

WCBA Equip | Church Covenant and Member Expectations

Introduction | Scripture has established a framework for the church. That ecclesiastical framework has biblically rooted expectations for members. In the current culture of ecclesiastical/ religious consumerism and individualism, often devoid of true community, establishing such a baseline of expectations for churches to acknowledge and implement will serve the church in advancing its Kingdom mission. This guide, including the sample statements and resources contained herein, is one component of the PBBA Under45 Project, focusing on the Crisis of Ecclesiology, and is intended to aid churches in their quest for health and Kingdom impact.

Foundation [sample] | We believe the new covenant which was inaugurated by Christ Himself not only is to be the source for the creation of the church universal, the people of God of all ages at all times in all places, but that those who are of the new covenant are therefore to behave in a way that reflects that covenant. The covenant, secured and sealed by the blood of Jesus, creates, and controls the people of God. We believe the church is God's household, called to devote ourselves to one another in a loving relationship both showing what God is like and calling others to join His family through faith in Jesus Christ. Our covenant relationship with God implies a covenant relationship with one another. Therefore, we are called to commit to one another in a covenant commitment.

We are a church family because we come together with common commitments pledging to be the church here for the glory of God. Since our church is governed congregationally under the biblical authority of qualified pastors, we find our covenant an essential foundation for our local commitment to each other and to God in our local expression. A church without a covenant is like a marriage without vows, both flows necessarily from the nature of the relationship. Our membership covenant is an expression of our desire to learn and live as a family together on mission so that the vision of glorifying God by making disciples of all nations might take place.

STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE | The core doctrinal beliefs of our church are expressed in the current Baptist Faith and Message and are further expressed and clarified in [insert any additional statement of doctrine the church has adopted].

PERSONAL STATEMENT OF FAITH [sample] | The following are affirmations an individual would acknowledge as a conditional part of their church membership.

I hereby affirm the following:

- I am a Christian, saved from the eternal wrath of God by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, my Lord and Savior, through His life, death, resurrection, and ascension by which I am assured of justification before God and eternal life. (John 3:16-18; Rom. 3:23-26)
- I believe Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be; God's eternal Son, the Messiah who became flesh; fully God and fully man. The only mediator between God and man. (Isa. 53:6; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70; John 4:25-26, 6:29, 8:58, 11:25-27, 14:6-7, 15:5; Heb. 12:24; 1 Tim. 2:5)
- I have repented of my sins and have been made a new creation in Christ (1 John 1:9; 2 Cor. 5:17)
- I commit by God's grace to live in obedience to His word and to be held accountable by other believers. (2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:20)
- In obedience to the Scriptures, I have been baptized by immersion to personally identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and to publicly demonstrate my new identity as a disciple of Jesus. (Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21)

THE OBLIGATIONS OF A CHURCH MEMBER

I covenant with our church to:

- Take personal responsibility for my own discipleship by regularly gathering with our entire faith family on Sunday, by making disciples of Jesus, and by having a plan and accountability for growing personally as a disciple of Jesus through the practice of spiritual disciplines.
- Steward God's resources by giving of my time, talents, and treasures to the church faith family
- By God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin so that I could live a new life (2 Cor. 5:17).
- Submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- Submit to discipline by God through His Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-5 8; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9, 3:10-11; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 14-25).
- Submit to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17).

MY COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH | the following is a ~~sample~~ statement/covenant that members would agree to as part of the membership process.

Sample 1 |

I, having been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior, and, on the profession of my faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and in agreement with my churches statements, strategy, and structure; I do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. I commit to live in the light of my new identity in Christ, seeking to serve the ministry of the local and global church for His glory. I understand this covenant obligates me to the members of my Church, and I willingly place myself in submission to the Pastors of the church. I will notify Pastoral Leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Sample 2 |

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord¹; and on the profession of our faith², having been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit³, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant⁴ with one another as one body in Christ Jesus.⁵

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love⁶ spurring one another on toward love and good deeds.⁷ We will meet together consistently to sustain its worship⁸, ordinances⁹, disciplines¹⁰, and doctrines submitting ourselves to the Word of God as the all-sufficient authority in our lives and in His church.¹¹ We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.¹²

¹ Acts 2:38; 16:31; 20:21

² Luke 14:25-33; Romans 10:9-10

³ Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41; Romans 6:1-4

⁴ Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:6-13

⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:12-20; Ephesians 4:15-16

⁶ 1 John 3:11-24; 4:7-21

⁷ Hebrews 10:24; James 1:21; James 2:14-24

⁸ John 4:24; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12

⁹ Acts 8:36,38-39; Matthew 26:29; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

¹⁰ Matthew 5:3-12; Ephesians 6:18; Hebrews 13:1-5

¹¹ 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Psalm 19:7-11; 119:105-112; 2 Timothy 4:2-4

¹² 2 Corinthians 8-9

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions, biblically educate our children¹³, and seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances.¹⁴ We will walk biblically wise in the world¹⁵ being just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements¹⁶ and exemplary in our behavior and manners.¹⁷ We will be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.¹⁸

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember one another in prayer¹⁹ and to aid one another in sickness and distress.²⁰ We will cultivate God-glorifying understanding in our actions and speech being slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation²¹, mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.²² We will submit to the pastoral leadership who has 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.²³ We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.²⁴

¹³ Mark 1:35; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 113:3

¹⁴ Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:1-2, 15-16

¹⁵ Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 3:5-6

¹⁶ Matthew 5:33-37

¹⁷ Ephesians 4:17-5:21; Philippians 1:27

¹⁸ Matthew 6:10; Isaiah 26:8

¹⁹ Philippians 1:3-6; 1 John 4:19-21; Matthew 22:36-40

²⁰ Romans 12:9-13; 1 Corinthians 12:26; 2 Corinthians 2:3; Galatians 6:2

²¹ Hebrews 13:15-16; James 1:19

²² Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 6:1

²³ Hebrews 13:7,17; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4

²⁴ Hebrews 10:25