psalm 119:8 (We can pray that God will open our eyes to His word); Psalm 139:23-24 (We can pray that God will search our hearts and lead us); Matthew 6:5-15 (Jesus taught His disciples how to pray); Luke 5:15-16 (Jesus made prayer His priority); Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16 (We can confidently approach God); Philippians 4:6 (We can bring all our requests and thanks to God); 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (We are to keep praying always); 1 John 5:14-15 (If we pray according to God's will, He grants our requests).



## In \_\_\_\_\_ with other Christians –

God made you unique, but He gave you a common identity in His Son Jesus so you could learn from other believers in Him. The church is a community of fellow sinners saved by the grace of God and called to walk alongside and help each other. God wants us to be in relationship with one another, to rejoice and weep with one another, and to “stimulate one another toward love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24), as these verses illustrate:

Psalm 122:1 (There is joy in going to the house of the Lord); Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (Two are better than one); John 13:34-35 (Love one another that the world may see Christ); Acts 2:42 (We learn and grow in community with one another); Romans 12:15 (We rejoice and weep with others); 1 Corinthians 1:9 (We have fellowship with God); 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 (We are interdependent members of one body); Galatians 6:2 (We carry one another’s burdens); Ephesians 4:12 (God’s leaders prepare us for works of service); Hebrews 10:24-25 (God works through us when we meet together); 1 John 1:3 (We have fellowship with one another).



## Serving God by the giving of your time, talents, and \_\_\_\_\_ –

Giving is God’s signature movement...He gave us His only Son, so that we could become part of His family. Serving God by serving others is something that grows out of our love for God and thankfulness for what God has done for us. This servanthood grows out of love and gratitude and is not involuntary servitude. Jesus had a clear mission: “For the Son of Man did not come to serve, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). It is a mission He desires His followers to carry out too. Everyone who wants to live for Him carefully listens for His call to serve others, as the following verses reflect:

Malachi 3:8-9 (We rob God when we don’t give our tithes and offerings); Malachi 3:10-11 (God blesses us tangibly and intangibly when we tithe and give); 1 Corinthians 15:58 (We are to give ourselves fully to God’s work); Galatians 5:13 (We are to serve one another in love); Ephesians 2:10 (God has prepared good works for each of us to do); Colossians 3:17, 23 (We do all for the Lord and His glory); 2 Thessalonians 3:13 (We should never tire of doing what’s right); Hebrews 9:14 (We are saved to serve the living God); James 1:27 (We are to look after orphans and widows); James 2:26 (Faith without works is dead); James 4:17 (We sin when we knowingly neglect God’s work); 1 Peter 4:10 (We are to use our spiritual gifts to serve others).

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# Branch Basics Part III

## "BRANCHING OUT" TO OTHERS

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Read the following passage from 1 Corinthians chapter 12...

*"As you know, the human body is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. Suppose a foot says, 'I'm not a hand, so I'm not part of the body!' Would that mean it's no longer part of the body? Or suppose an ear says, 'I'm not an eye, so I'm not a part of the body!' Would that mean it's no longer part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell?"*



*"Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a fire?" - C.S. Lewis*

*"So God put each and every part of the body together as he wanted it. How could it be a body if it only had one part? So there are many parts but one body. God's purpose was that the body should not be divided but rather that all of its parts should feel the same concern for each other. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts share its suffering. If one part is praised, all the others share in its happiness. You are Christ's body and each of you is an individual part of it." 1 Corinthians 12:14-20; 25-27 (GWT)*

What a benefit being part of a "church body" is! Just like the human body is able to do so much more with its many parts than, say, if it were simply a giant foot, the church body is able to do so much more to affect our world for God than any one individual person.

"Branching Out" is simply our phrase to capture the idea of the selflessness of a Christian. After becoming eternally **Rooted in Jesus**, and haven taken steps of **Growing in Faith** with Him, it's time to **Branch Out to others**.

The emphasis on this section of the class is to give you a good understanding of the kind of church you are representing. God will place many people in your path who will have spiritual needs and questions. We believe it is important for you to have a firm grasp on the "kind" of church body you belong to.



