

Surf Church Porto Conduct

March 2018

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1. Who We Are

The purpose of this document is simply to describe to anyone looking in, who we are, and who we aren't, as well as why we do what we do. We list and describe a number of things that define us, primarily derived from scriptures in the Holy Bible.

This is a working document that should develop as the church develops in size and maturity, as we walk together with Jesus...

A. Vision Statement of Surf Church Porto

“to make disciples amongst the surfers, skateboarders and students of the North of Portugal...”

“We are looking to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the surf, skate, student communities of the North of Porto.” These communities are iconic of the unreached generation in this region. The churches of the North have a gap from 14 years to 40 years old, and we seek to fill that gap.

Of course, everyone is welcome at Surf Church Porto, but this group is our main focus, especially those in the free sport and student communities.

This will affect our church culture, conduct, style, environment and outreach method in that we are geared toward the spreading of the gospel within the focus sub culture and generation. Essentially, as much as is Biblically permitting, we want an environment where young surfers, skaters and students would feel comfortable enough to really hear the message of Jesus.

Our strategy within this vision, is to do what we love, for the one we love, making relationships with others that also love to do what we love...

This means that we freely surf, in order to meet surfers. We freely skate in order to meet skaters, and we engage the university culture in a variety of ways, in order to meet students. We trust that the Gospel will spill out of our hearts into these naturally made relationships.

B. Surf Church Porto's (non) Denominational Description

Surf Church Porto is a non-denominational, discipleship community of folks seeking to follow the Holy Bible. We teach through the Bible, week after week, hoping to teach new folks to also be able to teach the bible as well. (2 Tim 2:2)

What do we mean by saying we are a bible church? Simply that our sermons are consistently ½ chapter of the bible, working through the Bible chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse. Further, much of our discipleship time spent with members of the church throughout the week is founded in wisdom and teaching directly from the Bible. We seek to live what the Bible teaches.

In our community everyone is welcomed and received regardless of age, race, sub culture, education, language, nationality, sexual orientation, etc.

While everyone is more than welcome to be in our midst, it is clear however that we will give, teach and encourage everyone toward our great teacher, and the savior of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. What we do – Weekly Meeting

We believe that church is not one thing, one time, one day per week. We believe followers of Jesus make up the living “church.” As a result we include eating together, reaching out together, and enjoying recreation together as part of our weekly church meeting.

We meet at 14:00 at the “ET” for community outreach, generally looking like a 3-hour surf session. We then have a church dinner at 17:30 wherein we always take communion, followed by a church service that includes singing worship, testimony giving, bible teaching, and prayer.

We do this every single Sunday, rain or shine. We understand that surf varies, therefore we also skateboard or engage in other beach activities when the surf is down.

A. Community Outreach

We have had very little problems with meeting people and inviting them to our church through sharing the Gospel and creating relationships. However, we believe community outreach to be a prescribed biblical characteristic of the church.

The more people we are exposed to, the more people might answer the knocking of the Holy Spirit on their hearts to come and join our community.

The outreach strategy will generally revolve around surfing as we’ve discovered this to be a very successful and easy way to engage people with intentional relationship.

We will have occasional outreach days seeking to give a surf experience to underprivileged kids in our communities.

We will remain sensitive to the community's needs around us, being willing to formulate trash cleanups, orphanage visits, homeless feedings, etc if people in our community feel compelled to launch such outreaches.

This will also include our weekly surf ministry, taking place on Sunday's at 14:00.

Surf Ministry

Troy Pitney will be the Leader of the Surf Ministry serving as a deacon for a trial period of 1 year. To be clear, this does not mean that the appointed person does everything regarding the surfing ministry.

This is primarily in regards to the Sunday afternoon surf times, but would also extend into Surf Church surf outreaches and events, as well as working on "Surf Community Relations" with the various entities involved in the surfing community of Porto.

As with everything done at Surf Church Porto, this position is a position in which the leader would disciple a team of helpers to accomplish the surfing ministry needs of the church.

The appointed leader of this ministry should continually be striving to meet the descriptions of a deacon as referred to in 1 Timothy 3. The leadership of the church will hold this leader accountable to that description.

