

APPENDIX C

Membership Covenant

The Redeeming Grace Bible Church membership covenant is birthed out of our love for the church body and its individual members whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy which is found in Christ. The primary purpose of this covenant is to serve as a teaching document with three functions:

- To clarify the biblical obligations and expectations for the Elders of Redeeming Grace Bible Church and the individual members.
- To establish the teaching and doctrinal parameters of Redeeming Grace Bible Church
- To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

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I. The Church

The church exists to display the glory of God in the world through the preaching of the gospel to all peoples.

The church is both universal (i.e. all believers of all times and places) and local (i.e. a particular group of believers in a locale).

The New Testament is filled with beautiful metaphors of what the church is:

- the household of God (Ephesians 2:19)
- the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2)
- the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)

The church is an assembly of believers covenanted together for corporate worship, prayer, and proclamation to the end that we grow into maturing disciples of Jesus Christ, conformed to his image, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit unto holiness and good works.

II. 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” (Merriam- Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary). There are biblical covenants throughout the Old and New Testament. God establishes relationships with his people through covenants. In some covenants, one party binds themselves to fulfill the obligations of both sides of the covenant. In others, the parties are reciprocally bound to the obligations. A church covenant calls both parties the church body as a whole, including the leaders, and the individual members of the church to faithfulness.

If at any time an individual member feels as though the corporate body is not remaining faithful to the requirements of the covenant, it is the responsibility of the individual member to lovingly and humbly express concerns to the Elders. If the Elders are unwilling to change and pursue covenant faithfulness, then the member is freed from his or her membership obligations and encouraged to seek membership elsewhere given the church’s disobedience. In addition, certain circumstances may provide sufficient and righteous grounds to transfer membership elsewhere.

III. Redeeming Grace Bible Church Baptist Church Statement of Faith

The beliefs that represent the church are found in its statement of faith: The 1689 London Baptist Confession. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate all these beliefs is not required, members must not stand in hostile opposition to the points contained in the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith but work towards the unity of the church body in doctrine and deed.

IV. Obligations Redeeming Grace Bible Church Elders to the Redeeming Grace Bible Church body:

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

The Elders covenant...

- to appoint Elders and deacons (including staff members who serve in these offices) according to the criteria assigned to them in the 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 the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- 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; James 5:14)
- to teach in complete agreement with the Church's Statement of Faith (1689 LBC) and to submit ourselves to it, being convicted that it represents Biblical truth as given by God through the Scriptures.
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 5:14)
- to equip the members of the church for the work of the 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 exercise 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 below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3)

V. Biblical Obligations of the Members to the Redeeming Grace Bible Church Body

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ,

I covenant...

- to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (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 (Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
- to follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to his church:
 - by being baptized after my conversion
 - by regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through the Lord's supper
- to regularly participate in the life of Redeeming Grace Bible Church by attending weekly gatherings, and living on mission in my family, community, and job (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. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful and voluntary (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 walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ. Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit.
- I will practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex and pornography and avoid situations that would be particularly tempting in this regard. (Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
- I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Baptist Church before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11)
- I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Romans 1:28-32; 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:2-18)
- to refrain from such activities that the Scriptures would deem foolish (Romans 14:14-23)
- to take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present stumbling block to another (1 Corinthians 8:1-13)
- 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.

- 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 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 (Romans 8:13; Colossians 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 (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

- to do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:
 - notify the appropriate staff member

 - seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer.