

# HARVEST CHURCH

## MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

As a church of Jesus Christ, Harvest is called to glorify God by growing and multiplying disciples of Jesus. This is a special calling designated for the people of God, who have been saved by His grace and are being sanctified by His Spirit. The purpose of this membership covenant is to clarify what the church is, how we are led, and what our biblical responsibilities are to one another as covenant members of this body.

### **The Church**

“Jesus gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” (Titus 2:14)

The church is comprised universally of all men, women, and children who have repented of their sin and placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Whereas we were all once dead in our sins, God has made us alive in Christ, made us the dwelling of His Holy Spirit, and prepared us for His good works in this world (Ephesians 2:1-10). The church universal is meant to display God’s glory and grace and to be a powerful witness to the nations of the saving and transforming power of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

More than a universal entity, the church takes its form locally in every place where Christians live and worship. What is true of the global church is also true of the local church: we are the household of God (Ephesians 2:19) and the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12). The scriptures also point clearly to the local church as an interdependent community (Ephesians 4; Romans 12; John 13-17). We are a people called *together* for the sake of Christ, and therefore the Christian life may not be lived independently of the local church (Hebrews 10:24-25).

In Christ, all members of a local body are united in love by a genuine bond of God’s Spirit (Philippians 2:1-2). Thus, we share a blessed responsibility to treat one another as true brothers and sisters who are committed to the ultimate good of our spiritual family. This covenant calls us to live together in such a way that the gospel of Jesus is exemplified within our church body, our homes, our community, and our world.

### **Our Covenant Together**

A covenant is an agreement or promise between two parties whereby they commit themselves to one another. The biblical concept of covenant is not a lawful contract, but a binding relationship. God has brought us into covenant relationship with Himself through Christ, and the family of God shares in this covenant as His church.

The covenant of Harvest Church is three-fold. First, we acknowledge our relationship to God as people committed to love and obey Him. Second, we acknowledge the relationship between those whom God calls to lead the church and those under their leadership. Third, we acknowledge the bonds we share with one another as fellow members of Christ’s body. These commitments are not unique to Harvest Church; rather they are rooted in the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors commanded of all Christians in the bible. Thus, each member ought to uphold these virtues out of obedience to Christ and for His glory, not merely out of duty to Harvest Church.

## Statement of Beliefs

We accord with the Christian beliefs set forth in the Baptist Faith and Message, found here: <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>. At a more basic level, covenant members of Harvest Church must agree with the following doctrines as foundational to the Christian faith:

- The Bible is entirely true, authoritative, trustworthy, and sufficient (Psalm 19:7-10; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- There is one eternally sovereign and triune God who exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 12:4-6; Matthew 28:17-20).
- Humanity, though lovingly created by God and in His image, is inherently sinful and falls short of God's glory (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:1-23; Ephesians 2:1-3)
- The just penalty for human sin is physical and spiritual death (Genesis 2:15-17; Romans 6:23; James 1:14-15)
- Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of the virgin Mary, and is both fully God and fully man (John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15-20; Matthew 1:20; Hebrews 1:1-3)
- Jesus Christ died as the sacrificial substitute to pay the penalty for sin (John 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).
- Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:7).
- There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Only those who turn to Jesus in faith and repentance will be raised to eternal glory. Those who do not turn to Christ in faith and repentance will be raised to eternal judgment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
- Only through faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ and repentance from sin can one be reconciled to God and receive the gift of eternal life (John 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

## For Harvest Church Leaders

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping and caring for the church body and her individual members.

### The elders covenant:

- to appoint elders and deacons according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (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 love, serve and pray fervently for the people of Harvest Church (1 These 2:8; James 5:14).
- to care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth and love (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28-29; 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). This includes guarding the church against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1).
- to equip and empower the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).

- to lovingly exercise church 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 humbly set an example as fellow church members in fulfilling the commitments of church membership stated below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

### **For Harvest Church Members**

As those who have experienced the grace of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of godly attitudes and actions. The Scriptures refer to this reality as “living by the Spirit” (Rom. 8). The covenant that follows is intended to serve as an accessible yet non-exhaustive explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces.

#### As a member of Harvest Church, I covenant:

- to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues of life and faith (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- to pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
- to regularly participate in the life of Harvest Church by attending weekly services, engaging in discipleship groups and serving those within and outside of the church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- to steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances. (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- by God’s grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to live in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3). I will strive to put sinful attitudes and actions to death while pursuing love and good deeds through the Spirit (Romans 8:13; 2 Peter 1:3-11).
- to submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by:
  - following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another; the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration (Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1-2).
  - receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:5-11).
- to seek peace and unity with fellow members when conflict arises. This requires a settled commitment to love and forgiveness, as well as a commitment to involve elders in the peacemaking process if necessary (Romans 12:9-21).
- to submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 3:8; 5:5).
- to meet with an elder, or elders, in the event that I feel the church is acting in disobedience to God’s word. I will not spread gossip within the church, nor will I leave the church without first seeking to resolve my concerns. I will, instead, seek the good of Harvest Church and pray that our leaders will hear and respond with godly humility.