

Mom Heart Ministry

GUIDING DOCUMENTS

Every movement of God is like a train. In order for it to move it must have two things: (1) it needs fuel for its engine, and (2) it needs tracks to run on. For Mom Heart, vision is the fuel, and values are the tracks. Vision is the end one believes a movement can achieve—to change hearts, minds, wills, ways, motives. Values are the means one believes will achieve the ends—beliefs, convictions, data, plans, actions. When the engine is fired up with the fuel of vision, and the wheels are running along the tracks of values, there is a movement. Every Christian movement is defined by its vision and values.

Mom Heart is a movement of God. Rather than trying to build an organization, our goal is to build a movement of mothers who are ministering to other mothers. Our role is not to organize and control, but to encourage, equip, and enable mothers to “restore moms’ hearts to God’s heart for motherhood.” To keep the Mom Heart movement from losing steam or going off the rails, though, it is critical that everyone who wants to be a Mom Heart group leader should understand, share, and wholeheartedly affirm the vision and values that define this movement. We all need to have the same destination in view (our vision) and be on the same path to get there (our values). That is the purpose of this *Mom Heart Group Leader Manual* and the two documents that follow.

What Is a “Vision and Values Covenant”?

The term “covenant” may sound a little official or serious to you, but it is really just a promise—a mutual agreement made between two parties. In our case, our covenant is a personal promise, made between you and us, to preserve and promote the vision and values that define Mom Heart Ministry. It is not a law, or an enforceable document of some kind, but simply a mutual pact made between us as mom-hearted mothers. Our hope is that each group, whether here in the states or around the world, that takes the name Mom Heart will, at its heart, be known for certain qualities. Agreeing to adhere to our vision and values in this covenant will help insure that we are all on the same tracks.

And, no, we do not require you to sign a document and send it in to prove your loyalty. We trust the Holy Spirit, not rules and laws, to build this movement. Rather, all we ask is that you carefully and prayerfully read the “Mom Heart Vision and Values Covenant” and decide if what we are trying to build is something you can wholeheartedly support. Think of the covenant as a self-evaluation tool—listen to the Spirit in your own heart, and discern if God is directing you to become a Mom Heart group leader. You will know. We hope he is. We would love to encourage, equip, and enable you to join us in this movement of “coming home to God’s heart for motherhood.” If you are all aboard on this train, then God can you use to change the world, one mom at a time.

What Is a “Statement of Faith”?

The popular proverb asserts, “If you don’t stand for something you’ll fall for anything.” Although it is doubtful the language of the early church would have produced a similarly pithy and clever maxim, there is no doubt they adhered to the same belief. The earliest creeds were written by church councils to express the fundamental beliefs of the new Christian religion and church, often in response to false teachers and competing belief systems. The Apostles’ Creed has evolved over time, but it is a succinct statement of beliefs from the early church. The Nicene Creed is attributed to the Council of Nicaea in 325, and was revised in 381 by the Council of Constantinople. It is, in various forms, the most common creedal expression of the Christian faith in use today. It is the standard for Christian orthodoxy.

The Protestant Reformation, begun in 1517, generated countless confessions, canons, consensuses, declarations, articles, and all variety of statements to define the beliefs and practices of the re-formed church that had separated itself from Catholicism. With the rapid spread of denominationalism, every subsequent expression of the church needed its own Statement of Faith to differentiate itself from all the other expressions of the church. Today, a typical Statement of Faith generally will serve two distinct purposes: (1) to show alignment with the orthodox beliefs and doctrine common to all Christians, and (2) to show alignment with the theological beliefs and doctrine specific to a Christian denomination, movement, or system. In the denominational era, it’s less about standing for something so you don’t fall into error, and more about, “You can’t tell the players without a scorecard.”

Why Does Mom Heart Need These Documents?

Mom Heart Ministry is not a church or a theological school. It is a parachurch movement. That simply means we come “alongside” (*para*) the church to help. A parachurch organization is typically independent from the church so it can serve across denominational lines. The modern parachurch movement began in the early 1950s with the growth of Evangelicalism, and is now a major component of American Christianity. Most parachurch organizations have a Statement of Faith for the same reason as a church—to help those coming to it know where it fits in the broad field of beliefs and practices.

Mom Heart Ministry has a Statement of Faith for two reasons: (1) to align ourselves with historic Christian belief, and (2) to provide boundaries for moms who want to call their group a “Mom Heart” group. We want the words Mom Heart to mean some very specific things, but we also want them to not mean some other things. Our Statement of Faith is a general expression of beliefs because we want to include mothers in as many church and theological traditions as we possibly can. However, because it is a summary statement of faith, it is vulnerable to group leaders and members who would want to fill in the doctrinal gaps with their own theological beliefs. Our Vision and Values Covenant is our attempt to prevent that from happening. The two documents together express the beliefs and practices that define Mom Heart Ministry. If you want to start or be a Mom Heart group, we simply ask that you can affirm and embrace the things that make us Mom Heart, as expressed in these documents.