The leader of this position would/should recruit a team to manage and labor to meet the surf ministry needs of Surf Church Porto.

Everyone in the church could/should be involved with the general flow of getting boards and suits to the beach and back to our garage, clean and dry. This is to be kindly and gracefully managed by the leader and his/her team.

Surf Church Porto nominated Troy, in this position, as a deacon of the church.

B. Weekly Church Dinners

We believe that meeting together and eating together is an essential part of discipleship community. We eat dinner together after our Sunday Surf Sessions, with Dinner starting at 17:30.

As we continue to grow, we've realized a developed structure is becoming needed.

We have therefore appointed Alice Barros to take over and manage the food ministry of Surf Church Porto for a period of 1 year, renewable thereafter. To be clear, this does not mean that the appointed person does everything regarding the food ministry.

This is primarily in regards to the weekly church dinners, which are a part of the church program on Sundays, but would also extend into Surf Church outreaches and events.

As with everything done at Surf Church Porto, this position would be a position in which the leader would disciple a team of helpers to accomplish the food needs of the church.

The appointed leader of this ministry should be striving to meet the descriptions of a deacon as referred to in 1 Timothy 3. The leadership of the church will hold this leader accountable to that description.

The leader of this position would/should recruit a team to manage and labor to meet the food needs of Surf Church Porto.

Everyone in the church could/should be involved with the general flow of setting up, serving, and cleaning afterwards, but this is to be kindly and gracefully managed by the leader and his/her team.

For clarity, a chart of revolving responsibility should be created to develop this ministry to understand what is needed (supplies and labor) and who is leading what and when.

Surf Church Porto has appointed Alice in this position as a deacon of the church.

The leadership has decided now that 10% of all church giving will be dedicated to the food ministry costs.

1. Communion

Communion is introduced in Matthew 26 as we see Jesus offer the broken bread as his body and the wine as his blood during the celebration dinner of the Passover that he was eating with his disciples. We see then Jesus say, "as often as you eat/drink of it, do it in remembrance of me..."

Since bread and wine are a staple at our Sunday evening dinners, we take communion in our church dinners every week, as often as we eat of it...

Communion doesn't always need to be a somber and internalized time. We believe Communion should often be practiced in true spiritual community, with true celebration as to what Jesus accomplished. Essentially, it shouldn't be a quiet "I'm sorry" prayer once a month, but instead weekly meals of fellowship in which conversation is dominated by remembering what Jesus did and rejoicing in what He is doing.

We then see the early church having these communion dinners called "love feasts," (Jude 1:12) throughout Acts and many of the epistles.

Paul gave a warning (1 Cor 11) not to eat or drink judgment on oneself by examining themselves before partaking of the bread and wine. In context of what he wrote, the Corinthian church was getting drunk on the wine, and gorging themselves on the food, leaving others hungry (as also seen in Jude 1:12). The meal of communion was meant to be a self-less, community driven time full of the fruits of the spirit.

So in this context, communion is not a prescribed time to confess sin necessarily (though any time is a good time) but rather to look to see if your drinking or eating selfishly in terms of the current community.

Therefore, we will look to practice this Biblically, weekly, directing that our prayers, and conversation during the dinner be in part focused on the great things that Jesus has done for us, especially in regards to his body broken for us.

C. Worship Time / Testimony

We seek to sing meaningful and scripturally true worship songs. We seek also to lead worship in a style consistent with the sub cultures that we are aiming to serve.

Note on Worship time:

We freely invite everyone with musical desire and skill to join us in playing an instrument for our worship times.

However, the worship team meets at 6pm on Sundays (subject to change) to go over the songs and strategy of the worship time during the service. You must join this time to be prepared enough to join in the actual time of worship with an instrument.

We have therefore appointed Mia Waters to take over and manage the Worship ministry of Surf Church Porto for a period of 1 year, renewable thereafter. To be clear, this does not mean that the she has to do everything regarding the worship ministry.

This is primarily in regards to the weekly services, which are a part of the church program on Sundays, but would also extend into Surf Church outreaches and events.

As with everything done at Surf Church Porto, this position would be a position in which the leader would disciple a team of helpers to accomplish the worship ministry needs of the church.

