

4. PART I **BASIC**- The Support Beams: “Basic Doctrine”

(REVIEW)

a. The Five Cookie Test.

b. Small Group Breakout:

i. How do you understand the concept of “The Doctrine of the Church”?

ii. As a Small Group come up with a definition of the word “Doctrine.”

iii. Can you list ONE- (If you know several, list your favorite)?

iv. Now put your church designer hats on and if you had to build your own “_____ Church” from scratch- what would be the key (4-10) doctrines that would define your community of faith. (List the key 4-10 doctrines and give a simple sentence definition or description of each of those doctrines on the Small Group Leader Hand-out.)

C. Group Share on small group learning from the 4 questions. (See HAND-OUT EXTRA SESSION 5- THE SUPPORT BEAMS for group reporting.)

d. The Cliff Notes to understanding The Support Beams of the Church is found in The Apostles' Creed- The Creed of Foundational Christian Doctrine!

i. The ABC's:

1. What does the word **FOUNDATIONAL** imply?

Foundation:(n) "the basis or lowest part of a structure; groundwork; the principles or origin of anything; the first stitches in knitting or crocheting.

2. What does the word **DOCTRINE** mean?

Doctrine: (n) "that which is taught; the principles, belief or dogma of any church, sect, or party.

Dogma: (n) "an established principle, tenet, or doctrine; a doctrine stated in a formal manner and received by the Church as authoritative.

ii. Background on The Apostles' Creed.

1. I think the best summary of "Foundational Christian Doctrine" is found in The Apostles' Creed.

2. History & Origin of The Apostles' Creed:

The Apostles' Creed is a statement of faith used in the Western Church. Like other early creeds, another being the Nicene Creed, it falls into three sections dealing with God, the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

The text was originally initiated to act as a litmus test against the infiltration of **Gnosticism or Marcionism** into the early church.

- **The Gnostics-** Does not except Jesus' dualism, but only that he was the Son of God who assumed a ghost like phantasmal human experiencing, and could have never been crucified, let alone dead and buried. They were into Gnosis or divine enlightenment of knowledge.
- **The Marcionist-** Marcion of Sinope at Rome (144 A.D.) believed only in a Gospel of Love, he deleted the OT from the biblical cannon. The God of the OT, the God of Law, was a different and lesser God than the God of the NT, the God of Jesus thus the God of Love. The creed has since been able to stand up as a clear detector of all quasi-Christian and cultic sects since. He accepted 10 of the 24 chapters of Luke and 10 of Paul's Epistles to be his canon.

In an effort to define the basic elements of the Christianity around 150AD the basis of The Apostles' Creed then called "The Symbol of Faith" was established. To affirm this creed prevented those with Gnostic or Marcionist theologies from entering the community of Christian Faith. In the baptisms of Christians having gone through a 3-year period of Confirmation it was used originally as a series of 3 questions. The confirmand was immersed after each of the three questions and answers were given. Its title is first found in a letter of St., Ambrose in 390AD., by which time the legend of its joint composition by the Apostles was current. By the early Middle Ages, it was used throughout in Christian Baptism. By the 7th & 9th century it secured a place in the daily offices, it is found in the Book of Common Prayer and is used to this day as one of the oldest and most historical professions of the Christian Faith.

iii. The Apostles' Creed.

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

~

**And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
He descended into hell,
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand
of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge
the quick and the dead.**

~

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

iv. Key Doctrines found within!

- **Trinity-** Father, Son & Holy Spirit
- **Creation**
- **Jesus, the Christ-** Son of God and Son of Man
- **Atonement**
- **Resurrection**
- **Ascension**
- **Judgment**
- **The Church**
- **Eternal Life**

v. The Support Beams of the Church are found in its Basic Core Doctrine. Let's take a look at these Practical Rules of God.

