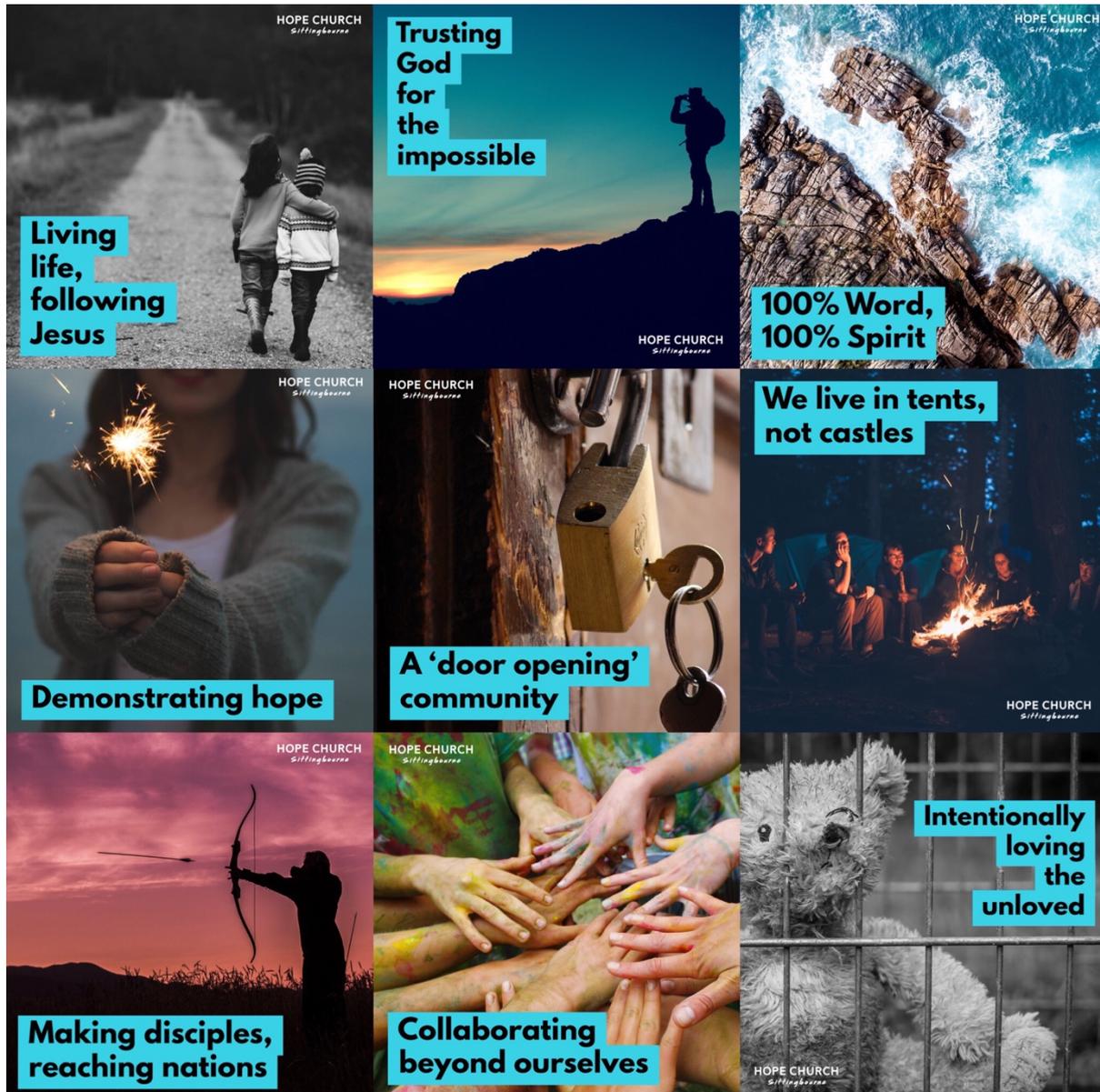


HOPE CHURCH

Sittingbourne



9 DISTINCTIVE VALUES



The values of Hope Church Sittingbourne are those distinctive things which make us who we are – Think of them as being part of our DNA. These are philosophical practices, each undergirded by firm Biblical foundations. Each one is important to us and defines the way we live our lives, not just individually but collectively and in every conceivable context.

I'm firmly convinced that it is values (*rather than vision*) which yield the greatest missional fruit. If you are able to cultivate a missional Kingdom culture through engendering simple adaptive values, values which not only endure but thrive in every context, that's the path towards a reproducible and viral organic movement.

Living life, following Jesus

- We believe that life is a gift which is to be lived and enjoyed
- Life is a journey with many ups and downs. This journey is to be undertaken with others and Jesus is right there with us every step of the way
- Our daily lives are lived before an audience of One, Jesus
- God has created man and woman to complement one another – There are distinctives between the two sexes. Men are fathers, women are mothers. We believe that the Church is to be governed by male elders who meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:5-9. Men and women lead together and are equal in value and dignity.
- The Gospel of the Kingdom affects every aspect of daily life, not just Sundays (ie. family, work, politics, ethics, morality, finances, education, social life, media, arts, sport, everything!)

