

Assembly at Sg. Nibong Gospel Hall (SNGH)

A guide to the Doctrines & Practices of the Assembly at

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Purpose

To provide a guide to the Biblical Principles & Practices of the assembly at SNGH for:

1. Believers currently in fellowship
2. Believers from other churches or assemblies intending to fellowship at SNGH.
3. New elders & deacons & those in leadership amongst the saints.

Qualification

This is **NOT** a creed or the absolute authority on the faith. Our ultimate authority on all matters of faith is the original Word of God, i.e. the Biblical text in the original language and form. (*see* 1.1 The Bible)

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1. Basic Doctrines

1.1. The Bible

We believe that the Bible, composed of the **Old Testament** and **New Testament**, is God's inspired and infallible Word, and is the supreme standard and **final authority** for all conduct, faith and doctrine.

We believe the **Holy Spirit** moved prophets and apostles to write the sacred Scriptures (2 Peter 1:20-21). He did this employing the distinctive styles of each individual. These writings are **God-breathed**, the very Word of God (2 Timothy 3:15-17; John 10:35). As such they are unfailingly accurate. They are **without error** in all that they state and teach as fact, including God's work in creation, events of world history, and prophetic matters of the future (Matthew 5:18,19).

We believe that God has given us the whole of Scripture, down to the very words. This plenary and verbal inspiration applies, strictly speaking, only to the **original manuscripts**. These originals are known to us with great accuracy from the many manuscript copies available to us.

As God has faithfully overseen the writing of the Scriptures, so He has safeguarded their preservation and recognition in the **39 books** of the Old Testament and **27 books** of the New Testament, as found in the "Protestant Bible". They are therefore **canonical** as having met the criteria of acceptance as the word of God by the Christian church.

We believe that the Scriptures speak with **divine authority**. We submit to all that they command and embrace them as God's trustworthy guide for our lives. They are the sole norm of the Christian faith. Their central message is the self-revelation of God and the person and saving work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:18; Luke 24:25-27).

(Note: we will use the terms **Bible**, **Scriptures** and **Holy Scriptures** to mean one and the same)

1.2. The Interpretation of the Bible

We believe the **interpretation** of the Holy Scriptures should be **literal**, that is, Scripture is true as the authors meant it. The scriptural truths are derived by applying the **literal-historical-grammatical** method of interpretation. This does not mean there are no **figures of speech** used by the authors but should be interpret as such only when the authors intended it to be in the normal sense of the writings.

We believe the **primary interpretation** of a passage applies to the people and time **to which it was written**. Not all Scripture is meant directly for the church. However, some passages can often have valuable secondary applications for us when understood in the light of the New Testament.

Based on the **authority of the Bible** and its interpretation outlined above, the following is a summary of the **Doctrines** we hold and **Practice**, according to the Scriptures.

1.3.God

God exists eternally as **One in three Persons**, namely the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to whom equal honour is due (Dt.6:4; John. 12:26; Ph.2:6; John. 1:1,2 ; 5:17,22-23; 14:25-26; 16:7,27,28 ; Matt. 28:19)

Although God is a tri-unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Scripture also affirms that God is NOT three different gods or manifest Himself in three different forms or manifestations. We acknowledge that we are unable to fully and perfectly explain or give an account of this declaration by Scripture as to the nature of the **Triune God** for it is the deep mystery of God but nevertheless affirm that this declaration and teaching of Scripture is sufficient for knowing God and for the Christian faith.

1.4.Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the **flesh** (John 1:1, 14). He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Mt. 1:20-25; Lk 1:35).

He was **without sin** and His death was a sacrifice to God and a **propitiation** for the remission of sins (Rom.4:25; 2Co.5:21)

He was raised **bodily** from the dead (Mt.28:5-7; 1Cor.15:20)

He ascended to the right hand of the Father and is now the all-sufficient **High Priest** of His people. (Acts 1:9; He.4:14-16)

He will **personally come again** to receive His people unto Himself and to set up His Kingdom. (Jn. 14:3; 1 Th.4:13-18; Is.9:6-7)

The Lord Jesus is both **fully God** and **fully man**. (John 10: 30, John 14:9, Phil 2:6-8 ; Acts 2:22 , Rom 5:15,18,19). We acknowledge that we are unable to fully and perfectly explain or give an account of this declaration by Scripture as to the nature of the **Lord Jesus Christ** but nevertheless affirm that this declaration and teaching of Scripture is sufficient for knowing Him and the Christian faith.

1.5.Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the **third person** of the Godhead.