# Why We Exist as a Church

The purpose of our church is summarized with these key scriptures:

## **The Great Commandment:**

*"And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:36-40 (NASB)*

## **The Great Commission:**

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."  
Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB)*

Out of these two passages we find five purposes for our church:

- To "Love God with all your heart" is **WORSHIP**.
- To "Love your neighbor as yourself" is **MINISTRY**.
- To "Go...and make disciples" is **EVANGELISM**.
- To "Baptize..." is to be in **FELLOWSHIP**.
- To "Teach them...all things" is **DISCIPLESHIP**.

# What We Believe

- God is bigger and better and closer than we can imagine.
- The Bible is God's perfect guidebook for living.
- Jesus is God showing Himself to us.
- Through His Holy Spirit, God lives in and through us now.
- Nothing in creation "just happened." God made it all.
- Grace is the only way to have a relationship with God.
- Faith is the only way to grow in our relationship with God.
- God has allowed evil to provide us with a choice, God can bring good even out of evil events and God promises victory over evil to those who choose him.
- Heaven and hell are real places. Death is a beginning, not the end.
- The church is to serve people like Jesus served people.
- Jesus is coming again.

# The Branch Church Statements

## **In essential beliefs – we have unity**

*“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” Ephesians 4:4-6 (NASB)*

## **In non-essential beliefs – we have liberty**

*“Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions...Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand...But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God...So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God...The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.” Romans 14:1, 4, 10, 12, 22 (NASB)*

## **In all our beliefs – we show charity**

*“If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”  
1 Corinthians 13:2 (NASB)*



# Official Synopsis of Doctrines:

**While we believe in the basic cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith such as:**

- Inerrancy of Scripture
- The Virgin Birth
- The blood atonement
- The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- The bodily, visible second coming of Jesus Christ

We hold these truths to be distinctive of churches of the same faith as our own:

## **- The Deity and Lordship of Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and the second part of the triune Godhead.

Philippians 2:5-11

## **- The Absolute Necessity of the New Birth**

The new birth (salvation) redeems a soul from hell, initiates a personal relationship with God, and precedes the indwelling spirit and God's provisions for His children. John 3:3; 5 & 7

## **- Regenerated Church Membership**

A new birth experience is a prerequisite to church membership. Acts 2:47

## **- Salvation by Faith Alone**

There is nothing an individual contributes to his salvation except to receive by faith the gift of salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9

## **- Priesthood, Equality and Competency of All Believers**

Every child of God has direct access to God through prayer and is directly responsible to God for his actions. Revelation 1:5-6; 2:8-9

## **- The Eternal Security of All Believers**

Once received, there is nothing that can rescind the gift of salvation. 1 Peter 1:5; Romans 8:28-39

## **-The Bible: The Sole authority for Faith and Practice**

The Bible is the complete, inerrant, infallible word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

## **- Autonomy and Theocracy of the Local Church**

The head of the church is Christ and the local church is independent of any outside control.

Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 13:1-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9

## **- Believer's Baptism by Immersion Only**

Baptism is the first of two ordinances of the church and follows salvation. It is administered by a church of the Biblical doctrine with immersion as the only acceptable mode. Romans 6:4

## **- Symbolism of the Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is the second ordinance of the church. Its practice and elements symbolize the body and blood of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

## **- Separation of Church and State**

The head of the church is Christ and the local church is independent of any outside control.

Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 13:1-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9

## **- Evangelism of the World is the Supreme Task of the Church**

It is the responsibility of every Christian and church to spread the gospel of Christ. Matthew 28:19-20

# The Branch Church Structure

The Branch Church has a simple structure using biblical guidelines as our blueprint. We are part of Christ's New Testament Church, meaning we are in between the period of Christ ascending to heaven, and when He will return again. We are truly living in exciting times.

Many people have many different views of what a church is or how it should function, but we feel there are a few key points that every healthy church must have.

## 1. The church is a \_\_\_\_\_.

*"They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."* Acts 2:42-47 (NASB)

A top priority in a fellowship is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

One of the roles of our church elders is to encourage and equip The Branch Church for the work of God's ministry. In order for this to happen most effectively, there must be unity within our church.

*"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."* Ephesians 4:1-6 (NASB)

The bible tells us that any \_\_\_\_\_ causing disunity is \_\_\_\_\_.

