



Fellowship Prairies

Encounter God, Equip God's People, Engage God's World

Fellowship Prairies Interdependence Excellence Document

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Fellowship Prairies Interdependence Excellence

The members of Fellowship Prairies share benefits and responsibilities because we truly believe that belonging to this family matters.

Our vision statement ‘Encounter God, Equip God’s People, Engage God’s World’ guides our decisions and activities as a family of churches. It is our prayerful dream that all our churches be healthy, involved, making a significant influence in demonstrating God’s love and communicating His word to the people of our Region. This Interdependence Excellence Document illustrates the interdependent relationship Fellowship Prairies has with its member churches and each individual church’s responsibility to each other.

In this document,

- “FEBCC”, “Fellowship”, and “National” refer to the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada.
- “Fellowship Prairies” refers to Fellowship Prairies Inc., one of five Regions of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada. This Region encompasses Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
- “Fellowship Prairies Family” refers to Fellowship Prairies and its member churches. “Fellowship Prairies Interdependence Excellence” and “Interdependence Excellence” refers to this document and its constituent parts, the Fellowship’s Statement of Faith, Fellowship Prairies Vision, Fellowship Prairies Values and Fellowship Prairies Code of Ethics.
- “Region” and “Regional” refer to Fellowship Prairies.
- “Regional Director” refers to the person so employed by Fellowship Prairies.
- The “Regional Ministry Centre” refers to the Region’s Regional Director and his staff [paid and unpaid].
- The “Leadership Board” refers to the elected leadership of Fellowship Prairies.
- “Equip” or “Equip Convention” refers to the annual Regional Convention.
- “Ministry Staff” means the various ministry staff [paid or unpaid] in a leadership position of one of the Fellowship Prairies churches, as determined by the local church, or a Chaplain recognized by the Region.

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- “Lead (or Senior) Pastor” of a church refers to that person designated by the church as holding the most senior pastoral position in their congregation.
- The Advisory Ministry is a Fellowship Prairies team of experienced individuals who have a deep and growing love for our Lord, committed to support the Fellowship Prairies family of churches, and who are available to advise churches and to assist Boards with recruitment interviews, conflict mediation, and theological interpretation.

Interdependence Excellence is built upon and is a compendium of Fellowship Prairies faith affirmations, which include:

- (A) the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada Statement of Faith;
- (B) our Fellowship Prairies Vision;
- (C) our Fellowship Prairies Values; and
- (D) our Fellowship Prairies Code of Ethics.

Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada Statement of Faith

1. BIBLE:

We believe the Bible to be the complete Word of God; that the sixty-six books, as originally written, comprising the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and were entirely free from error; that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and the true basis of Christian union.

2. GOD:

We believe in one God, Creator of all, holy, sovereign, eternal, existing in three equal Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3. CHRIST:

We believe in the absolute and essential deity of Jesus Christ, in His eternal existence with the Father in pre-incarnate glory, in His virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, triumphant ascension, mediatorial ministry and personal return.

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT:

We believe in the absolute and essential deity and personality of the Holy Spirit who convinces of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, Who regenerates, sanctifies, illuminates and comforts those who believe in Jesus Christ.

5. SATAN:

We believe that Satan exists as an evil personality, the originator of sin, the archenemy of God and man.

6. MAN:

We believe that man was divinely created in the image of God; that he sinned, becoming guilty before God, resulting in total depravity, thereby incurring physical and spiritual death.

7. SALVATION:

We believe that salvation is by the sovereign, electing grace of God; that by the appointment of the Father, Christ voluntarily suffered a vicarious, expiatory and propitiatory death; that justification is by faith alone in the all sufficient sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and that those whom God has effectually called shall be divinely preserved and finally perfected in the image of the Lord.

8. FUTURE THINGS:

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ; in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust; in the eternal blessedness of the redeemed and in the judgment and conscious, eternal punishment of the wicked.

9. THE LOCAL CHURCH:

We believe that a church is a company of immersed believers, called out of the world, separated unto the Lord Jesus, voluntarily associated for the ministry of the Word, the mutual edification of its members, the propagation of the faith and the observance of the ordinances. We believe it is a sovereign, independent body, exercising its own divinely awarded gifts, precepts and privileges under the Lordship of Christ, the Great Head of the church. We believe that its officers are pastors and deacons.