The Holy Spirit whose regenerating and sanctifying work enables the believer to live righteously and godly in this present world. (Jn.3:5-8;16:8-11; Ti.3:4-7)

1.6.Man

Man (& woman) is created in the image of God and **is uniquely created** different from animals. (Gen 1:26,27). Because **Man (& woman)** is created in **God's image**, their lives have **intrinsic value**.

Although Man was created without sin, through Adam all Man sinned. (Rom 5:12)

All man by nature is alienated from God because of **sin** and is therefore under **divine judgement and condemnation**. (Eph.2:1; Rom 3:19; 5:6; 12-19) He can only be saved and justified before God through **repentance** and **faith in Christ**. (Lk.13:3; Ga2:16)

Because of man's sin, the **just penalty is physical death and eternal spiritual death** (Rom 6:23).

1.7. Salvation

Man can be **saved** from the penalty and power of sin by **believing in Jesus Christ** and His **finished work** on the **cross** and **His resurrection**. (John 3:13-18, 1 Cor 15:1-3)

A justified believer is also **born of God** and **indwelt by the Holy Spirit** resulting in evident holiness of life, doing of God's will and manifestation of the **fruit of the Spirit**. (John 1:12,13; John 3:5-8; John.14:16-17; Rom.8:9; Matt.7:21-23; Gal 5:22-24)

A believer is also, **at conversion**, baptized in the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ - the Church. (1 Co.12:12-13). We do NOT believe in a further "baptism of the Holy Spirit" after conversion. We do not believe the scriptures teach this.

A true believer is **not able to lose his salvation** because God is the one who preserves him/her. (John 10:28-29; John 14:2-3; 1 Cor 1:8-9; Phil 1:6).

1.8. Resurrection

The dead will be raised **bodily** either to life or condemnation and that the blessedness of the righteous and the punishment of the unrighteous will be eternal. (1 Co.15:51-57 2Co.5:10; Rev.20:11-15).

At the time of the **rapture**, the dead in Christ will rise first followed by the rapture (1Thess 4:14-17, 1 Cor 15:51-54) of the Christians who are alive to enjoy eternity with the Lord Jesus forever (1 Thess 4:17).

2. Biblical Practices

2.1. The Gathering & Name of the Assembly

As with the early church, as documented in Acts and the letters, the local church gathers in the **name of the Lord Jesus Christ**, and not by their earthly leaders (Paul, Apollos, Luther, etc), and not by practices (Baptist, Presbyterian, etc). However, for practical purposes, we name the **building** in which we meet as believers in Christ Jesus. This is similar to how Paul and other scripture writers address the local churches, e.g. to the church at Corinth, etc. (1 Cor 1:2, 1 Thess 1:1, 2Thess 1:1, Rev 2:1, 8,12, 18, Rev 3:1, 7,14). Therefore we are the church (or assembly) at Sungai Nibong Gospel Hall.

(Note that the scriptures uses the word "church" to refer to the body of or gathering of believers and not to a building)

2.2. Church Government

According to the scriptures, there are only two offices that govern or oversee the local church, namely, **elders (or overseers)** and **deacons**. (Acts 14:23, Acts 20:17, Phil 1:1, 1 Tim 3:1-15, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Pet 5:1-7, 1 Tim 5:17-19, Jas 5:14).

The elders are **to shepherd** the local church which includes **teaching** the scriptures and overseeing the affairs while the deacons see to the **physical needs** of the local church.

We believe in and the practice of the **plurality of elders** in each local church or assembly, as taught in the scriptures, and NOT a one-pastor system.

2.3. The Priesthood of believers

All who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are now priests (1 Peter 2:9) while the Lord Jesus is our High Priest. As such, there are no “ordained” priests to approach God on behalf of the believers. All believers may approach the throne of grace freely without an ordained priest (Heb 4:14-16, Heb 10:19-22).

2.4. Baptism

We believe in **baptism by immersion**, as an outward show of a person’s belief in Jesus Christ a **Savior and Lord**. It is carried out as soon as practically possible after a person’s acceptance of the Lord Jesus. (Matt 3:16, Acts 8:38-39). Baptism by immersion represents a believer’s **death, burial and resurrection** in Jesus Christ (Rom 6:3-4). “Baptism by **sprinkling**” is not the **baptism** referred to in the scriptures and so is really **not a baptism**.

2.5. The Lord’s Supper

The early church as recorded in Acts, practiced the **breaking of bread** (or the **Lord’s Supper**) to **remember** the Lord Jesus. This is the practice that the apostles taught. (Acts 2:42, 1 Cor 11:23-27). The early church also broke bread on the **first day of the week** (Acts 20:7), which we believe should be a healthy pattern to observe, notwithstanding practical circumstances.

