

becoming an owner



Becoming an Owner at Westwinds

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." [Romans 12.4-5]

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Steps to Becoming an Owner

Step 1: *Complete The Owners' Manual* (this document). Learn about the unique philosophy of Westwinds Community Church. Answer the questions in the text. Point by point you'll assess your current spiritual health and commitment to the distinctives of Westwinds. The more honest you are with yourself, the more valuable this part of the ownership process will be.

Step 2: *Fill out an ownership card* found in the back of this manual and send it back to the church office. Someone from the staff or elder team will be in touch. They can help you with any questions you might have about this manual or about Westwinds.

Step 3: Once you become an owner, you will be assigned a deacon. You will be expected to attend the seasonal ownership gatherings called Hivemind, Mondays @ 6:30pm (usually about 4-5 a year).

Ownership at Westwinds is a one year, renewable commitment formalized through a group interactive we will do at one of our Hivemind gatherings each year. If, for some reason, you are unable to attend that meeting, you will be able to renew your ownership commitment through the church office.

If you have any other questions while you are studying the manual, please don't hesitate to call the church office (517.750.1111). The ownership process at Westwinds has been designed to be a personally enriching step in your ongoing walk with Christ. If you'll submit to the process and to the person of Christ, we trust you will experience Christian spirituality in new and refreshing ways.

Westwinds Ownership?

“I have heard of membership, but ownership...what is that?” At Westwinds we desire a fresh perspective on almost everything. No doubt you have noticed that our society talks a lot about “loyalty”, “rewards” and things like “buying in” to ideas. Not only is the concept of owning more relevant than membership, but more importantly, it is rooted in the story upon which we base everything we do – the Bible.

Ownership implies Spiritual Engagement with God.

Those who have not yet begun to follow the way of Jesus are encouraged to cross that line of faith and live their lives for Christ. God has created us to be in dynamic relationship with Him. Westwinds is nothing but the expression of many of those individual relationships coming together for wholeness, learning, mutual encouragement, and worship of the One who made them. It has been said that there are many paths to God - this is not true. There are, however, many ways to find Jesus, but Jesus Christ is the only way to God. Owners, therefore, must have a vertical relationship that only can come through a personal encounter with Jesus. Owners at Westwinds long for transformative experiences and are not content to stagnate and waste away spiritually.

Have you engaged in a relationship with Jesus?

When and how did you come to the conclusion you needed Him?

Ownership Implies Interpersonal Engagement.

Ownership is a dynamic term. By definition it requires a high degree of commitment to the church and to the people of the church. The essence of the local church is relationships...not only the vertical relationship with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, but also through the horizontal relationships with other owners. There is nothing better than accomplishing mission in the context of deep community.

The old model of membership often had the idea that “the church” was to provide care, nurture, and support for its members. Of course, that statement is true, provided the definition of “church” is agreed upon. In the old membership system “church” was defined as “clergy.” The clergy was perceived as the professionally trained care givers. Membership usually implied commitment to an institution, not to the relationships cultivated with others in the church.

In the new ownership model this more traditional approach is eliminated. Community only happens to the degree we give and receive love, laughter, and faithfulness. The appropriate role of leadership is to train and equip our owners for healthy interdependence. The old idea of “clergy as the hired professional” to do the ministry is void. The role of church leadership as defined in God’s Word is as trainers, equippers, and releasers. Their role is fundamentally to help owners become healthy, grow, and utilize their spiritual gifts.

With what habits and practices are you currently involved within The Elements?

As an owner you must remain connected to others. Are you committed to that?

How would you describe the difference between the older membership model of joining and the newer ownership model of belonging?

Ownership implies Missional Orientation.

Owners are not only excited about forming relationships with others as they “do life” together; they are also impassioned about being a part of something much bigger than themselves. Owners have come to conclude that they want to be a part of a bigger-than-life mission of reaching other people with the story of God. Owners share this life transformation with their friends, neighbors, and relatives. They aren’t “joining” a to be catered to; they own Westwinds because they want to be active in fulfilling God’s mission in this place and in this way. They are energized by this way of doing ministry. They want to make known they can be counted on to partner with other owners in accomplishing the God-sized task of living with the transforming Gospel and welcoming others into His Kingdom.

Are you committed to actively participate in accomplishing the mission and vision of Westwinds Community Church?