"The Support Beams" are the Core Doctrine or what I like to call **"The Biggies: The essential load supporting beams of The House of God."** They have four basic ground rules:

1. They are **un-touchable**: Not ours to touch they are God's Practical Rules of Faith.
2. They are **un-changeable**: Regardless of the timeline, current social-trends and/or the various cultural views these support beams remain the same just as our *"God remains the same yesterday, today & tomorrow."*
3. They are **un-moveable**: Whether you are Jack & Jill in the pew, Rev. Marvelous, Joe Apostle, Super Bishop or Popus Patitus these support beams remain the same. They are beyond man's ability to move—they are fixed and held by the very hand & truth of God.
4. They are **un-negotiable**: When people come to the Church of Jesus Christ whether they are new members or long standing, impoverished or the wealthiest, the thickest or the most enlightened; these Beams will stand as they are because they are complete!

vi. The Support Beams- the Biggies!

1. **The Trinity/Triune God**- God is THREE in ONE- Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

1. **God as Father-** God is Father Almighty, Creator of the Universe.
 2. **God as Son- Jesus** Christ is fully human and fully God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He died on the cross, the complete and final sacrifice for our sins according to the Word. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Father He is both our High Priest, Advocate and Judge.
 3. **God as Holy Spirit-** The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living through the spiritual gifts, and the understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily.
2. **Free Will-** The gift offered by God's Prevenient Grace that allows all humans to reject or accept His plan for our life.
 3. **Original Sin-** Man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through atonement and regeneration by the Holy Spirit can man be saved and receive the spiritual life God offers to all who call Him Lord & Savior.

4. **The Atonement-** Comes in Jesus Christ who become the final Passover Lamb offering Himself, a lamb without blemish, offering His blood and life as the only acceptable offering to God for the sin debt of humanity both original and actual.

The Details of The Atonement:

In His death on the cross, Jesus Christ fulfilled and replaced the Old Testament sacrificial system. He offered up Himself as the supreme, once-for-all **sacrifice of atonement** through the shedding of his **blood**. By Jesus' one act of righteousness, **salvation** as a free gift is for all who **believe & confess Him as Savior & Lord**.

5. **The Resurrection-** The triumph of Jesus over the Grave, which promises the believers triumph over the Grave.

Pastor Troy's ordination version writings:

The Resurrection can pertain to that of, The Christ, on that first Easter Morning or to the Resurrection of the dead at the second coming. In reference to the first, it is a fundamental base of Christianity, without which Christian doctrine and Scripture becomes a word without integrity. This is testified to by its inclusion in the Apostles' Creed, one of the earliest formulas used for admission into the Christian community. It is the very basis of Christian preaching that as Christ was resurrected we might also be born again. It is the belief that Christ himself bore the sin of the

world, died upon the cross, was buried, and on the third day took up his life again that we might know that the promises of God and the forgiveness of sin was in his power to give. In reference to the second, the Resurrection of the dead, it is also a fundamental base of Christianity. Again it, as well as the next doctrine, "eternal life", are noted by their inclusion in the last line of the Apostles' Creed, "the resurrection of the body and life everlasting." The resurrection of the body is the Christian belief that at the Parousia² (*par-oo-see'-ah*) those saints having died, and those that are living, shall enter into a new heavenly body for eternity.

6. **Justification by Faith**- The Shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become children of God into eternal life. By our justification we join the Priesthood of all Believers (1 Peter 2:9, Revelations 1:6) and our

² The Parousia or Return of the Messiah- The personal and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ is our hope and has a vital bearing on the personal life and witness of the *Biblical Functioning Faithful Follower of Jesus*. In this time, we believe there will be a bodily resurrection of the all the dead; *of the believer to eternal life with the Lord and of the unbeliever to eternal judgment.*

commissioned to take the Good News to the World (Matthew 28:18-20).

7. **The Word of God-** The Bible, the Scriptures, both Old & New testament are the Written Word of God. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God it is the truth without any mixture or error in its original writings. It is the complete revelation of God's will for the Church. It is the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. Where it speaks God is calling us to listen and obey.
8. **The Church-** The Church is composed of all such persons (*Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers*) who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head.

e. Review of Community of Faith Constitution, Article IV Statement of Faith. (*See Special Hand out*)

f. Closing Prayer.