Trusting God for the impossible

- We are a Supernatural people who hope in that which we do not see
- We believe that the Kingdom of God has broken through but isn't yet fully realised/inaugurated (now & not-yet)
- When presented with challenges our first thought is to give them to God *#prayerfirst*
- We believe in the power of prayer and fasting - We are intentional with prayer undergirding all that we do
- We believe that God heals - Signs and wonders demonstrate the power of the Gospel and are not a means or end unto themselves
- We believe that God is honoured through suffering – Sadly not everyone is healed in this life, pain and suffering exist. We disciple people to have a healthy biblical theology of suffering as expressed in Scripture
- Our experience does not define our expectation - We persevere, even with little faith or no observable changes/transformation/breakthrough
- We believe in the power of sacraments - God has given us communion, baptism, prayer, fasting and other spiritual practices that somehow change and transform us. We embrace these practices as part of a healthy, mature and holistic Christian lifestyle
- We have a vision defined budget not a budget defined vision – Gods provision follows Gods vision. We will always have what we need provided for in season. Our finances should reflect this faith-gap

100% Word, 100% Spirit

- It is said that if you're all Word you dry up and if you're all Spirit you blow up. To be 50% Word, 50% Spirit would be contrary to New Testament teaching, we would be luke-warm - We are 100% Word and 100% Spirit
- We believe the Word of God is relevant for every generation, nation and tribe
- We believe the Word of God is an unchangeable truth, it represents the unchanging Kingdom rule and reign of God in all eternity.
- We believe that the Word of God is living and active and speaks to us today
- We believe that the Holy Spirit is alive and active and the inheritance of every Christian today
- We believe that God gives gifts to His children liberally (ie. tongues, healing, prophecy, administration, works, mercy, etc.)
- We believe that the Holy Spirit of God can be grieved through the way we live our lives, so we believe in holiness and intentionally trying to live lives that honour God
- We believe in lavish grace - A gift we receive that we don't deserve - Grace is the cure for legalism, it helps us rest from striving as we embrace the perfect finished work of Jesus undertaken on our behalf
- We believe in mercy - We don't get what we do deserve (judgement) - Because of the perfect work of Christ we are forgiven and made one with God in reconciliation as adopted sons & daughters – We are no longer at war with God, we can experience true peace!



Demonstrating hope

- We are a church built around the word hope
- Hope is more than a name of a church - Hope is an attitude of the soul
- We receive hope as we encounter Jesus
- We believe in hope as we outwork our daily lives
- We extend hope in a hopeless world
- We look for opportunities to considerably share our stories of hope with others
- We believe everyone has their own unique story of hope which may yet to be discovered
- We express hope in all that we do (i.e. when we face opposition or problems we lean into hope)
- Even in complete darkness and desolation hope exists
- Resurrection life is all about Hope – We are a people living in the hope of the Easter story
- Our hope is Jesus, the living Hope (1 Peter 1:3)

A 'door opening' community

- God has entrusted us with keys to unlock doors for the Gospel
- We are a people that live in freedom because our doors have been unlocked by Jesus
- We create intentional opportunities for others to flourish by opening doors with them
- We are a hospitable people who live with the doors of our lives wide open
- The doors to our homes are wide open and our tables will always have room
- The doors to our church are wide open to everyone, regardless of religion, persuasion, beliefs and practices

We live in tents, not castles

- We are a pilgrim people, always on the move, passing through this life (Hebrews 11:9)
- Our home is in heaven, we are not getting settled in this world
- Life is better lived singing songs around the campfire and telling stories
- We live in meaningful and authentic community separated by thin canvas rather than thick stone
- God has called us to keep moving forward and not to settle for settlements (Philippians 3:20)
- We are not geographically bound, God can call any of us anywhere at anytime
- We live in intimate relationship to our environment, connected, known and rooted
- We live off the land – We live local, shop local, have fun locally and invest ourselves locally
- We are intentionally vulnerable, dependent and exposed - Living our lives publicly to be observed
- We live lives that express Gospel mobility (not hoarding, travelling light, what's mine is yours - Acts 2:42-47)
- Anything that hinders or prevents Gospel mobility probably needs reviewing (1Peter 2:11)
- We need one another on the journey of faith, we're together, not individuals
- Others we meet along the way add to and enrich our story, even if only for a passing moment
- We honour the strangers passing through – We give ourselves to people who need to find their bearings and make new friends in a strange new land

**INWARD**

These 3 values speak about our relationship with one another as disciples

Making disciples, reaching nations

- We believe we are an army - We have a biblical mandate for mobilising and training disciples to have a gritty and resilient wartime mentality
- We uphold the Great Commission - To go and make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20)
- We believe each person is known personally by God and has their own unique next steps to following Jesus on His mission in the world
- We train people with these four things in mind:
 1. Who someone is
 2. How they are gifted
 3. Where they are at in their Christian faith
 4. Where God has called them

We then create next steps towards that person increasing in faithfulness and fruitfulness

- We believe that discipleship happens along the road of adventure with Jesus, not in classrooms!
- We intentionally create opportunities for people to get out on the road, following Jesus and pushing their own boundaries to learn and grow in faith and obedience
- We have our eyes fixed on our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)
- We make effort to support friends in pioneering contexts both locally and in the nations - We can do more together than apart

Collaborating beyond ourselves

- We believe that the picture of Nehemiah building the wall is part of our calling (Nehemiah 3)
- We aspire to be a cohesive and central collaborative pillar to the Kingdom work of God in our generation
- We believe that where brothers dwell together in unity there the Lord commands a blessing (Psalm 133)
- We believe that we can call others to co-labouring towards Kingdom advance across denominations and streams and theological boundaries
- We also believe we are called to partner with those who may not be of faith but are for working towards the benefit of our local communities and wider regions/nations (ie. agencies and organisations)

Intentionally loving the unloved

- Jesus has called us to love the one in front of us and not getting caught up in numbers
- We proactively ensure we are a Church for a broken world
- When faced with difficult decisions we prioritise the poor
- When we read the New Testament we see Jesus at work on the margins and empowering the disempowered. Jesus came for the sick, not the well. This is the way in which Jesus loves us when we were at our most unlovely - We do likewise

**OUTWARD**

These 3 values speak about our relationship with the wider world