Ownership: Accomplishing Mission God's Way

By now you have already gotten a sense that Westwinds has a sharp focus concerning its unique sense of mission, vision, and values. These prongs comprise what might best be described as an "energy field." Everything we do in developing people and reaching out to our community, spiritual formation is magnetized by the energy field of mission, vision, and values. There are many worthy opportunities out there, but God has given us a special sense of destiny. As a result we only act on those things aligned with our unique sense of God's direction for us. Let's explore this energy field a little bit more.

Westwinds' Mission

The first zone in this energy field is our mission (a.k.a. our reason for existing). An organization as well as the organism of the church will be moved by focusing on something. The question is by what and on what? For some churches it may be driven by certain programs, personalities, passions, or problems. The list could go on and on. Unfortunately these are inadequate to serve as maps in the constantly changing terrain of our culture. Something more solid and sure is needed. The only thing that doesn't shift or change is God's purpose. God does nothing haphazardly. He grants purpose and clarity of mission to every church that seeks it. When passionately owned and acted upon, a mission catalyzes a local church for high impact. This mission is unchanging, is independent of personalities and individual passions, and has abiding relevance for generations to come.

That's why Westwinds has adopted a three-fold mission statement. We want to focus not only on the transformation of ourselves as image-bearers of God and not only on the beautiful community of God's people in which His will reigns supreme, but also on the ultimate reconciliation of the world back into a perfectly ordered and harmonious planet.

That's why we tell our people we're here to **shadow God, build the church, and heal the world.**

Shadowing God reminds us that we must stay in step with God's plan for us as individuals. We are never fully formed; we are always works-in-progress. That work progresses only by staying in step with the Spirit and being constantly malleable and edited by God.

Building the church means we recognize that Christian spirituality is not an individual sport. church is plural, and God's purposes for reconciliation involve us sorting out our relationships with the people around us.

Healing the world connotes the fact that our salvation is neither privatized or communized, but expressed most faithfully in mission. We invite the Spirit to change us and to create a holy community of similarly simultaneously changing people, so that together we can effect change in the world.

Shadowing God protects us from either
just being content to remain crappy people
but have lots of church-y friends or
just being involved in some kind of social agenda
with no real ethic of personal transformation.

Building the church protects us from either
just focusing on our own spiritual experience
to the exclusion of those around us or
just diving into random projects as a means
of escaping human interaction, laughter, learning,
or solidarity with those in pain.

Healing the world protects us from either
being really great moral examples of who are
so "heavenly minded as to be no earthly good",
or creating little ecclesial communes who focus
only on those with club-member elite status,
content to let the pagans or their forests or their
ozone burn.

There's a trifecta at work in the ministry of the church, a three-legged stool that simply cannot function well while balancing on only two (or God forbid, one) leg. What God really wants from us, His people, individually and corporately as the church is that we come to Him in open relationship, embody the sacrifice of Jesus, and work to reconcile ourselves and others to Him and His mission to heal and to save.

Westwinds' Vision

The second component in this energy field is vision. Vision describes how we will uniquely accomplish our mission. Every local church probably shares a mission similar to Westwinds. But that is probably where the similarity ceases. Will the mission be accomplished through liturgical settings? Traditional formats? Spontaneous, free-flowing services? These format vehicles begin getting at the question of vision. How will we accomplish the mission of life development for everyone?

To use a favorite illustration with ice cream: all churches are in the ice cream business (mission), but we all serve a different flavor (vision). Inherent in this illustration is that a variety of flavors exist for reaching a variety of peoples and satisfying their tastes. Some like butter pecan; others prefer fudge ripple. Different church visions merely express the multifaceted creativity of God. We need them all, and one is not better than the other. But at Westwinds we realize we cannot be all things to all people. We are convinced God has made our vision clear.

Our vision is to present Christ to the (spiritually) curious, the disenfranchised (those burned out on organized religion), the intellectual, and the creative. Using a variety of contemporary formats, we desire to reach the believer as well as the seeker with a message that is as satisfying to the head as it is to the heart and brings them toward full life development in Christ.

What most excites you?

What misgivings or concerns do you have?