The appointed leader of this ministry should be striving to meet the descriptions of a deacon as referred to in 1 Timothy 3. The leadership of the church will hold this leader accountable to that description.

People who share their stories will need to arrange this with church leadership before the church service.

D. Bible Teaching/Study

We believe very highly in the Bible as being the spoken and revealed Word of God, to teach and declare how a person can have friendship with God, forgiveness of sins, and conduct themselves in daily life that blesses both themselves and the people around them. As a result this is a major core value of

Surf Church. Bible teaching is a significant focus during our church and Bible study times.

Further, we aren't looking to give well-groomed sermons, rather times of open bible teaching and thought provocation. Essentially, we want to create bible studiers through our church services, not sermon analyzers. As a result, we teach at least a half chapter of scripture, verse by verse, every meeting.

Further still, we have a Bible study every Thursday covering the same passage as the Sunday service, allowing a deeper look into the passage, in order to create better memory and clarity of the passage. We really believe in the Bible being our guide to teach and lead in everything.

1. Discipleship

We believe that a single weekly service is not sufficient for disciples to be fed well enough to grow deeply in their walks with Jesus. As a result, the church plant team has engaged in intentional discipleship with at least one, and no more than 3 church members.

This is where life experience, biblical knowledge and Spiritual wisdom are most effectively imparted. This is essential to growth and sustainability.

Further, in obedience to 2 Timothy, 2:2, we teach our disciples to disciple others, teaching them to disciple others, etc. This is our main strategy for growth.

We believe that almost every circumstance is a discipleship opportunity, since the teaching and leading of Jesus pertains to every part of life.

E. Children's Ministry

As we continue to grow, we've realized a developed structure is becoming needed for the different kids and age groups.

We have therefore appointed Michelle Pitney to take over and manage this ministry of Surf Church Porto for a period of 1 year, renewable thereafter. To be clear, this does not mean that the appointed person does everything regarding the Children's ministry.

This is primarily in regards to the Kids' Sunday school, which is a part of the church program on Sundays, but would also extend into Surf Church outreaches and events.

As with everything done at Surf Church Porto, this position would be a position in which the leader would disciple a team of helpers to accomplish the Children's ministry needs of the church.

The appointed leader of this ministry should be striving to meet the descriptions of a deacon as referred to in 1 Timothy 3. The leadership of the church will hold this leader accountable to that description.

The leader of this position would/should recruit a team to manage and labor to meet the Children's ministry needs of Surf Church Porto.

Everyone in the church could/should be involved with the general flow of setting up, serving, and cleaning afterwards, but this is to be kindly and gracefully managed by the leader and his/her team.

For clarity, a chart of revolving responsibility should be created to develop this ministry to understand what is needed (supplies and labor) and who is leading what and when.

Surf Church Porto has appointed Michelle in this position as a deacon of the church.

During the service Bible teaching time, usually starting around 19:25 and going to 20:15, 3 different classes of children will be running.

2 leaders will work with Nursery age children, from 0-3 years of age. These leaders will primarily deal with the caring for and watching these children, though little games and crafts can be provided. Both English and Portuguese language should be available for the kids.

The nursery currently meets in the entrance of the locker rooms adjacent to the gym where the church meets. The space is converted in order to minimize traffic in and out during the nursery time.

2 leaders will work with ages 4-8 providing meaningful activities and lessons for the children corresponding with the Bible passage that is being taught during regular church. Both English and Portuguese language should be available.

This Sunday school meets in the Locker rooms in the space adjacent to the gym. The space is converted to a workable kids space for this time and then torn down every Sunday.

At least 1 leader will take the “adolescents” for kids 9-14 years of age. These young people will sit with the leader in the back of the church in a corner so they can be exposed to and hear

the main message/sermon, but still have the freedom to engage in quiet conversation with the leader. The leader here should have meaningful questions and interactions planned during this time. Both English and Portuguese should be available for these youngsters.

F. Prayer

Prayer is simply conversation and relational connection with our Father in Heaven, through relationship with our Savior, Jesus Christ. For this reason, we pray in Jesus name.

This is a main staple of our service times. Further, as all of us are involved with specific disciple making, we are teaching prayer as normal part of a believer’s life. Moreover, prayer isn’t necessarily an outspoken, planned time; rather often it is the ongoing internal dialogue between yourself and your savior.