10. ORDINANCES:

We believe that there are only two ordinances for the church regularly observed in the New Testament in the following order:

- 1. Baptism which is the immersion of the believer in water, whereby he obeys Christ's command and set forth his identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection;*
- 2. The Lord's Supper which is the memorial wherein the believer partakes of the two elements, bread and wine, which symbolize the Lord's body and shed blood, proclaiming His death until He comes.*

11. CHURCH AND STATE

We believe in the entire separation of church and state.

12. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY:

We believe in religious liberty, that every man has the right to practice and propagate his beliefs.

13. THE LORD'S DAY

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day and that, in a special sense, it is the divinely appointed day for worship and spiritual exercise.

14. CIVIL GOVERNMENT:

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of society that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed, except only in the things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince of the kings of the earth.

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Fellowship Prairies Vision:

Encounter God, Equip God's People, Engage God's World

Encounter God

This will naturally encompass (but not be limited to) aspects such as prayer, time in the Bible, and worship.

Equip God's People

This support of one another helps to further us in our relationship to both God and fellow followers.

Engage God's World

This happens within the structure of one's personal "world", as well as the world-at-large. There is a responsibility to love and speak of Christ's love to those who have yet to experience who He is.

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Fellowship Prairies Values

Prayer

*Prayer is our chief ministry. Our strength is in God. We will be a movement of prayer.
Psalm 127:1*

Passion for God

Our supreme goal is to glorify God, worship and enjoy Him forever. Matthew 22:37-39

Biblical Authority

The Bible is God's final authority for us. No person or group can carry greater authority than the Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16

Compassion for the Lost

Lost people matter to God; lost people matter to us. Evangelism must be at the heart of all our ministries. Matthew 28:18-20

Reproducing Servant Leaders

Healthy Servant Leaders reproduce themselves in future leaders. 2 Timothy 2:2

Relationships

To prosper under God, we will foster strong and healthy relationships rooted in truth, love, openness, accountability, forgiveness and acceptance. Ephesians 4:25-32

Fellowship Prairies Code of Ethics (April 2012)

Those Ministry Staff called to minister within Fellowship Prairies will strive to serve their community effectively by maintaining an exemplary personal and ministry lifestyle with standards of morality consistent with Scripture.

The Fellowship Prairies family of churches is committed to integrity in all areas of life. The relationships within our community of individuals, churches and organizations are to be biblical and thus positive, supportive and nurtured in an atmosphere of trust and care.

This covenant is a solemn pledge whereby individuals, churches and organizations place themselves under an obligation to God. Each individual who accepts responsibility as a leader within Fellowship Prairies sincerely embraces this covenant, while recognizing that any covenant cannot capture our full ethical responsibilities to God. The Scriptures alone are sufficient for that.

1. RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

By faith I will strive to guard my personal quiet time with my Lord and to walk in obedience to Him. I will seek to fulfill my duty to my congregation as one who must give account to God (Romans 14:12). By the power of the Holy Spirit I will seek to be the Ministry Staff member God has called me to be.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO MY FAMILY

I will seek to fulfill my duties to my family, namely: to be faithfully loving to my spouse; to love, discipline and care for our children; to be gentle with my family; and to provide for my family. I subscribe to the biblical position of a heterosexual marriage: one man and one woman united for life. I renounce and reject any sexual activity outside the covenant of marriage, including all forms of sexual deviation, such as but not limited to adultery, homosexuality, incest, child abuse and pornography.

3. RELATIONSHIP TO MY CHURCH

I will seek to carry out my ministry responsibilities in the light of 2 Timothy 4:1-2, & 2:2, namely: to preach the Word; to be prepared at all times; to correct, rebuke, and encourage; to exercise patience; and to equip the saints for the work of ministry. I will keep my study habits and research honourable and above reproach. I will not plagiarize another person's work.

If my doctrinal convictions or practices should change in the process of time so that, despite and after prayerful study and discussion with both church and Regional leadership, my settled position continues to differ from my church's doctrinal statement, I will notify my church through my resignation. With this resignation I will conclude my pastoral ministry with members of my former church. I will not initiate contact with members of my former church for the purpose of pastoral direction or to influence those under the pastoral care of my successor. I will not take or use resources or assets that belong to my former church.

4. RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY

I will seek to maintain a good reputation in the community as encouraged in 1 Timothy 3:7, 14 and 15. I will fulfill all my financial obligations; obey government laws and regulations not contrary to Scripture; and seek to contribute to the life and welfare of the community. I will seek to be a person of integrity (Romans 12:17) in all my dealings with others, being above reproach in personal morals and in my relationships with both men and women.