Westwinds' owners resonate with this energy field of mission and vision. It excites them and impassions them. Owners at Westwinds recognize all churches are valuable and different, but they are deeply ignited by reaching people and experiencing transformation using the best creative, innovative, team designed spiritual experiences possible. Owners at Westwinds are ignited by reaching out to others and by experiencing transformation themselves. They are totally convinced that creative ministry reflects the infinite creativity of God and then models the "never the same" approach Jesus used in reaching different people with different needs at different times. Owners are moved to excitement about this kind of ministry because they sense this mission and vision are rooted in the heart of God with sensitivity to our culture and times.

Mission, again, explains why we exist; vision explains how we will accomplish our mission.

Westwinds' Core Values

The final dimension to this energy field is our core values. These values reflect *how* we will take the journey of fulfilling the mission and vision.

We value:

Imagination

God authors our dreams. As such, we need to ask ourselves, 'God, what are you doing to heal the world?' and 'Who are you calling me to be?' We need to open our imagination to the Spirit and let God help us find these answers together.

perMission

Too frequently in churches, people feel as if they need permission from church leaders to be involved in ministry. Not so at Westwinds. We need our owners to be looking for opportunities all the time to serve our community and to heal the world in the name of Christ.

Authenticity

There is so much advice on what a "good Christian" looks like, but that advice – by and large – leads us astray. Be authentic. Let Jesus come out of your pores, and don't sweat the made-up rules. Sweat Christ.

Community

A major part of church is community. Community is tough because it means we've got to make it work with people we might not like and with people we might not care about. But that inherent difficulty is what makes community spiritual. Being in community requires character, because it is hard work, it's deep work, but it's also the work to which we are called as lovers and followers of Jesus Christ.



*What core values are easiest for you to “own?”
Do you find yourself in full alignment with all four values?*

Understanding this energy field allows potential owners to determine if this is the church for them. “Is this where I want to throw my hat in the ring? Is this a place where I can land and become rooted in God? In the scriptures? In the mission of Christ? In community?”

Ownership is a commitment that essentially says “I am attracted to and passionate about the unique energy field of mission, vision, and values, and I want to help make that mission a reality.” The old notion of membership often carries with it the idea of entitlement, wherein people ask “What does the church provide for me?” The days of that kind of membership are over. God is building a church that will be intentional and strategic in accomplishing His purposes. Westwinds is such a church. Those looking for special privilege or attention by being on a membership roll will simply not be happy or content here.

Essential Beliefs

Within Christendom there is plenty of room for debate on the finer points of theology: however, there are some things that are non-negotiable for Christ followers. We practice the following attitudes towards doctrinal issues.

In essential beliefs - we have unity.

There is one Body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all...Ephesians 4.4-6 (NIV)

In nonessential beliefs - we have liberty.

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters...who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls...so then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Romans 14.1,4,12,22

In all our beliefs - we show charity.

...and hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but the very secrets of God, and if I have that absolute faith which can move mountains—but have no love, I amount to nothing at all. 1 Corinthians 13.2

The Essentials We Believe

We believe these nine doctrines must be internalized by every person who claims to be a lover and follower of Jesus Christ. For a further exploration of these doctrines, please see *DOXA: What You Believe Matters*, available at the SoundWords kiosk or the church office.

1. **Scripture:** We believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error when they were initially penned

by their authors. We believe it to be the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of all people, the divine and final authority for the Christian life and faith in all matters of creed and conduct, belief and behavior, orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

Do you affirm that the Bible alone is the inspired Word of God and therefore the final authority by which we should live our lives?

2. **Godhead:** We believe in the Trinity, the Triune God, one God who has always and will always exist as one substance with three distinct persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe there is only one Father, one God, and one salvation, manifest in Jesus Christ, to which there is access only because of the Holy Spirit.

Do you affirm the belief in the historic Christian doctrine of the Trinity?

3. **Humanity:** We believe that all people are created in the image of God. Through the fall of Adam and Eve, we have all been separated from our true selves as image-bearers of God and from God Himself. Only through following Jesus Christ can we recover our true humanity. Only through the work of the Holy Spirit can eternal life be received.

Do you agree that all humanity without God is lost?

Do you affirm you, too, are a sinner, and apart from Christ you are without hope?

Do you further acknowledge that new birth is the only solution to the problem of sin?

4. **God the Father:** We believe in one God, almighty and eternal, Maker and Creator of all things in heaven and earth, all things visible and invisible.

Do you affirm this understanding of God, recognizing that while not exhaustive, these things must be true of God the Father for Him to be God?