How we Act - Other Core Values

G. Giving

We want Surf Church to become indigenously sustainable. The giving will be used for Sunday dinners, outreaches, to support future missionaries, to pay a local pastor, etc.

As this is a subject with tension surrounding it, we are aiming to strictly let the bible dictate how we teach this principle. We want to be very careful not to portray a group of foreigners coming in and looking to acquire indigenous money, so we will be very clear with intentions for any giving received.

This will be accomplished during **Semi Annual Financial Reports** for everyone in which we give an account for our spending, as well as open voting to the church as to what will be done with the money (outreaches, retreats, Portuguese Pastor salary, Portuguese missionary support, etc.). The church plant team will guide these meetings.

There is a **giving box** in the back of the meeting area on the communion table. In the foreseeable future, we won't "pass the plate" for offerings, but will only rely on God to prompt people to give in secret.

A. Baptism

We will baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe in only honoring people's request to be baptized if we have a discipleship relationship with them where we are already engaged in ongoing discipleship. In rare occasion, visitors may be baptized with us if a strong link and permission from their home church Pastor can be established.

We will baptize with immersion in the ocean, in surfer fashion, surrounded by everyone sitting on his or her surfboards.

Baptism represents the laying down of one's life, rising again in the cleansed power of the Lord Jesus. It is a public demonstration of the new life one has in Jesus.

B. Pastors, Elders and Deacons

1 Timothy 3 states what an elder and deacon need to be. Scripture also tells us that a church should have elders and deacons.

As we understand it, there is Biblical freedom to how many elders, pastors and deacons can be elected.

Surf Church Porto leadership has voted to have 2 pastors, and 3 elders and 4 deacons to fit the current needs of the church. This number can grow as the church grows.

We have, as of October 29th, 2017, appointed 4 deacons for 4 or the ministries we operate. These are Mia Waters for worship, Alice Barros for hospitality and food, Troy Pitney for surfing, Michelle Pitney for Children's ministry.

We have, as of October 29th, 2017, appointed Samuel Cianelli as the head pastor, and Troy Pitney as the Missions and Outreach Pastor.

We have, as of October 29th, 2017, appointed Dustin Waters, Samuel Cianelli and Cesar Barros as elders. They all meet the biblical test.

Since we seek to be an indigenously sustained church, this leadership team will be continuing to search for, and train potential new pastors, elders and deacons, resigning from their own offices as pastors, elders and deacons as is fitting.

In November 2018, we will hold another assembly to vote for potential new elders, pastors and deacons, or extend the current leadership for another term of service.

As far as we understand biblically an elder's role is to support and balance the pastoral staff, as well as lead exemplary lives amongst the congregation according to 1 Timothy 3.

As far as we understand biblically a pastor's role is to lead the congregation spiritually, dedicated to living and teaching and studying the Bible (as seen in Acts 6:2-4), as well as leading exemplary lives amongst the congregation according to 1 Timothy 3.

As far as we understand biblically a deacon's role is to lead the church in service, following the example of the head deacon, Jesus Christ, who did not consider his equality with God, something to be held onto, but instead humbled himself even to the point of death on a cross.

C. Disputes in Church

There have been, and there inevitably will be disputes over big things and petty things. Regardless of that, we are choosing to follow the bible over each of these disputes. Matthew 18:15-17 is our guiding text on this.

This text and practice only pertains to those who are willing to follow Jesus, and his teaching.

We will not force any of this on anyone who is not willing to follow Jesus and his teaching, but if you are causing harm to the community, and you are not willing to follow Jesus regarding disputes, you will be asked to leave our community.

If person A does something that person B does not like and thinks is not biblical, then B should go to A and quietly tell them that they were hurt, or that they disagree with what A did. This should be done very humbly, with the hope of reconciling with and restoring A.

If A refuses to listen, B needs to get 2 witnesses to go to A again. If A is still unwilling to ask forgiveness and apologize, then B needs to go to the leadership of the church, and A will be asked in front of the whole church to confess, repent and apologize. If A still won't repent, A will be asked to leave the fellowship.