Some good references regarding unity in the church are found in: John 13:34-35; Romans 12:16-18, 15:5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:10, 14:33; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 1:27, 2:1-3, 4:2; Colossians 2:2, 3:12-17; 2 Timothy 2:14, 23; 1 Peter 3:8

In fact all of Paul's writings in the New Testament have at least some element of encouragement to each church in the area of unity.

**2. The church is a \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit." 1 Peter 3:8 (NASB)*

A good way to think of this is to remember that we operate on the basis of \_\_\_\_\_ and not \_\_\_\_\_.

*"He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)" 1 Timothy 3:4-5 (NASB)*

*"Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity." 1 Timothy 5:1-2 (NASB)*

**3. The church is a \_\_\_\_\_.**

This means that the church is more than four walls and a roof, it is a living **organism**.

Here are some bible verses that help explain this: 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23; Colossians 1:18, 2:19.

*"The church is a body – not a business. We are an organism, not an organization."*  
– Anonymous

It is because of this reason we function on the basis of **spiritual gifts** and not **elected officers**.

*"For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." Romans 12:3-8 (NASB)*

The simple structure of our body would be to say that the people are the " \_\_\_\_\_ " and the pastors are the " \_\_\_\_\_ ."

*"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-12 (NASB)*

#### 4. The church is made up of \_\_\_\_\_.

"Sheep" is one of Jesus' favorite descriptions of His people.



*"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.' This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. So Jesus said to them again, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 'All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep...My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.'" John 10:1-15, 27-30 (NASB)*

## 5. The sheep are cared for by the \_\_\_\_\_.

*"So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My lambs. He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend My sheep.'" John 21:15-17 (NASB)*

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leaders: "POIMEN," "PRESBUTEROS," and "EPISCOPOS."



*"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:1-5 (NASB)*

*"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" Acts 20:28 (NASB)*

## **Our affiliations:**

The Branch church began in January, 2005 with eight people in a home in north San Bernardino. Immanuel Baptist Church in Highland, CA served as our main sponsoring church and supported us financially and administratively.

Four other groups of churches gave financial support to help get us started:

1. The Inland Empire Southern Baptist Association. This group consists of over 100 churches in the Inland Empire that fellowship together and work together to reach San Bernardino and Riverside counties.
2. The North American Mission Board. The North American Mission Board (NAMB) is the domestic missions agency of the Southern Baptist Convention. NAMB has a local and global vision to see the gospel spread.
3. The California Southern Baptist Convention. Over 1,500 churches that fellowship together with the goal of evangelizing our state.
4. The Southern Baptist Convention. Over 40,000 churches that cooperate together in a worldwide effort of missions and evangelism.

### **Why have any denominational affiliations?**

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is the largest association of Christian churches in America. One out of every 10 churches in America is affiliated with the SBC. SBC churches are a diverse group of churches that include every race, nationality, and ethnic group. Each Sunday, services are held in over 80 languages in the U.S. It is also one of the fastest growing groups, baptizing over 1,000 new Christians a day in the U.S. and begins nearly five new churches a day.

### **What are some of the advantages of this affiliation?**

Every SBC church is completely independent, and there is no denominational control or hierarchy. Each church is self-governed and determines its own practices. For example, each church chooses its own pastor, owns its own buildings and assets, and determines its own practices. Affiliating with the SBC allows us to be mission minded by identifying with other Christians around the world who are known for their commitment to the bible. It allows our church to participate in the largest missionary organization in the world. Through the SBC's Cooperative Program we help support over 7,500 missionaries in 104 countries around the world.



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# Branch Basics Part IV

## "BEARING FRUIT" FOR LIFE

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Jesus used some memorable words just before He made His journey to the cross. He said to His disciples, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."* John 15:5 (NKJV)



*"As soon as a man begins to find Christ, he begins to find others."* - Charles Spurgeon

It would take much more than one class session to fully define what Jesus meant by this, but what He didn't mean was that you would have a Dole pineapple attached to you at all times. What He meant in essence, is that your identity in Christ means you are now a supernatural being. You are much more than flesh, you are spiritual. Bearing fruit in biblical terms means there are now things about your life that others can see as evidence of your conversion to true Christianity. Just like we can tell an apple or an orange tree by the fruit it produces, God's intention for us is that we bear spiritual fruit that will make a difference for eternity.