5. **God the Son:** We believe that Jesus Christ, who lived fully as a human being, was and is fully God – being of one substance with the Father. We believe that He was incarnated for our salvation and was crucified, died, and came to new life. We believe He now resides with the Father until He should come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you affirm Jesus as the way, the truth and the life, and that no one can come to the Father except through His death and resurrection?

Do you affirm the above statements concerning who Jesus is and what Jesus did?

6. **God the Holy Spirit:** We believe the Holy Spirit's goal is to bring glory and honor to Jesus Christ. We affirm He is actively involved in the lives of Christ followers. He is not only responsible for their new birth, He also instructs and empowers them to live the Christian life. He grows fruit in their lives as evidence of character development. He gifts them in ways that enable fulfillment of their God-given destiny. We affirm He is also active in the lives of all unbelievers, whether skeptics or seekers. He is at work prodding them about sin, pointing out their distance from God, and heightening their sense of emptiness that only God can fill.

Do you affirm the statements made about the third person of the Trinity - the Holy Spirit?

7. **Salvation:** We believe that God, in His great love for all people, provided the ultimate sacrifice for sin in His Son, Jesus Christ. Salvation can come through Him alone. Only through His shed blood and resurrection are there any grounds for justification and reconciliation to God. Salvation is, therefore, received as a free gift of faith.

Do you affirm that salvation is found in Christ alone and that no other religious system, ideology, or person is sufficient for salvation and eternal life?

8. Judgment and Assurance: We believe that death seals the eternal destiny of each person. At the final judgment, unbelievers will be separated from God into eternal condemnation. Believers will be received into God's loving presence and rewarded for their faithfulness to Him in this life.

Do you affirm that there is indeed a final judgment to which we will all be subjected?

Do you understand God alone as the final Judge and Master of our eternal destiny?

9. The Local Church: We believe that the local church is a congregation of believers who gather for worship, prayer, instruction, encouragement, mutual accountability, and community with each other. Together, the local church comprises the "Body of Christ." Through it, believers invest time, energy and resources to fulfill the Great Commission – reaching lost people and growing them into fully devoted followers of Christ.

Do you affirm that the local church is a biblically mandated and instituted community?

Do you understand your role as a participant in the local church, and its relationship to following Jesus Christ?

STOP! If there is anything in this section that you do not understand or find confusing, please stop here before going any further. No question is too elementary to ask. We want you to have a clear understanding of Westwinds' essential beliefs.

If you do need to stop here to ask questions, please contact a Westwinds' elder or staff person.

The Creed

At Westwinds, we've begun looking for a way to pull our people together around our common quest to follow Jesus, wherever they might happen to be on their faith journey. This Creed, written by Randy Shafer, has been designed to help people keep moving forwards.

We want you to begin wrestling with how you understand the words of this Creed. The verbiage is simple enough for a newer and unknowledgeable follower to engage; yet also contains nuances that would challenge the most "marinated" Christ-follower.

*I give myself
to the JOURNEY of KNOWING
and FOLLOWING Jesus
and his way*

to seeking the TRUTH of the scriptures

*to locking arms
with the PEOPLE of Westwinds*

*to responding to the movement of GOD
in and around me*

*to loving and sacrificing for others
that all may experience the full life
God DESIRES for his creation.*

Spend a few moments reflecting on each of the phrases in this creed. What do they mean to you?

I give myself...

What word[s] would you use to describe your God orientation these days?

Surrendered?

Struggling?

Starving?

Satisfying?

Sporadic?

*Who or what would you say you're giving your life to?
How would you describe your dedication to Christian spirituality?
What is one thing you could do to know Jesus better?*

...to seeking truth

*How are you absorbing scripture these days?
Where is it affecting your life?
Who is around you that could help you understand it better?
What is one thing you could do to discover more about God's Word?
How might your past be keeping you from discovering truth in the Bible?
What is one scripture that is especially meaningful to you?*

...to locking arms

*Do you consider Westwinds to be your church?
What does it mean to "lock arms" with someone?
What's the difference between locking arms with people and simply
participating in an organization?
Does anything hold you back from locking arms with someone?
With others at Westwinds?
Who does God seem to be inviting you into relationship with?*

...to responding

*How do you stay attentive to the nudges of God?
What kinds of things encourage you to hear God? What distracts you?
What do you see God doing in or around you?
What is keeping you from obeying God?
Do you trust God?*

...to loving

*What is one thing you could do to help someone today?
How will you determine when you should sacrifice for someone?
Is there anyone you're having a hard time loving?
Is there anyone you're ignoring?
What is keeping you from living more generously?*

...that all may experience the full life God desires for His creation

Do you honestly believe God wants you to experience a full life?