The very clear point and motive behind this process is to restore good relationships and keep a strong community of people that love each other. We do not want people who hate or dislike each other within our midst. If Simon the Zealot had peace and fellowship with Matthew the tax collector through the power of Jesus, then how much more can we have peace together as well!

Scripture is clear that forgiveness is a gift to the one who gives it, not just the one who receives it! Jesus instructed Peter to forgive limitlessly in a time where the religious people said only to forgive 3 times.

Let's avoid all of this, and be a church that is very quick to apologize, and even quicker to forgive, as Jesus exemplified.

If the person for any reason, does not want to hear or agree with the point, the person is completely free to do it.

D. Biblical health

Scripture speaks a lot of development of good health practices. As a result, this community seeks to be a support to spring all of those that enter this fellowship toward better health

practices. This includes physical, emotional, psychological, financial and especially spiritual health.

Additionally, this pertains to healing from all dependencies on anything that is not provided by the Holy Spirit. This includes, but is not limited to dependency on drugs, alcohol, marijuana, tattoos, piercings, etc.

Surf Church does focus much on the development of spiritual health and growth, through leading in worship, teaching the bible, and focusing on discipleship relationships. However, we want also to take a holistic approach to life, teaching and encouraging steps toward better health in all of the above-mentioned areas in life and more!

Surf Church seeks to be an environment that encourages and gives support toward the bettering of healthy habits, especially in regards to the following:

1. Physical Health/Alcohol

If alcohol is a struggle for you, meaning that you habitually drink to much, or have a dependency on, or are very tempted with, we hope to be a support for you to begin drinking less and less, eventually leaving it entirely.

Scripture says in Ephesians 5:18, “don’t get drunk on wine... but be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Because of psalm 104:15 and Ecclesiastes 10:19, we do believe that moderate amounts of alcohol are a blessing and are to be enjoyed responsibly. As a result, most Surf Church meals are served with beer and wine. We trust that everyone in this fellowship would work together toward the responsible consumption of these beverages.

We ask that alcohol only be consumed during the dinnertime of Surf Church’s program. Please refrain from drinking an alcoholic beverage during the worship or bible teaching times.

As of July 1, a new law in Portugal says that minors under the age of 18 cannot consume Alcohol. Therefore if anyone under the age of 18 is consuming alcohol, leadership should be informed and we will ask the individual not to.

2. Physical Health/Tobacco

Scripture doesn’t say anything specifically regarding the smoking of tobacco, but few would make an argument that the consumption of tobacco is healthy in any way.

We understand however, that it is a very big part of the culture of the dynamic of people that we are trying to reach (surfers, skaters, and students from 14-40 years of age) and as a result smoking will continue to be allowed at Surf Church.

However, if you are a person who has an addiction to smoking cigarettes, we hope the Surf Church is a place that gives you the strength and encouragement to make steps away from addiction, smoking less and less until not smoking at all!

Surf Church is not a place to come and smoke and drink, but a place to come and be together, and find intimacy with God and each other, moving into healthier situations in all facets of life.

The law in Portugal says that minors under the age of 18 cannot consume tobacco. Therefore if anyone under the age of 18 is consuming tobacco, leadership should be informed and we will ask the individual not to.

A Note on Tobacco and Alcohol:

Romans 14 teaches us to be sensitive to all people about what we say and do, and in the case of tobacco and alcohol, it is very appropriate and right to be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of those around you.

We will find visitors coming to Surf Church that are bitterly against alcohol. When we know of their presence amongst us, we should be very cautious of using alcohol around them so as to show them grace. We should not use our freedom to partake of these substances as things that can make them upset or hurt them.

In the same way, when smoking on the balcony, it would be encouraged to make sure there is no one opposed to it while you do it. Be sensitive and loving, full of grace to everyone.

3. Physical Health/Eating Habits/Exercise

While the Bible doesn't address tobacco specifically, it does address physical health and eating habits. In fact, as the early church fathers developed the 7 deadly sins, they felt compelled to include gluttony as one of them due to the large amount of times scripture addresses it. The Bible has some 30 verses dealing directly with gluttony (which is not limited only to overeating).