This doesn't mean you'll be a perfect person, it means you'll be one who is in the process of blooming. Part of this process also means that our will be empowered to go and share what God has done for you, and what He can do for others.

*"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*  
Matthew 28:18-20 (NASB)

**"Bearing Fruit for Life"** entails exercising your \_\_\_\_\_ with:

- A commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ within The Branch.
- A commitment to The Branch's \_\_\_\_\_ strategy.
- A commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ Projects.
- A commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ Projects.

## How do I determine what my Spiritual Gifts are?

There are a wide variety of spiritual gifts "tests" to help aid you in discovering what your spiritual gifts are. Everyone who is a born-again believer is given at least one spiritual gift. One tool that we recommend is the S.H.A.P.E. material which is available as a free download on The Branch's website. This material is designed so that you can do a personal bible study on the topic of your spiritual gifts. The S.H.A.P.E. bible study material is all about finding your unique place in God's redemptive story by discovering your SHAPE for ministry.

Finding out what your spiritual giftedness is can be like beginning a journey to discover your unique place in God's great story. This material will help reveal your; **S**piritual gifts, **H**eart, **A**bilities, **P**ersonality and **E**xperiences. After evaluating your SHAPE, you will write your own life "story" to see your place in God's story.

### Here are some points to ponder regarding your SHAPE for ministry:

What God made me to *BE* determines what He intends for me to *DO*. I will understand the **purpose** I was created for when I understand the kind of **person** I am. This is the secret of knowing God's will for my life!

God is consistent in His plan for each of our lives. He would not give us inborn talents and temperaments, spiritual gifts, and all sorts of life experiences and then not use them! By reviewing and studying these factors, we can discover the ministry has for us... the *unique* way God intends for us to serve Him.

The two results of discovering the ministry I've been shaped for are: fulfillment and fruitfulness.

### Spiritual Gifts Test

Also available as a free download are two spiritual gifts tests. One is a comprehensive and detailed test that will you will need to set aside a good amount of time for. The second one is an alternative test that is shorter and simpler. Both are good tools for learning more about your spiritual gifts.

Both the SHAPE material and the spiritual gifts test can be found at [www.thebranchonline.com/shape](http://www.thebranchonline.com/shape)

"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-12

# What are the Serving Ministry opportunities at The Branch?

*“Since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be.” Romans 12:5 (MSG)*

## **DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES**

**SMALL GROUP LEADER/FACILITATOR:** Facilitates or teaches a small group of adults using church provided curriculum: Community groups, men’s groups and women’s groups. Groups meet weekly in the homes of host families or in local restaurants for Bible study, prayer, support and sharing.

**MEN’S MINISTRY:** Serves in a ministry specifically designed for men by helping to coordinate men’s events/activities.

**WOMEN’S MINISTRY:** Serves in a ministry for women by helping to coordinate women’s events/activities.

**ONE-ON-ONE DISCIPLER:** Encourages, teaches and leads one other person to walk more closely with Jesus in their daily life through Bible study, application of biblical principles and by personal example. Consistent meeting times and accountability are critical for this ministry.

## **FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES**

**CARE MINISTRY:** A ministry that takes care of specific and immediate needs of those in The Branch Church family: financial, physical and emotional.

**MEAL MINISTRY:** A ministry that provides meals for those in the church family who are in the midst of a crisis, after funerals, surgery, and general family hardships.

## **WORSHIP MINISTRIES**

**AUDIO TECHNICIAN:** Sets-up and runs the sound system for weekend worship services and other occasional worship activities.

**VIDEO TECHNICIAN:** Sets-up and runs the MediaShout presentations for weekend worship services and other occasional worship activities.

**WORSHIP TEAM:** A contemporary worship band (musicians and vocalists), which leads the church in worship songs at our weekend worship services as well as special services/events.

**USHER:** Assists people into the worship service, oversees the service in general, assists people where needed, helps in the serving of communion, and collects the offering.

**GREETER:** Warmly greets everyone who is on their way to the worship services with a handshake, a hug, a smile and a worship bulletin. They are the first impressions of friendliness, acceptance and love to members, attenders and visitors alike.

**HOSPITALITY TEAM:** A ministry team that puts out the donuts, prepares refreshments, and serves them up with a warm “good mornin’ y’all!” at the weekend worship services and other special services/events.