Why or why not?

What might you be doing that is hindering someone else from experiencing that full life?

What would a full life be like?

Who do you know that needs a fuller life with God?

What dreams do you have that would help others if they became reality?

What keeps you from pursuing those dreams?

After internalizing this creed, what areas do you think will be easiest for you to uphold? What will be the hardest?

Why?

AN OWNER'S ROLE

Every Westwinds' owner is expected to model a vibrant and persistent relationship with Christ and his Church. The following 11 verbs help us better understand the role of a Westwinds owner:



TEACH LEAD PROTECT REWARD CHECK

BALANCE MEASURE PRAY SEEK SOLVE STUDY

1. *Westwinds' owners need to teach the people our...*

- Mission: shadow God; build the church; heal the world
- Core Values: imagination, perMission, authenticity, community
- Vision/Brand: (spiritually) curious, disenfranchised (with religion), creative, intellectual
- Basic Theology: Doxa

2. *Westwinds' owners need to lead people by...*

- quelling negative talk
- planting seeds of promise
- counseling others
- casting vision for the future of Westwinds
- being actively involved in ministry

3. *Westwinds' owners need to protect the church...*

- **Premise:** everyone wants to make Westwinds more like something else, but we must protect the following characteristics that make our church distinct:
 - the irreligious nature of Westwinds
 - the “brand” of Westwinds
 - the experimental nature of Westwinds
 - the grace of Westwinds

Westwinds' owners need to protect the staff's...

- reputation
- boundaries
- families

4. *Westwinds' owners need to reward the church by...*

- celebrating excellence
- rewarding shareholders, peers, and employees

Westwinds' owners need to reward:

- staff
- elders
- volunteers

5. *Westwinds' owners need to check our church in the following ways:*

- by evaluating staff spirits and attitudes
- by evaluating elder spirits and attitudes
- by evaluating overall church spirit and direction
- by evaluating strategic plans and initiatives

6. *Westwinds' owners need to balance our:*

- dreams with responsibility
- hardship with calling
- compassion with discernment
- preferences with mission

7. *Westwinds' owners need to measure:*

- the health of our leaders
- the metrics of worship (attendance at The Cue, The Elements + satellite participation)
- the budget and our fiscal responsibility
- our communication strategies and implementation

8. *Westwinds' owners need to pray for:*

- wisdom in leadership
- discernment concerning the specific will of God for the church
- protection (from spiritual, political, and social harm)
- the courage to fulfill our mission in the face of opposition

9. *Westwinds' owners need to seek for:*

- knowledge
- understanding
- spiritual and ecclesial guidance
- personal and corporate holiness

10. *Westwinds' owners need to solve:*

- problems (through administration, networking, resources, and facilities)
- issues (by addressing personal and interpersonal sin and confrontation)
- crisis within the church (by assuming responsibility to make things right)

11. Westwinds' owners need to study the scriptures:

- to stay fresh in their own spirits
- to better understand the movement of God
- to better understand what it means to be a follower of Jesus
- to better understand what it means to be a Christ-like leader
- to learn sound doctrine
- to discern the validity of new church methods and innovations

Self-Study Guide

for further personal reflection

The primary reason to become an owner is not to gain a personal advantage but to identify ourselves with the marks of biblical maturity. Since we're all pursuing God, we ought to be pursuing these qualities as a way to be pleasing to Him—first and foremost.

Please read the following statements and assess whether you resonate with each statement. Then take your time as you read through the questions under each statement. Carefully consider your answers and be totally honest. They are for your benefit and will not be seen by anyone else if you do not desire to share your response.

I will actively pursue a dynamic relationship with God and other people by...

- living a godly life
- spending time in spiritual formation, scripture, and prayer
- attending The Cue at Westwinds
- participating in The Elements/Satellites

“Let’s see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding being together as some do but spurring each other on...”
Hebrews 10.25 (The Message)

“Exercise daily in God—no spiritual flabbiness please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so...”
1 Timothy 4.8 (The Message)

Questions for personal reflection:

Briefly describe what a dynamic relationship with God means to you.