Interestingly, the church of today's world generally takes a strong stance against Tobacco and Alcohol, but rarely speaks against poor eating habits and/or gluttony. (Please note that it

is very possible to be healthy looking and a glutton, or unhealthy and not being a glutton at all.)

Spurgeon and Moody fought about this, as Spurgeon was a tobacco guy, and Moody gluttonous. Once when Moody was invited to speak at a service by Spurgeon, Moody accepted and proceeded to speak the whole time on the sinfulness of smoking! At the end of the message, Spurgeon got up and said, "I'll put down the tobacco when you put down the fork..."

Each of us has unhealthy habits in some area of our life. Some are more noticeable to others, some are more popular, and some are more justifiable. However, let's not be a community that focuses on these habits that each other are doing, and instead walk with each other to become healthier in every way on this spiritual journey.

As a result, we want to encourage anyone in our presence to find the strength and encouragement to develop better physical habits in regards to food and physical exercise.

As Surf Church, there are plenty of opportunities to develop healthy physical habits through surf, and other beach activities.

Further, we want to give the support and encouragement to change eating habits (both over indulgence and under eating) as well, to support good overall physical health.

4. Sexual health

Scripture delivers the famous, "your body is a temple..." discourse, from 1 Corinthians 6, directly in the context of sexual health and purity.

The point is that God made you and your body and your sexuality for good and it is all meant to be enjoyed within the proper parameters. If these parameters are followed, sexuality is unbelievably wonderful.

However, with something so good and exciting, the human race has greatly abused it, and now sexuality is one of the most confused and painful things that exist.

Surf Church Porto wants to be a place that you can find strength and encouragement to develop better and healthier sexual practices.

Though it is old fashioned, Surf Church believes that sex before marriage only causes pain and confusion. As a result, we encourage all within our midst to do all they can to abstain from sexual practices with another individual outside of marriage, keeping a pure personal mind as well. (For example lusting after someone in your mind, or viewing pornography).

We also believe that your sexuality is then reserved, within marriage, only for your spouse, and if this is followed, it will greatly bless your marriage.

5. Psychological health

Surf Church hopes that if you struggle with psychological, emotional, or other neural and social habits or disorders that hurt you and others around you, you might find strength and encouragement in our midst to make the steps toward greater health in these areas.

No one on staff at Surf Church is certified in Psych medicine, but can offer basic biblical council to a point.

If it becomes clear that more professional help is needed, Surf Church leadership will stand with that person, encouraging them and praying with them on the journey of seeking professional help and therefore better overall health.

6. Financial Health

As with all aspects of life, we believe the Bible teaches to have good financial health. This does not mean to have a lot of money, but instead to steward well what God is giving you.

First, this starts with the desire to be a giver, not a taker. It is not a healthy standpoint in life to look to use others, rather to look to help and bless others. As a result, those of us that are regularly in Surf Church should seek to be givers and those that bless, rather than takers only.

Scripture is rather harsh on this point. 1 Thessalonians 3:10 says that if someone isn't willing to work, then they shouldn't be able to eat...

We encourage everyone to do what they can to do the work that God has given them, or continue in the studies that God has given them. We will be filled with grace for those without jobs for a long time but we only encourage people to not be lazy, but look to be contributors.

We understand that sometimes people have physical or mental disorders that keep them from being able to work or earn an income. In those cases we will stand with that person until the end, expecting them to still understand that their disability is not an excuse to not contribute in whatever way they are able.

We also encourage people to live within their means. This means spending only what you earn and not being irresponsible with credit opportunities, etc.

We also believe that the Bible teaches giving as an act of worship. Many believe that because of Malachi 3:8-10 church members should give 10% of their income to the local church. We will not take a firm stance on that.

In fact, we believe that we should be much more generous than that, being willing to give without expecting in return.

You have the freedom to give or not. We encourage you to give. You have the freedom to give to Surf Church or not. We encourage you simply to give where God leads you.

Remember that giving to this church is a blessing for you in many ways! You will benefit from what the money is spent on, and you will be full of joy that you gave to something you believe in!

We are diverse and growing in our community. We all bring different skills and talents and experiences into our fellowship.

Let us be quick to offer our services and experiences to others in our fellowship, cutting costs, and saving time and hassle, to benefit each other.

