

IV. CHURCH COVENANT

What is a covenant? A covenant is generally defined as “a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action.” [1] If a statement of faith is a summary of right doctrine, the church covenant summarizes right living. Paul told Timothy, “watch your life and doctrine closely” (1 Tim 4:16). The covenant aids church leaders and members by describing what a Christian life looks like. Proper use of a church covenant encourages members to take responsibility for each other’s holiness. (Heb. 3:12-14) As we’ve said before, the Christian faith is a community project. Together we have the profound privilege to celebrate the glory of God through lives transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul the Apostle refers to this as “living by the Spirit” in Romans chapter 8. This church covenant in no way seeks to add additional obligations to the believer but instead exists to highlight from the scriptures the kind of fruit produced by a truly changed life.

COVENANT:

Having been brought by God’s grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ I now, in full dependence upon His grace, resolve to live by faith, and so establish this covenant with my church. I understand that in all of these resolutions, I am aware of my utter dependence upon the Spirit of God to work in me to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, work and pray for the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, heed the Scripture’s command to obey and be subject to the leaders in a spirit of humility, love and respect, mindful that they have been called to serve and keep watch over my soul and will have to give an account. I will strive to allow them to fulfill their ministry with joy, which is to my advantage. (Heb. 13:17, 1 Thess. 5:12-13, 1 Peter 5:5)

I PROMISE, in the strength of His grace, to bring up our children and youth in the training and instruction of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends. (Eph. 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:1)

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, helping to carry each other’s burdens. (Rom. 12:15)

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, seek, by God’s help, to live carefully in this world, denying ungodliness and worldly passions. I will strive to live a self-controlled, upright, and godly life in this present age, as I wait for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:14)

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, defend and maintain gospel ministry in this church by supporting and upholding:

- The preaching of the Word of God (2 Tim 4:2)
- The administration of the Gospel Sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper) (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 11:26)
- The exercise of church discipline (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor 5:13)

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, seek to contribute cheerfully, generously and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel to all nations. (Matt. 28:19; Luke 12:33; 2 Cor. 9:7)

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Complete chastity and fidelity means, among other things, that regardless of my marital status, I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, homosexuality, premarital sex and pornography (Rom. 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 6:15-20, 10:8; Eph. 5:3; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Roots Community Church before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matt.19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; for the role of the church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for the resolution of legal matters within the assembly of the church in 1 Cor. 6).

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Rom. 1:28-32, 13:13; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:18; James 3:3-18).

I WILL, in the strength of His grace, if/when I move from this place, as soon as possible unite with some other church where I can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. -Romans 15:5-6