

Gospel Light Baptist Church

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

*Gospel Light Baptist Church exists to bring glory to God
By making disciples of all nations
Through gospel-centered worship, discipleship, service and outreach.*

The church is the vehicle by which God is accomplishing His purposes in the world. The church exists to display the glory of God because all things exist for His glory. Followers of Jesus have been invited graciously into God's redemptive purposes for the world through the church. In light of this reality, the opportunity to join a local church is much more than a commitment to consistent attendance or active involvement in community. It is also a sacred call to be involved in the redemptive work of our sovereign God and to be a local manifestation of the universal household of God. Therefore, we will covenant together to fulfill these purposes and hold one another accountable to this high calling.

The primary purpose of this covenant is to serve as a teaching document inculcating these areas:

- To spell out biblical obligations and expectations between the elders and individual members of the Gospel Light Baptist Church .
- To establish teaching and doctrinal guidelines for Gospel Light Baptist Church .
- To serve as a tool for growth in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

What Is a Covenant?

A covenant is a contract or agreement between two or more parties. Covenant is how God has chosen to communicate to us, to redeem us, and to guarantee us eternal life in Jesus. These truths, revealed in the Bible, are the basis of Christianity. The Bible is a covenant document. The Old and New Testaments are really Old and New Covenants. The word "testament" is Latin for Covenant.

Membership in a local church involves commitment to worship the Lord corporately, edifying brothers and sisters through mutual exhortation and service, cooperating in mission, and holding each other accountable to walk in a manner pleasing to the Lord as a witness to the truth of Christ in the world.

We believe that covenant church membership is a wise and helpful path for those who desire to walk together in obedience to the Lord and in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:27). This becomes evident when we consider how the New Testament teaching on church government and church discipline relate to mutual accountability and thus to the concept of covenant membership. The New Testament teaching about church government and church discipline would be meaningless if some form of commitment to this accountability in a body of believers were not expected.

The biblical call for a membership of mutual accountability in a local body of believers suggests the need for believers to make a covenant with one another. This is simply implied in agreeing to hold each other accountable to walk in a manner pleasing to the Lord.

The church covenant is a written summary of biblical practice that a church agrees should be the basis of its accountability. The covenant allows for freedom of conscience in areas where the Bible is not definite in its guidance. The covenant focuses on principles, especially as they relate to our corporate life together.

Statement of Basic Beliefs

The following beliefs represent the core of central orthodox beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate these beliefs is not required, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership at Gospel Light Baptist Church.

We believe...

- **THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD:** The Bible is God's written revelation of Himself to mankind divinely given through human authors who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is entirely true, totally sufficient, and completely authoritative for matters of life and faith. (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- **THERE IS ONE TRIUNE GOD:** There is only one true and living God who is the Creator of the universe. He exists eternally in three Persons – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6; Isaiah 46:9-10; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 28:17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
- **PEOPLE ARE IN NEED OF REDEMPTION:** Because of the Fall, the image of God in people is distorted but not lost. All people have disobeyed God willfully through sin; thus inheriting both physical and spiritual death and the need for redemption. All human beings are born with a sin nature and into an environment inclined toward sin. Only by the grace of God through Jesus Christ can they experience salvation. (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8, 12-21; 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- **JESUS IS BOTH LORD AND CHRIST:** Jesus is both fully God and fully human. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the Cross as a substitute for mankind, was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will one day return. (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).
- **JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION:** Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man. No other religion, belief, or person can reconcile God and man. He alone can provide forgiveness and eternal salvation. (John 1:29; 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).

- JESUS CHRIST WILL RETURN: God will bring the world to its appropriate end in His own time and in His own way. At that time, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth. Christ will judge both the saved and unsaved. Those who have trusted Christ will receive a glorified body and dwell forever with the Lord. Those who have not trusted in Christ will spend eternity in hell, the place of everlasting punishment. (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
- SALVATION IS BY FAITH ALONE: Salvation comes only through a faith relationship with Jesus Christ, the Savior, as a person repents of sin and receives Christ's forgiveness and eternal life. Salvation is instantaneous and accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. This salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of Christ's life, death and resurrection, not on the basis of human works. All the redeemed are secured in Christ forever. (John 3:18,14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6)

Elders Covenant Obligations to the Church Body

As shepherds of a local church, elders are men entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members. The following is an overview of the covenant obligations for elders as defined within the Scriptures.

The elders covenant...

- to, along with the aid of members, appoint elders and deacons according to the criteria assigned to them in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter. 5:1-4)
- to prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following of the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- To oversee the growth of members as disciples of Christ and give an account for their growth in grace, truth, and love (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16 Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
- to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1).

- to lovingly oversee the exercise of discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined and the health of the church as a whole. (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- to set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated in the Membership Covenant, Statement of Faith, and By-laws. (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

Church Members Covenant Obligations

One of our greatest convictions is that church membership should be meaningful. Therefore, we believe it is important to covenant together as a church family. As members of Gospel Light Baptist Church, we affirm this covenant with one another, by God's grace, for our growth, and ultimately for the glory of God.

We covenant...

- to delight in the glory of God, depend on the presence of God, and grow in the knowledge of God by submitting to the Word of God in all matters of life, as the all sufficient authority in our lives and in His Church. (Psalms 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- to grow in Christ and his Gospel through the consistent practice of spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, fasting, Scripture reading, worship, and service. (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
- to participate regularly in the Lord's Supper as we reverently and joyfully remember the past work of Christ's atoning sacrifice, celebrate the present help of Christ, as our mediator who ever lives to intercede for us at the Father's right hand (Lk. 22:7-23; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:23-32)
- to live life together and challenge one another to grow as disciples of Christ; to commit to living out the Gospel and its implications for every day life and to spur one another on to love and good deeds by:
 - meeting with one another consistently in small groups
 - actively participating in the corporate gatherings of this local church, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.
 - praying for one another regularly and serving one another selflessly (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- to steward our spiritual gifts, time, resources, and money in a sacrificial manner consistent with the Gospel and for its progress. To give cheerfully, regularly, and generously to the

support of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel both in our city and through all nations (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

- to affirm, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to exercise our Christian liberty with responsibility, remembering that because of the Gospel, we have a special obligation to lead a new and holy life (i.e. issues such as cohabitation, extra-marital sex, homosexuality, drug addictions, alcohol abuse, etc. are not consistent with this special obligation to lead a new and holy life). (1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3; Romans 1:28-32, 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18).

- to seek to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace by affirming that we are God's church and not our own therefore our preferences, needs, and desires are secondary to the mission and vision of the church. (Ephesians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Psalm 141:5).

Part of maintaining unity and peace means:

- we will adhere to Gospel Light Baptist Church's "Statement of Basic Beliefs"
- we will not be divisive over Gospel Light Baptist Church's "Statement of Faith"

- to humbly and gently confront one another and receive correction from one another in accordance with a New Testament understanding of church discipline and restoration and to willingly submit to and prayerfully support the leadership of our pastors (elders) as they seek to oversee discipline among our church. (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

- to cooperate with, submit to, and prayerfully support the leadership of the pastors and elders who have been entrusted by God to serve and care for this body by teaching the Word of Christ to us and modeling the character of Christ before us (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:5).

- to endeavor to build Gospel-centered homes.

- husbands will seek to lead their wives and children sacrificially as Christ leads the church
- wives will seek to submit to their husbands, as the church does to Christ.
- As parents, we will raise the children under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family. (Ephesians 5).