5. RELATIONSHIP TO Fellowship Prairies and THE FELLOWSHIP OF EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CHURCHES IN CANADA

Because the church I serve is affiliated with the Fellowship Prairies Region of the Fellowship, I will participate wholeheartedly in the life of the Region and the Fellowship.

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This includes praying for God's blessing on its life, witness, ministry and growth and encouraging my church to participate in the various outreach ministries of the Fellowship regionally, nationally and internationally.

If my doctrinal convictions should change in the process of time so that, despite and after prayerful study and discussion with both church, Regional leadership and/or National leadership, my settled position continues to conflict with the Fellowship Statement of Faith, I will notify the church through my resignation.

Should I leave for any reason and consider entering another ministry within the immediate area of the city, town or community of the church I am leaving, I shall only do so with the blessing of the Fellowship Prairies Leadership Board.

The Benefits of Membership in the Family

- (1) **Annual Conventions.** Fellowship Prairies initiates, coordinates and subsidizes the Annual Equip Convention and Encounter Prayer Retreat. Encounter Prayer Retreats and other leadership events (Engage Conferences or Retreats) will be offered in locations which allow for reasonable access to training and fellowship opportunities across our Region.
- (2) **Registration Fees.** The cost to attend Equip is subsidized by Fellowship Prairies to provide increased opportunity for individuals to attend without significant concern for cost. Anyone and everyone are welcome to register to attend Equip, while only representatives appointed by member churches are eligible to vote.
- (3) **Healthy Church Consultations.** These consultations are available as a benefit to every member church once every five years. The consultations have proven to be a significant benefit to our churches. Before the consultation weekend, the Regional Director will advise the Pastor and Board Chair of the church as to the cost to the Region for the consultation. The church will be encouraged to reimburse Fellowship Prairies as much as they can reasonably afford. The commitment of the Region is that costs not deter any church from this service.
- (4) **Phone Cluster Conference.** Fellowship Prairies coordinates cluster conference calls for Ministry Staff who choose to be involved. Cluster conferences typically have 8 members and will convene four times each year. Clusters provide opportunity for Ministry Staff to build relationships, share successes and challenges, learn from each other and pray together. Clusters are arranged partially by common ministry interest or focus such as: specialization of pastoral or leadership role [e.g., senior, associate, youth, administrative support]; and size of church.

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- (5) **Local Associations.** Ministry Staff within geographical locations are encouraged to meet together, share resources, pray and bless each other through caring and supportive relationships.
- (6) **Church Planting.** Fellowship Prairies will contract with our National Office for consulting services to assist with developing and coordinating a vibrant church planting program.
- (7) **Recruitment Assistance.** The final responsibility for selection and hiring of staff rests with each autonomous church. Website advertising and recommendations for recruitment purposes are available to all member churches. The Regional Ministry Centre is available to assist churches with pastoral search protocol and interview questions, and it also maintains a file of profiles of individuals looking for pastoral positions. At a church's request, the Advisory Ministry is available to conduct interviews to evaluate the theological soundness of selected candidates.
- (8) **Conflict Resolution.** The Regional Ministry Centre is available to assist pastors and church leaders with advice on conflict resolution and dispute mediation. The Advisory Ministry, the Regional Director and other volunteers are available to help in time of conflict.
- (9) **Ordination Process.** The responsibility for Ordination rests with the local church. The process of Ordination Councils and the maintenance of the list of those ordained rest with the Region. Fellowship Prairies will publish the names of all its ordained Pastors in its Annual Report.
- (10) **Coaching, Advice and Encouragement.** The Regional Ministry Centre is available for prayer support, encouragement, coaching and advice.

The Responsibilities of Membership in the Family

- (1) Member churches, while autonomous, formally agree to fellowship and work with one another based on our unwavering belief in the supremacy of the Scriptures, our agreement with our Fellowship's Statement of Faith, and our agreement with the Fellowship Prairies Statement of Vision, Statement of Values and Code of Ethics. We willingly identify ourselves with, and support the Regional family. Once a year we affirm our continuing agreement with these basic tenets of fellowship through the signatures of each of the Ministry Staff and the Board Chair of each church/ministry on their acknowledgement of agreement with this Interdependence Excellence document. Timely submission of this acknowledgement of agreement is necessary not only for churches/ministries to clearly demonstrate support for the Regional family but also for Ministry Staff to maintain their authorization from the Region to have a provincial/territorial license to solemnize marriages as required by the applicable jurisdictional government.
- (2) Fellowship Prairies leaders are a dynamic team. Each member church has an interdependent responsibility to each other member of the team for prayer, encouragement and relationship. Each member church will actively participate in the life of the Fellowship Prairies family through prayer, encouragement and, when possible, sending their members to attend the annual Equip Convention, Encounter Prayer Retreats and other Regional initiatives (Engage Conferences or Retreats).
- (3) Fellowship Prairies seeks to accomplish the work God directs us to do as a family of churches. To accomplish this work, financial resources are essential and are the sole responsibility of member churches. The Fellowship Prairies Leadership Board has determined that "equality" would be that each church should contribute 4% of its annual budget to the Region to enable the Region to fund and provide the services to our