**SET-UP / TEAR DOWN TEAM:** Also known as the “Church in a Box” team. A ministry team that sets up the equipment before and tears down the equipment after the weekend worship service and other occasional special services/events.

**PRAYER TEAM:** A ministry team dedicated to pray daily for a variety of needs both within the church family and others whose needs have been brought to their attention.

**ALTAR COUNSELOR:** Greets those who come forward during a worship service invitation to make spiritual commitments, and counsels them based on their decision.

### **SERVICE MINISTRIES**

**CHURCH SIGNS MINISTRY:** Puts out The Branch Church signs before weekend worship services and collects them back up again after the service.

**TRAILER DRIVER:** Tows one of the two Branch Church equipment trailers to and from the weekend worship services and other occasional special services/events.

### **OUTREACH MINISTRIES**

**VISITING TEAM:** A team that does community surveys, follow-up visits to people who have attended special events, and who welcomes those who have visited The Branch Church through a friendly phone call and a visit to their home.

### **STUDENT MINISTRIES**

**COLLEGE AGE LEADER:** Encourages, guides and teaches young college-age adults and also coordinates other college-age events/outings.

**YOUTH GROUP SPONSORS/LEADER:** Encourages, mentors and helps the Jr. and Sr. High youth at our youth program in a large group setting and other youth events/outings helping them deal with the issues they face, guiding them in finding answers to their questions and encouraging them in their relationship with Jesus.

**YOUTH SMALL GROUP LEADER:** Leads a small group of teens, at various times of breakout sessions from the large group Thursday night program. This person facilitates Bible study, prayer, support and sharing.

### **T.W.I.G.S. CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES**

**NURSERY CARE-GIVER:** Nurtures and cares for infants and toddlers primarily at weekend worship services and occasionally for other special services/events.

**TODDLER TEACHER/ASSISTANT:** Teaches or assists for children primarily in the 2-3 year old range. Provides love and care and a watchful eye for this very active age.

**PRESCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER/ASSISTANT:** Teaches or assists a class for 3yrs. – Kindergarteners: laying foundational Christian principles, helping them get more familiar with the Bible and introducing them to Jesus.

**ELEMENTARY SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER/ASSISTANT:** Teaches or assists classes for 1st - 6th grade through Bible learning activities, discussions of Biblical topics all with an emphasis on practical growing-up issues.

**VBS TEAM:** A ministry team that plans, coordinates, teaches and facilitates a week-long summer evening Vacation Bible School for children 2 year old through 6th grade: recruitment, activities, lessons, music, skits, snacks and many others.

**TWIGS WORSHIP TEAM:** A ministry designed to lead children in worshipping God through music, media, drama, and other artistic expressions.

\* Please note, certain Serving Ministries require that you have been a member of The Branch for a minimum of six months, and that you have completed Branch Basics. See a pastor if you have questions about a specific ministry.

# What is the Serving Our World Strategy?

The Serving Our World strategy (S.O.W.) is a fundamental part of who The Branch Church is. It is what we hope to most be identified with by outsiders in our community (other than our love for Jesus Christ!) S.O.W. Projects are designed to allow our church to actively participate in evangelism by showing our community and the world around us simple and strategic acts of kindness. In the fallen and cynical world we live in, being the hands and feet of Jesus OUTSIDE the church walls is special thing. All throughout the New Testament the church is commanded to "GO" and preach the gospel, not merely build and wait for people to "come."

S.O.W. Projects are actions that will lead to making consistent contact with our community; direct discussions about spiritual matters; opportunities to share our "stories" and personal testimonies of what God has done in our lives; and chances to present the good news of Jesus Christ to people in our world who desperately need Him.

## Servant Evangelism Explained

There are nearly always two goals associated with evangelism: (1) include a much higher percentage of Christians in the action of evangelism, and (2) reach out in significant ways to a lot of people in our "own backyards."

"Evangelism" both excites and depresses us when we hear it. It's something we all feel called to do because the love of God compels us and the word of God commands us to do it. As disciples we are thrilled with the idea of seeing others come to Christ. But on the other hand, we're depressed when it comes to the outworking of that value. We don't have a clue as to how we can realistically pull off that task. So there's a big "Yes, let's do it," but also a big "No, let's not do it the way we've been doing it" going on in our hearts.