On the other hand, let no one assume that anyone should do anything for anyone for free. Let's be willing to give and bless

in all circumstances, with the skills and resources that God has trusted us with!

7. Marriage and Relationships

We believe that marriage is incredibly sacred, and directly reflects aspects of the triune God, and His desire for unity with us, the beloved Bride of Christ.

Scripture begins with a wedding, a union between Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:23-24), and then ends with the wedding, the union between Jesus and His Church.

Scripture is again clear that "what God has joined together, let no one separate." (Matt 19:6) We believe in this as well and as a church we will fight to protect the sanctity of this wonderful institution. In addition to keeping each other accountable to be faithful to love our spouses through personal relationship, Surf Church offers a number of resources and events geared toward keeping marriages good and healthy. (For example, Ele e Ela couples courses, Marriage events and other counseling opportunities).

To be clear, we believe marriage to be the holy union of 1 man with one woman, as scripture defines it (Gen 2:23-24). We believe it is the mans joy to lead the family spiritually, taking

upon the role that Paul taught in Ephesians 5:23-28 which states:

“For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;”

Paul then goes on to say that the wife’s role is to respond to the husband with respect. We want to see men and women loving each other selflessly and humbly, in all loyalty, companionship, and submission, considering the other more important than themselves, just as Jesus exemplified with the church.

Unfaithfulness and Divorce

Unfortunately in a fallen world, people make grave mistakes with very painful and destructive consequences.

In the case of unfaithfulness in marriage, we still believe that forgiveness and seeking help to heal the marriage is the right way forward.

Jesus said that the reason Moses allowed divorce was because of the hardness of the people’s heart, wanting divorce, and always wanting a new spouse (Matthew 19:3-10). We believe that the Heart of God doesn’t want anything to tear two people apart, even marital unfaithfulness, and that despite very painful circumstances, the best way forward is confession, forgiveness and walking the road of healing together! We always believe in Restoration, just like the scripture on resolving disputes as seen in Matthew 18, referenced as well here in the church bi-laws, section 3:C “Disputes in Church.”

Sometimes people will choose differently, and though we discourage that choice, there is a biblical precedent for moving forward with new relationships.

We believe that if your spouse is unfaithful, and you decide against forgiveness and healing, you may divorce your spouse and be free to remarry. However again, it is strongly advised to seek all possible avenues for forgiveness and healing together.

This is clearly biblically exemplified in Jesus, continuing in love with his Adulterous Bride until all is made well and she is made faithful (Revelation 19:7-9). This is also seen in Hosea, continuing with his wife who was unfaithful, sustaining many painful moments, but faithfully loving her until the end, bringing about great change and impact to the Israelites (Hosea chapters 1-3)...

If you were the one who was unfaithful, and your spouse divorced you as a result, remarriage is permitted once the following steps have been made:

1. You have sought the forgiveness and potential healing of the original marriage, and your previous spouse has either refused to forgive you, or forgiven you but won't remarry you.
2. You have sought the forgiveness of all family and friends and those affected by the original act of unfaithfulness (including brothers and sisters in church community).

Once these steps have been satisfied, we believe one is free to remarry.

Dating

We believe that dating relationships should always have a seriously seeking nature to them. We don't believe it's healthy in any way to have casual ongoing dating relationships.

Further, in light of 1 Corinthians 6, during a dating relationship, we believe in absolute sexual purity, and clear boundaries that will help in this. This includes abstaining from overnight stays together, holidays away together, and living together before marriage. This requires honesty and humble accountability, but we believe it is worth it for the overall quality and longevity of the relationship that will lead to a long and satisfying marriage!

E. Surf Church Media

Surf Church operates much of its agenda on Facebook @surfchurchporto. Please subscribe to keep up to date on our events.

www.surfchurch.pt has been designed and launched early 2018

Creative time, which meets every other Wednesday, at 19:30 – 22:30, is always posted on the “Events” section of our Facebook page.

Women's night, which meets every other Wednesday, at 19:30, is always posted...

We as the Surf Church leadership, commit to giving at least 2 weeks advance before specialized events, such as baptisms and outreaches, are carried out.

We are developing a Bulletin ministry as well where events will be communicated to those at church on Sundays. This will be in addition to the consistent announcements made during every Sunday service.