How do you plan to develop dynamic relationships with others at Westwinds?

Share what your daily life of prayer and Bible study is like.

Share some answers to prayer you have had recently.

What do the following verses teach about the importance of scripture in the life of a growing Christian?

Psalm 1.2-3

Hebrews 4.12

Psalm 119.9-24

What does Luke 5.16 and Luke 6.12-13 tell us about Jesus' prayer life and His need to get alone periodically?

What are the implications for you personally?

Why does David worship God in Psalm 145.1-7?

How does worship benefit us?

Are you totally committed to actively pursuing a dynamic relationship with God and other people as defined above? Do you have any concerns about being able to fulfill this first commitment?

I will share in the outreach of my church by ...

- praying for and inviting the unchurched
- welcoming those who visit
- sharing my life and faith with those who don't know Christ

“Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples...”
Matthew 28.19 (TEV)

“...If anyone asks you why you believe as you do, be ready to tell them, and do it in a gentle and respectful way.”
1 Peter 3.15 (LB)

*“Be hospitable to one another without secretly wishing you didn’t have to be!”
1 Peter 4.9 (Phillips)*

Questions for personal reflection:

What is your purpose for coming to The Cue?

Name three people who are currently in your web of friendships (circle of influence) who are unchurched (don’t know Christ)?

The term “building bridges” means developing relationships with the unchurched in order to gain their trust so you can share your faith. What are some ways you could build bridges with those who don’t know Christ? Be specific.

What does it mean to be “hospitable” in I Peter 4.9?

How does your personality factor into your bridge building both inside and outside the church?

I Peter 3.15 says “you should be ready to tell people why you believe what you believe.” Write down your “story” of why you believe as you do.

Jesus’ charge to the early Christians still holds for us today. What does the big picture look like according to His words in the following passages?

Matthew 28.19-20

Acts 1.8

What implications does His plan have on your plans?

*“Look at it! All this comes from God who settled the relationship between us and Him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with Himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what He is doing. We’re Christ’s representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God’s work of making things right between them. We’re speaking for Christ Himself now: Become friends with God; He’s already a friend with you.
II Corinthians 5.18-20 (The Message)*

The Message version of this passage tells us we are God’s representatives. We usually think of sharing our faith as an activity we do to benefit others.

How does it build up your faith when you share it with someone?

Are you totally committed to sharing in the outreach of Westwinds Community Church as defined above? Do you have any concerns about being able to fulfill this second commitment?

I will serve the ministry of my church by ...

- discovering and using my gifts and talents
- participating in the ministries of Westwinds
- giving regularly

*“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...”
Ephesians 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...”
Philippians 2.2-4, 7*

*“Each 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 Corinthians 16.2*

Questions for personal reflection:

Considering the following scriptures, what is your understanding of the spiritual gifts?

1 Peter 4.10

1 Corinthians 12-14

Ephesians 2.10; 4:7; 4.11-13

What do you sense might be your spiritual gifts within the context of this body?

Serving is part of the life development process. How are you serving at Westwinds?

Read Matthew 9:36-38. Now imagine Jesus visiting a weekend service at Westwinds. After the service, you and He sit in the lobby and watch the hundreds of people walk out. He sighs as He sees the streams of attendees pass by—and then says to you the exact words from Matthew 9.

Explain in your own words what you think is on His mind and heart at that moment?

What was Paul's attitude toward working in God's service in I Timothy 1:12?

What factors or attitudes have hindered your involvement at times?

The Bible compares the church to a human body, with Christ as the head and all of us different parts or members (owners) of the body. Summarize in a sentence or two what Paul is trying to convey in I Corinthians 12.14-26.

What is the ultimate reason we each have differing abilities within the church? (I Corinthians 12.4-7)

What do you think Jesus meant by “bearing fruit” in John 15.8 and John 15.16-17?

What does I Corinthians 15.58 have to say about the standard for all believers of participation in ministry?

How might this motivate you when you allow other things to crowd out your involvement?

If you don't already give regularly to the local church, what is your action plan to get there?

In Luke 14.33 Jesus lays out for his followers what percentage of our worldly goods is His and what is ours. What is your reaction to His teaching in this verse?

What's the moral of the story Jesus summarized in Luke 16.10-13? What is the implication of these verses on your own possessions?

What additional lessons about giving can be gleaned from the following passages?