NEXT WEEK EITHER CONTINUE PART 1 ADVANCE OR BEGIN PART II
Building Spiritual Stamina: “*The Spiritual Disciplines*”

HAND OUT: SESSION 4- THE SUPPORT BEAMS

SMALL GROUP WORKSHEET MASTER:

1. Group Name _____ Church.
2. Your Groups definition of "Doctrine":
3. List your top 4-10 key doctrines with a simple definition or description of each of these doctrines.

1. _____:

2. _____:

3. _____:

4. _____:

5. _____:

6. _____:

7. _____:

8. _____:

9. _____:

10. _____:

HAND OUT- SESSION 4

ARTICLE IV from Constitution of Community of Faith

ARTICLE IV – STATEMENT OF FAITH

The core beliefs of Community of Faith Church are grounded in Biblical truth and summed up by the "Apostles' Creed".

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell, the third day he rose from the dead;

he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church***, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

***The holy Catholic Church is a traditional statement. This is not a reference to the Roman Catholic denomination. Rather, it refers to the Unified body of Christ as seen in scripture. The word "catholic" means united.

Summary of our Core Beliefs:

The Trinity/Triune God: God is THREE in ONE- Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

God as Father: God is Father Almighty, Creator of the Universe.

God as Son: Jesus Christ is fully human and fully God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He died on the cross, the complete and final sacrifice for our sins according to the Word. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Father He is both our High Priest, Advocate and Judge.

God as Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living through the spiritual gifts, and the understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing what is right. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

Free Will: The gift offered by God's Prevenient Grace that allows all humans to reject or accept His plan for our life.

Original Sin: Man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through atonement and regeneration by the Holy Spirit can man be saved and receive the spiritual life God offers to all who call Him Lord & Savior.

The Atonement: Comes in Jesus Christ who became the final Passover Lamb offering Himself, a lamb without blemish, offering His blood and life as the only acceptable offering to God for the sin debt of humanity both original and actual.

The Resurrection: The triumph of Jesus over the Grave, which promises the believers triumph over the Grave.

Justification by Faith: The Shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become children of God into eternal life. By our justification we join the Priesthood of all Believers (1 Peter 2:9, Revelations 1:6) and our commissioned to take the Good News to the World (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Word of God: The Bible, the Scriptures, both Old & New Testament are the Written Word of God. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God it is the truth without any mixture or error in its original writings. It is the complete revelation of God's will for the Church. It is the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. Where it speaks God is calling us to listen and obey.

The Church: The Church is composed of all such persons (Biblically Functioning Faithful Followers) who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head. WE BELIEVE:

Additional Theological & Biblical Reference to our Core Beliefs:

1. **God, the Father:** God, assisted by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, made the heavens and the earth. He is referred to by Jesus as Father and by Paul as Abba. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. Genesis 1:1; Psalms 68: 5; Isaiah 64:8; Matthew 6:9-13; Matthew 26:39; Romans 8:15; James 1:17.
2. **The Person and Work of Christ:** The Lord Jesus, the Christ, and the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice. Our redemption and salvation are guaranteed to us by His physical resurrection from the dead. Luke 1:38; John 1:1, 14 and 18; Romans 3:24-26; I Corinthians 15:4; Colossians 1:15-20; I John 2:2.
3. **The Personality of the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, regenerates believers in Christ, sets each member in the Body of Christ, the church; indwells them, seals them unto the day of redemption, teaches all truth and bestows spiritual gifts upon each saved believer. Jesus baptizes and fills with the Holy Spirit those yielded to Him. John 15:26; 16:7-15; I Corinthians 12:4-13; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18; I John 2:27.
4. **Holy Scriptures:** The Holy Bible, as set out in the original manuscripts, is the verbally inspired Word of God; authoritative, inerrant, and God-breathed. Matthew 5: 18; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21.
5. **Holiness:** God has called Christians out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light – from sin to holiness. It is God's will that we partake of His nature and escape the corruption that is in the world. Matthew 5:48; John 8:1-11; II Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 1:16; II Peter 1:4.
6. **Salvation:** Salvation is a gift of God through grace and is received by man through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ whose precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. John 1:12; Romans 3:25-26; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5.
7. **The New Creation:** God's masterful work of creating the universe by His Word is exceeded only by the greatest masterpiece of His workmanship, namely, a Christian. Becoming a new creation helps us

to face life knowing that our identification with Christ enables us to hold fast to our confession, overcome in life and be more than conquerors in Christ. II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24.