These are all efforts to better our communications. Please pay attention to the forums and communications to stay informed!

Note on Media Forums

Surf church has a number of public forms for us to communicate fun and interesting social things with each other. For example, we can communicate if we are surfing and invite others to come with us through the Facebook messenger.

Most of these forums are open for anyone to write anything in, so we ask that you please do not use these as forums to say anything personal, shocking, painful, controversial, political, etc.

If you have very serious things to communicate, then do it personally with the person you need to communicate with.

If you have things like this to communicate with the church, please communicate directly with the pastors or elders, and they will communicate with the rest of the church at their discretion.

With everything, please understand that you, who are reading this, represent not only Surf Church Porto, but also the body of Jesus Christ on this earth! Let's do all that we can to make sure our reputation is as good as possible before all people!

Romans 12:18 says to do as much as possible, as much as it relies on you, to live at peace with all men.

Let us strive to represent the love and forgiveness, the liberty and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Note on Press release and Interview:

We have had the joy of a number of Publications and News Journals taking interest in our church. This is excellent exposure to give the message of Jesus to Portugal and beyond.

We never speak negatively of other churches or spiritual institutions. Instead, we focus simply on who Jesus is, what He taught, and His message for the world.

We do not contrast our good, with other's bad. We simply speak of the good of Jesus, the Savior of the world, and our personal experience with him.

F. Church Growth / Respect

As our church is growing, it is clear that we will soon need a larger space to meet. The leadership is working on this to find a place within the church's budget that will accommodate the style of Surf Church Porto.

If you have ideas, please present them to the leadership.

To be clear, before any major move or decision is made regarding this, the church will be notified and given opportunity to offer opinion on the proposed changes.

As the church is growing, a schedule of "church cleaning" will be made, and members of the church will be encouraged to help with keeping our church well cleaned and operational. This includes the time now even though the church meets in the Pitney home.

No matter where the church meets, we expect general respect for the building. As long as we operate with surf, dinner and services, we expect everyone to respectfully consider all equipment and space used.

Essentially, clean after yourself, be willing to help in all circumstances.

We operate following our Savior who came not be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many! (Matt 20:28)

G. Church Planting

We believe that it is essential in the process of multiplication and sustainability development to have realistic, yet stretching goals for our disciples and church members.

One of these is to plant another church in the next 2-3 years, led primarily by a Portuguese church member. In our already established discipleship structure, we are teaching and training new potential pastors for Surf Church's in the future!

Already, good opportunities to plant churches are under way for Viana do Castelo and Peniche. (Refer to specific project write ups for ins and outs of these church plant projects.)

Further, we have plans to develop a Church Planting Institution, with the intention of training, sending, and supporting classes of church planters, beginning in our region, and expanding out from Porto as an epicenter.

H. Sending a Missionary

The great commission commands that we go therefore into all nations and make disciples of all men, teaching them all that Jesus taught the disciples and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! We take this very seriously...

Missions are a very important characteristic of the body of Jesus. As a result, from the very beginning now we are aiming to send and support missionaries.

We would like to support any missionary with a clear calling, giving financial priority to those who have been a part of our church over those who are simply looking for financial support. A matching amount of up to 50% of salary will be considered, and we will support our missionary in developing a deep

network of prayers and supporters to cover their needs the rest of the way.

A missionary will then be required to raise the additional funds.

In order to be considered and/or sent as a Surf Church Missionary, a candidate must have a good reputation in and out of the church, and have a character and demeanor that is above reproach with at least 6 months of consistent Jesus following and church attendance.

A missionary then must work with the leaders of the media team to create a clear and communicative “prayer slide” which will be shown in rotation at Surf Church Services during the prayer times at the end of services. The missionary will then be required to connect with the missions Pastor to be giving monthly up-to-date prayer requests that will be prayed for during this time. Each missionary will also be required to write brief updates and summaries of time spent, at least once every 2 months.

We believe that the church and the missionary should continually carry a deep and well connected relationship throughout the duration of the mission.

*Note: while we believe in all forms of missions and missional activities, we will prioritize our budget toward missionaries

with a church planting vision over all the other forms of missions.