It is also customary to use **one loaf or one bread** for the breaking of bread as it more closely symbolizes the one body in Christ. (1 Cor 10:17).

Because all believers are priests (see para 2.3), any **baptized brother** may lead in prayer, scripture reading or in a hymn/song to lead the assembly in remembering the Lord. Sisters are to participate by meditating and remaining silent (see para 2.7)

2.6. The Symbol of the Headship of Christ

When the local church **gathers**, they are to display the **Headship of Christ symbolically**. This done by **brothers uncovering** their heads, and **sisters covering** their heads. (1 Cor 11:2-16). This is a 2-fold instruction. Brothers must **NOT** cover their heads (by baseball caps, hats, skull caps, etc), and sisters are to have a **covering** on their heads. The reasons given by Paul are **NOT cultural** but are based on headship (1 Cor 11:3-5), creation order (1 Cor 11:8-9), and angels (1 Cor 11:10).

2.7. Role of Men & Women

When the **local church** gathers, brothers & sisters have **different roles** to play as described in scriptures. Although the roles are **different**, brothers & sisters have **equal standing** in Christ (Gal 3:26-28)

Brothers are to **lead** in teaching, and in prayers. (1 Cor 14: 1 Tim 2:8, 12)

Sisters are to remain **silent** (1 Cor 14:34-37 , 1 Tim 2:11)

Reasons given are **NOT** cultural but **Christ’s commandment** (1 Cor 14:37), and **Creation order** (1 Tim 2:13,14)

Sisters are to teach **children** and **younger women**. (Titus 2:3-5, 1 Tim 5:10, 2 Tim 1:5).

Sisters may lead in small functional groups, such as **sisters' meetings, Sunday school**, etc, where it is not the gathering of the “whole” local church or assembly.

2.8. Spiritual Gifts

We believe every believer is endowed with at least **one spiritual gift**. Not all have the same gifts or the same degree of gifts. (1 Cor 12:4-11; Rom 12:4-8)

The gifts are given as the **Holy Spirit Himself determines** (1 Cor 12:11).

The purpose of the gifts is for the **edification of local church** and **NOT** for personal edification (1 Cor 12:7)

We believe that the **miraculous sign gifts have ceased**. They were given as **signs** to **authenticate** the prophecies and teachings before the canon of scripture was closed. Once we have the canon of scripture, the sign gifts have **ceased**. (1 Tim 5:23 2 Tim 4:20, Phil 2:27)

The “miraculous sign gifts” that we observe today do **NOT** measure up to those recorded in scripture. (E.g. Tongues at Pentecost in Acts 2:4-11 are **earthly** languages that the speakers have not learnt, and **NOT** gibberish)

3. Biblical Doctrines

3.1. Eschatological

We believe in the **Pre-millennial, Pre-Tribulation** return of the Lord Jesus.

We believe in a **literal 1000 year** (millennial) reign of the Lord Jesus on earth as written in Rev 20:1-6. The **millennial reign** (or kingdom) begins **after** the Great Tribulation.

We believe the **rapture** of the church (all true believers) is imminent and will occur before the Great Tribulation of Matt 24:15-31. (1 Thess 4:13-18).

3.2. Dispensational

3.2.1. Israel and the Church

Though salvation has been by **grace through faith** in all times, when interpreting Scripture we should recognize that God has placed man in various conditions and dealt with man in various ways. This is most notable between the Old Testament and the New Testament times.

We believe the Church is **NOT** the new Israel (1 Cor 10:32; Rom 11:11-12, 25-26) and that **Promises and Curses** prophesied for Israel is meant for the nation of **Israel** and is **literal**. They are **NOT** to be **spiritualized** for the Church.

We believe that Literal **Prophecies for Israel** which have not yet been fulfilled will be fulfilled in the future.

We believe the **Church** is a **mystery** hidden before the foundations of the world and was only revealed to the New Testament apostles (Eph 3:1-7) and does **NOT replace Israel**. (1 Cor 10:32)

3.3. Prophetic

We believe in the **literal** interpretation of the **promises and prophecies** concerning **Israel**. Therefore the promises to Abraham, Isaac & Jacob will be fulfilled in the future since it has not yet been fulfilled as of today. (Gen 12:7, Gen 15:18-21, Gen 17:19, Gen 35:11-12, Jer 31:35-37). We acknowledge that some prophecies do have double or triple fulfillment but we maintain that the primary prophecy will still be fulfilled in spite of the secondary or tertiary fulfillment.

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