I Timothy 6.8-10, 17-19

I Corinthians 16.1-2

II Corinthians 8.8, 12

Luke 6.38

Matthew 6.3-4

What attitudes should characterize giving according to II Corinthians 9.6-9?

What challenge is presented in this passage? What promise?

Are you totally committed to serving the ministry of Westwinds Community Church? Do you have any concerns about being able to fulfill this third commitment?

I will protect the unity of my church by ...

- acting in love toward others
- refusing to gossip
- following and encouraging the leaders
- communicating positively and in a healthy way

*“So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together.”
Romans 15.19 (PH)*

*“Live in complete harmony with each other—each with the attitude of Christ toward each other.”
Romans 15-15 (LB)*

*“Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts.”
I Peter 1.22 (GN)*

*“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...”
Ephesians 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.”
Hebrews 13:17*

Questions for personal reflection:

Psalm 133 says where there is unity, God commands blessing. Read Psalm 133.1-3. Do you believe in the Westwinds Community Church vision?

What most excites you?

What concerns do you have?

The church is not a democracy. At Westwinds there are no elections or votes for most major decisions. That is left to the leadership team whom we feel God has entrusted with guiding this church. You may not always agree with what is decided. How will you handle your difference of opinion should it arise?

All of us play the role of followers at some level of our Christian experience. What do the following scriptures teach about the characteristics of a good follower in the church?

I Corinthians 16:15-16

I Thessalonians 5.12-13

Hebrews 13.17

Matthew 18 gives a biblical model for handling conflict. By design it prevents gossip and dishonoring each other. Are you totally committed to the kind of honesty modeled in Matthew 18?

II Timothy 2.23-24 points out that quarreling can happen among owners of the church. Put in your own words what our attitude and response should be according to the procedure Jesus outlines for conflict resolution in Matthew 18.15-17

Are you totally committed to protecting the unity of Westwinds Community Church? Do you have any concerns about being able to fulfill this fourth commitment?

CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to read and complete this owner's manual. We are excited about the future possibilities for working with God in the redemption of the world and about having you on board as an owner.

Two final points here at the end may help you to understand Westwinds' expectations:

1. follow through on your commitments to the church and to Christ, both personally and ecclesially (i.e. through the community of Westwinds)
2. review this manual periodically (at least once a year), so you can be refreshed in your spirit and in your understanding concerning your role as an owner

Again, thank you. The health of our church expands possibilities for growth, transformation, and contact with God, and it is now your responsibility to ensure Westwinds continues to grow because of your role as an owner.



What does it mean to be an “owner” at Westwinds?

As Christians, we are members of God’s household (Ephesians 2.19) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members, or “owners” as we call them, are sacrificially committed to do the work of the ministry that God has prepared in advance for them to do (cf. Ephesians 2.10, 4.12).

What are the requirements for becoming an owner at Westwinds?

A Westwinds owner is on board with Westwinds’ mission, vision, and values; they support and participate in The Elements and Satellites, and align themselves with our theological essentials. Owners give of their time, their talent, and their treasure. If you do all of these things, you are essentially an owner already - however, we encourage you to become legit. Grab a copy of the Owner’s Manual from the SoundWords kiosk and feel free to investigate further!

How can I become an owner at Westwinds?

Step One: complete the Owner’s Manual

Step Two: fill out an ownership card

Step Three: meet with someone from the staff/elder team

Once you become an owner, expect to attend our seasonal Hivemind gatherings

Is church membership/ownership even biblical?

Some people with Christian backgrounds contend against ownership, reasoning that we don’t need to be a “member” of any local church because, as a Christian, we are simply members of the universal Church - the worldwide Body of Christ. While it’s true that everyone who worships Jesus is a part of one global Church body, the Bible also recognizes smaller congregations as “churches” and encourages them to be organized.

In Acts 20.28, the Apostle Paul instructs the elders of the church at Ephesus to keep watch of the flock over which God made them overseers. Keeping watch over the flock would be impossible if we didn’t know who our owners were. Paul also instructed the Ephesians regarding the importance of church life. Jesus Christ blesses His people through the local church body, to which He gives His Word and Spirit. From Christ, that whole body grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (cf. Ephesians 4.16)

For more information on being an owner of Westwinds, please contact info@westwinds.org.

Additional resources on ownership and doctrine can be obtained through the SoundWords kiosk in the Westwinds lobby.