Mom Heart Ministry

STATEMENT OF FAITH

WHAT MOM HEART BELIEVES

Mom Heart Ministry is a small groups and teaching initiative of Whole Heart Ministries, a nonprofit (501c3) Christian organization. Whole Heart Ministries “Statement of Essential Beliefs” (available on WholeHeart.org) is a detailed explanation of the doctrinal beliefs that shape this ministry of teaching and service. The condensed “Mom Heart Statement of Faith” that follows is a more concise statement of the core beliefs that define and direct Whole Heart Ministries and the Mom Heart Ministry initiative.

MOM HEART STATEMENT OF FAITH

WORD: We affirm the entire Bible, both the Old and New Testaments as they have been faithfully transmitted and accurately translated, as God’s complete, true, and trustworthy Word—His finished and inspired revelation to His people, our sole authority in all matters of revealed spiritual truth and biblical history, and our trustworthy guide in all matters of salvation, life, faith, and godliness.

TRUTH: We affirm the essential doctrines of God’s Word recognized and accepted as the historic and orthodox Christian faith, and the centrality of the person and work of Jesus Christ to that faith—His divine-human nature, virgin birth, sinless life, attesting miracles, atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, present spiritual kingdom rule and reign, and future return in glory.

MARRIAGE: We affirm the biblical design for marriage as one man and one woman, united spiritually and physically for life, becoming as one for the purposes of fulfilling God’s creation mandate to bear children and to subdue and rule over creation, and for presenting to the world a living picture of the relationship of Christ and His church by serving God together with mutual love and respect.

FAMILY: We affirm the biblical design for the family, blessed by God “in the beginning,” for passing faith from one generation to the next, for training and instructing children in the Lord who will honor their parents and fear and follow God, for affirming that every child is a blessing and gift of God to be welcomed and desired, and for picturing the nature and character of the invisible God.

CHURCH: We affirm the biblical priority of the church, which is the visible body of Christ in both its local and universal expressions, in defending and extending the faith entrusted to it, and the absolute necessity of the work of God’s Holy Spirit, both in the world and in the believer, for enabling individual Christians to live according to that faith and to grow in godly character and obedience.

I will affirm and embrace the Statement of Faith of Mom Heart Ministry. Date: _____

Mom Heart Ministry

VISION AND VALUES COVENANT

OUR VISION

Mom Heart Ministry is a Christian movement and informal network of small groups for mothers that seeks to restore moms' hearts to God's heart for motherhood. We believe God's eternal purpose for mothers was evident at creation in His design for marriage and the family. Our vision is to encourage, equip, and enable mothers to start, lead, and tend Mom Heart groups around the world.

OUR VALUES

We value GOD'S WORD, not opinions. — A Mom Heart leader keeps group discussion grounded in what the Bible says, in historical and biblical context, to us today. She does not allow herself or others to promote or defend outside "experts" or personal opinions that can displace the work of the Spirit.

We value CHRIST, not theologies. — A Mom Heart leader keeps group discussion focused ultimately on the person and work of Christ. She does not allow herself or others to promote or defend systematic theologies, personal dogmas, church traditions, or controversial views that create conflict or discord.

We value LOVE, not expectations. — A Mom Heart leader keeps group discussion focused on expressing love and acceptance of one another. She does not allow herself or others to add extra-biblical expectations or conditions to the love and forgiveness of Christ offered unconditionally in His gospel.

We value GRACE, not laws. — A Mom Heart leader keeps group attitudes focused on our grace and freedom in Christ. She does not allow herself or others to express Christian laws and rules that create a burden of guilt by requiring works or specific beliefs of any kind in return for God's favor or blessing.

We value SPIRIT, not control. — A Mom Heart leader keeps group life and activities focused on listening and responding to the Holy Spirit's direction. She does not allow herself or others to exercise formal control that is more concerned about form than function, at the expense of the Holy Spirit's leading.

We value PEOPLE, not tasks. — A Mom Heart leader keeps group life and activities focused on the needs of people made in God's image and loved by Him. She does not allow herself or others to let the accomplishing of tasks and projects distract from or displace a sensitivity to the people being served.

We value MINISTRY, not exclusion. — A Mom Heart leader keeps group life and activities focused on loving and serving others inside and outside the group. She does not allow herself or others to become comfortable, complacent, and cliquish, but looks for ways to reach out, serve, and include others.

I will affirm and embrace the Vision and Values of Mom Heart Ministry. Date: _____