8. **The Total Depravity of Man:** Man was created in the image and likeness of God, but through Adam's sin, the human race fell. Man inherited a sinful nature and became alienated from God. Man is totally unable to regain his former position by or through his own means. Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; 6:5; Psalms 53:3; Romans 3:23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:12; I John 1:8.
9. **The Church:** The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is vested all the power for its government. According to His commandments, Christians are to associate themselves into communities of local churches. God admonishes His people to assemble regularly for worship. God still heals, delivers, and works miracles through His church. Deuteronomy 12: 5-7; Isaiah 53:5; John 14:12-14; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27; Hebrews 10:25; 13:8; James 5:14-15; I Peter 2:24.
10. **The Head of the Church:** The Head of the Church is Christ Himself. He is the final and ultimate authority in all matters of faith, doctrine, and decision. All divinely approved church practices in the New Testament reflect the Church's own acknowledgement of God's hand directing the Church. Where the Church failed to submit itself to Christ, He spoke firmly and unequivocally in denunciation. He expresses His will today through the Holy Spirit and the written Word. Matthew 11:27; 28:18; John 5:27; 14:16-18 and 26; 16:13-14; 17:2; Acts 13:2-4; 14:26-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 2 and 3.
11. **Baptism:** Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ; of remission of sins and of his giving himself up to God, and to live and walk in newness of life. It is not a prerequisite to salvation. Matthew 3:6-8; Mark 1:5, 9 and 15; Luke 3:3-16; Acts 8:38-39; Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12.
12. **The Lord's Day:** The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance and should be employed in exercise of worship and spiritual devotion. Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; Mark 2:27-28; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.
13. **The Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and juice of grapes; and to be observed by His Church until the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice but is designed to commemorate His death and our communion with Him and with our church fellowship. It is open to all believers. Matthew 26:26-28; I Corinthians 11:23-26.
14. **Citizenship:** Civil government is of divine appointment and established by God for the good order of human society. Government officials are to be prayed for and obeyed except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 9:6-7; Mark 12:13-17; Romans 13:1-7.
15. **Marriage:** The first institution that God gave mankind was marriage. He joined a man and a woman in a special and sacred union. To this union He gave a special gift – sexuality. This gift expressed in any other form (example: fornication, adultery, homosexuality, transsexuality, or bestiality) does not have God's approval. Genesis 2:18-25; 3:16; 4:1; Exodus 20:14 and 17; Song of Solomon; Matthew 19:1-6; Ephesians 5:22-31; Revelation 19:7-9.
16. **The Responsibility of Believers:** All believers should seek to walk by the Spirit, not bringing reproach upon their Lord and Savior. It is the obligation of every believer to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Holy Scripture and seek to proclaim the Gospel to the entire world. Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16 and 25; II Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:16-20.
17. **Sanctity of Life:** All human life was created by God and should be valued. The valueless ending of human life is not approved of by Him. Abortion and euthanasia are not acceptable means of dealing with life's difficulties. Exodus 20:13; II Peter 3:19.
18. **Stewardship:** God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual. All we have and are we owe to Him. We recognize the Lord as owner of all our possessions. Christians cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally should contribute their talents, abilities, and possessions to advancing the Savior's cause on earth. The purpose of the tithe is to enable us to discharge some of

the tremendous sense of obligation and indebtedness we have toward God and to teach us to always put God first in our lives. Deuteronomy 14:23; Leviticus 27:30-32; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4 and 19-21; Luke 12:16-21; Acts 2:44-47; Romans 6:6-22; I Corinthians 4:1-2; Philippians 4:10-19; I Peter 1:18-19.

19. **Last Things:** At the end of the age, every person will be judged. The unrighteous will go to Hell, a place of everlasting punishment. The righteous, through Christ, will receive their reward and dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-3; Revelation 19-22.
20. **The Second Coming of Christ:** Jesus will return personally and visibly to the earth according to His promise. Believers are to live sensible, righteous, and godly lives in the present age looking for His imminent return. Matthew 24:27-44; Titus 2:12-13.