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churches. We share together the opportunities and challenges of evangelizing, discipling, developing leaders, planting churches and sending missionaries. We agree to prayerfully consider what we can reasonably include in our current budget cycle. If we as a church are unable to meet the 4% goal, in the next year(s), we will commit to review our budget with the goal of increasing it to achieve the 4% level. The spirit of Paul's teaching emphasizes 'the goal is equality'. Together, as a regional fellowship of churches we will be able to support the Lord's work.

- (4) If a member church no longer supports the Fellowship Statement of Faith, or conspicuously ceases to participate in and fellowship with the Regional family and, furthermore, indicates no desire or intention to do so, then the Regional Director and the Leadership Board will seek to engage the church to discuss and resolve the issues with the goal of reconciliation. However, if after repeated attempts at reconciliation by the Leadership Board and the Regional Director, it is the view of the Leadership Board that the member church continues to indicate no desire or intention to engage with the Regional family, then the church will be notified that the Leadership Board will recommend at the next annual Equip Convention that the non-participating church be designated to Associate Member status.
- (5) Associate Member Churches are welcome to attend Fellowship Prairies conventions but are not eligible to vote during Business sessions. They are not subsidized for Fellowship Prairies events or services. Any services provided are on a Fee for Service basis. Any church moved to Associate Member status, and not restored to full Member status within two years, will be released from Fellowship Prairies membership subject to a vote at the next annual Equip Convention. Churches that are released from Fellowship Prairies membership consequently are no longer eligible to participate in either the Fellowship Group Insurance Plan or the Fellowship Pension Plan.

Implementation of Membership in the Family

- (1) Each year, Fellowship Prairies will send a copy of this Interdependence Excellence document [which includes the Fellowship's Statement of Faith and Fellowship Prairie's Statement of Vision, Statement of Values and Code of Ethics] to each Ministry Staff and the Board Chair of each member church/ministry for their discussion and review, prior to signing and returning their acknowledgement that they concur. This process serves to remind each Board Chair that they are legally and ethically responsible for the Ministry Staff and church/ministry under their Board's leadership. It also reduces the liability of other member churches/ministries and Fellowship Prairies' responsibility and liability for those who choose to disregard these foundation documents, on which our mutual fellowship is based. It is the responsibility of each Ministry Staff to return their signed acknowledgement of agreement prior to the deadline associated with the Region's annual submission to the respective provincial or territorial government regarding licences to marry. The Region will then submit to the appropriate authorities the names of those who are to be granted licences to solemnize marriages in the applicable jurisdiction.
- (2) Fellowship Prairies will withhold the authorization of licences to marry for those Ministry Staff who do not return their annual acknowledgement of agreement by the due date.
- (3) Churches maintaining their membership will continue to be eligible to participate in, and reap the benefits of participation in the Fellowship group benefit packages.

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Acknowledgement and Signatures:

As a Ministry Staff member and Board Chair, we have completed our annual review of Fellowship Prairies’ “Interdependence Excellence”! What We Believe” and have been reminded of the basis of our legal and ethical accountability and responsibility for each other and our church/ministry. We adhere to the Statement of Faith of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Church of Canada. We concur with the Fellowship Prairies Statement of Vision, Statement of Values and Code of Ethics and their intention to provide a high standard of integrity consistent with scripture.

*Signed on the _____ day of _____ 20____
Date*

*X _____
Signature*

print name

circle one:

*Church staff / Church Board Chair /
Leadership Board – Fellowship Prairies*

print name of church

*Reviewed with and witnessed by
Signature of Board Chair / Lead Pastor / or
Regional Director*

*X _____
Signature*

print name

circle one:

*Board Chair / Lead Pastor /
Regional Director – Fellowship Prairies*