## Some examples of S.O.W. projects include:

A free community carwash (no donations accepted); quarter giveaways at Laundromats; video rental giveaways; business blasts (gifts to busy workers in retail and service industries during busy holiday seasons); water and granola bar giveaways in local parks; community outreaches in parks; and many other "no strings attached" activities.

As we serve people who don't know Christ, they're automatically curious. It's only natural for them to ask, "So, why are you doing this?" In this age of selfishness, it's startling for someone to do a deed of kindness with no apparent strings attached. After we serve, we simply answer the natural questions that come up.

This is what Peter had in mind when he wrote:

*"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15)*

## **What are some examples of Local Mission Projects?**

Local Mission projects are The Branch Church's way of teaming up with other local churches to help expand God's kingdom. Past examples of our efforts include a partnership with Set Free Church Skid Row in Los Angeles and a new church plant in the Corona/Riverside area named New Life Church. In both of these endeavors The Branch has partnered to send teams of people who are willing to serve in whatever capacity those local churches need help in. Examples of serving may include: Street Evangelism; passing out flyers; helping with local outreaches and community events; prayer-walking; and just being available to be the hands and feet of Jesus.



## **What are some examples of Broad Mission Projects?**

Broad Mission projects are mission opportunities in which a team will have the opportunity to do the same kinds of activities in a Local Mission project, however, in a Broad Mission project you will usually be doing them out of state or out of the country. Broad Mission projects also usually include a series of training events leading up to the time of departure. These training meetings usually include topics on how to raise prayer and financial support from family and friends who wish to support your efforts. Other events leading up to these mission opportunities may include fundraising events that will help sponsor other team members who may have trouble raising their own full financial support.

# **The Branch Church Servant Leader's Covenant**

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with The Branch Church's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with The Branch Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

## **1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH**

...By acting in love toward other members

...By refusing to gossip

...By following the leaders

"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together." Rom. 15:19 (Ph)

"Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts." 1 Peter 1:22 (TEV)

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." Eph. 4:29

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you." Heb. 13:17

## **2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH**

...By praying for its growth

...By inviting the unchurched to attend

...By warmly welcoming those who visit

"To the church ... we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly." 1 Thess. 1:2

"The Master said to the servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes, and urge the people there to come so my house will be full.'" Luke 14:23 (NCV)

"So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified." Rom. 15:7 (LB)

### **3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH**

...By discovering my gifts and talents

...By being equipped to serve by my pastors

...By developing a servant's heart

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you..." 1 Peter 4:10(Ph)

"God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." Eph. 4:11-12

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant..." Phil. 2:3-4,7

### **4. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH**

...By attending faithfully

...By living a godly life

...By giving regularly

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another." Heb. 10:25

"But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ." Phil. 1:27 (Ph)

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering." 1 Cor. 16:2

"A tenth of all your produce is the Lord's, and it is holy." Lev. 27:30



# YES, I WANT TO BECOME A SERVANT LEADER OF THE BRANCH!

Have you committed your life to Jesus Christ and trusted Him for salvation?

Yes - No - Not Sure

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been baptized by immersion after you committed your life to Christ?

Yes - No

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

(If no, please call the church office at 708-1209 for the current baptism schedule.)

## The Branch Church Servant Leadership Covenant

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and having been baptized, and being in agreement with the statements and structure of The Branch Church, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to serve with The Branch Church family. In doing so I commit myself to God and to the other believers of the church to do the following:

1. I will \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of The Branch Church by:
  - Acting in love toward other members,
  - Refusing to gossip, and
  - By following the leadership.
  
2. I will \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of The Branch Church by:
  - Praying for its growth,
  - Inviting the unchurched to attend, and
  - Warmly welcoming those who visit.
  
3. I will \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of The Branch Church by:
  - Attending the worship service and my Home Group faithfully,
  - Living a godly life, and
  - Giving of the resources (my time, tithe and offerings, and talents) that God has given to me.
  
4. I will \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of The Branch Church by:
  - Growing in maturity as a believer,
  - Discovering my gifts and talents,
  - Being equipped by my pastors to serve, and
  - Developing a servant's heart.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Welcome to The Branch Family!**