

# Membership Covenant

The Beacon Church Membership Covenant documents the scriptural requirements for the church, its elders, and its members. The Membership Covenant contains four sections: (1) a description of the church, (2) a description of covenants, (3) the obligations of the elders to Beacon Church and its members, and (4) the obligations of members to Beacon Church.

## What is the Church?

The church is the gathering of the redeemed, the household of God (Eph. 2:19), the body and bride of Christ (1 Cor 12:12–31; Rev 21:2, 9). 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of many members within the same body. Just as a human body contains many parts that work together for proper functioning, the body of Christ requires its individual members working together as one body. As the scriptures say, “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’” (1 Cor 12:21). We all have gifts that differ according to the gracious provision of the Holy Spirit (Rom 12:3–8) which are necessary for the flourishing of the church.

The church exists to display the glory of God. Since the beginning, God has been calling His people for His glory in a grand narrative of redemption and reconciliation. Though creation now suffers the curse of sin, God is at work carrying out His redemptive plan. The church universal (all believers, everywhere) is the means by which God is fulfilling His purposes in the world (2 Cor 5:17–20). In light of this reality, the opportunity to join a local church body (a *particular* group of believers in a *particular* place) is much more than a commitment to consistent attendance or active involvement in community. It is a sacred call to be involved in the redemptive work of our sovereign God to push back the darkness of a fallen world through the power of the Holy Spirit with the light of His Son, Jesus Christ. Membership at Beacon Church is participation in a family, a local expression of the universal household of God. All members are united to Christ and thus to each other.

While the members serve as the foundation of Beacon Church, Scripture describes two offices given to the local church for its health, organization, and oversight: deacons and elders. Deacons are biblically-qualified men and women who are set-apart for service within the local church (Acts 6:1–7; 1 Tim 3:8–13). Elders are biblically-qualified men who are set-apart for shepherding, teaching, preaching, doctrinal oversight, and leadership (1 Pet 5:1–4; 1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 2:5–9). The membership of Beacon Church affirms deacons as lead servants and elders as servant leaders of the congregation.

## What is a Covenant?

A covenant is generally defined as a written agreement or promise between two or more parties to perform certain obligations and is usually signed. Within the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants, some between God and man (Gen 6, 9, 15; Ezek 20; Hos 2; Jer 31; Matt 26) and others between men (1 Sam 18; 2 Sam 5).

The Beacon Church covenant sets forth the promises and responsibilities of its elders and members. The elders promise to faithfully fulfill the scriptural requirements of the office of elder as well as their roles as members of Beacon Church. The members promise to fulfill the scriptural requirements of being a Christ follower. Most of these requirements are merely general Christian obligations. For example, all Christians, whether part of Beacon Church or not, are required to submit to the Scriptures, pursue holiness, repent of sin, and steward resources.

If a party to this covenant fails to fulfill its obligations, the members who have such information need to report the issue to the elders, who will meet with the affected parties to attempt to resolve the issue under the authority of Scripture and the gracious power of the Holy

Spirit. If the issue is not resolved through this process, there may be grounds for termination of the covenant with respect to the affected parties. This could include removal of an elder or member from Beacon Church.

### **Biblical Obligations of the Elders to Beacon Church**

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for Beacon Church corporately and individually. The elders covenant to fulfill these obligations as detailed in the Scriptures as follows:

- **to appoint elders and deacons (including staff members who serve in these offices) according to the qualifications set forth in the Scriptures** (1 Tim 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pet 5:1–4).
- **to prayerfully seek God’s will for Beacon Church and faithfully steward her resources, under the authority of the Scriptures and leading of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1–4).
- **to care for Beacon Church and seek her growth in grace, truth, and love** (Matt 28:16–20; Eph 4:15–16; Col 1:28; Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1–4).
- **to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture** (Acts 20:27–28; 1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 4:1–5; Titus 2:1).
- **to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry** (Eph 4:11–16).
- **to guard against false teachers and teachings** (Matt 7:15; Acts 20:28–31; 1 Tim 1:3–7; 1 John 4:1).
- **to lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined and the health of the church as a whole** (Matt 18:15–20; 1 Cor 5; Gal 6:1; Jas 5:19–20).
- **to fulfill the obligations of church membership stated below as a loving example to the body** (Phil 3:17; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7–8; 1 Pet 5:3).

### **Biblical Obligations of Members to Beacon Church**

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this reality as “living by the Spirit” (Rom 8). The requirements of this membership covenant are in no way intended as an addition to the biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, this document functions primarily as an accessible, yet non-exhaustive, explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces. As a member of Beacon Church, I covenant

- **to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues** (Ps 119; 2 Tim 3:14–17; 2 Pet 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 Cor 9:24–27; Eph 5:1–21; 1 Thess 5:12–22).

- **to follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the sacraments prescribed to His church**
  - by being baptized after my conversion (Acts 2:38)
  - by regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through communion (1 Cor 11:23-26)
  
- **to regularly participate in the life of Beacon Church by attending weekly services, participating in the life of the church, and serving those within and outside of this church** (Acts 2:42–47; Heb 10:23–25; Titus 3:14).
  
- **to steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful and voluntary** (Matt 25:14–30; Rom 12:1–2; 2 Cor 8–9; 1 Pet 4:10–11).
  
- **by God’s grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ** (1 Pet 1:13–16; 4:1–3).
  
- **to strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and service through the power of the Holy Spirit** (Rom 8:13).
  
- **to refrain from such activities that the Scriptures would deem foolish** (Rom 14:14–23).
  
- **to take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present a stumbling block to another** (1 Cor 8:1–13).
  
- **to submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit**
  - following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another—the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:15-20)
  - receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers (Ps 141:5; Matt 18:15–20; 1 Cor 5:9–13; Heb 12:5–11)
  
- **to do the following when I sin:**
  - confess my sin to God and to fellow believers
  - repent and seek help to put my sin to death (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6–10)
  
- **to submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church** (Eph 4:1–3; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:5).
  
- **to do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:**
  - to notify the elders
  - to seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer