

# **Christian Conduct – What is Expected of Church Members?**

## *A Brief Study on the Church Covenant*

### **Does God have Expectations?**

It is a mistake to think that there is no responsibility involved in being a member of the church. Something is expected of us!

1. God expects us to bring forth fruit (*John 15:1-5*) – by doing good works
2. God expects us to be the salt of the earth (*Matthew 5:13*) – by maintaining devotion to Christ
3. God expects us to be the light of the world (*Matthew 5:14-16*) – by proclaiming the gospel
4. God expects us to stay unspotted from the world (*1 John 2:15, James 4:4*) – by abstaining from sin

**New Testament Principle: – A tree is known by the fruit it bears**  
(*Matthew 12:33*)

The Church Covenant, which was adopted by Victory Church, verbalizes these expectations in a practical way and declares what we will strive to do as members of the church. It is not our authoritative rule of conduct and it is not a disciplinary tool. The Word of God is our only standard of truth. However, the covenant does two things for us:

1. it concisely states what we believe the Bible teaches about the responsibilities of church members; and
2. it binds us together in a common understanding and commitment to fulfill these principles

For these two reasons, I believe it is useful for us to study the covenant and use it as a concise way to discuss the subject of Christian conduct.

### **Victory's Church Covenant**

*(All members of The Anchor Mission are under this covenant)*

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, and having been born again by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as Victory Missionary Baptist Church, as one body in Christ.

We pledge therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, discipline, and doctrines; to observe the Church ordinances of believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper as authorized by our local Church; to 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.

We also pledge to maintain family and personal devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to preserve the sanctity of life; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of illegal drugs and intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to shun pornography, homosexuality, and gambling; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further pledge to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover pledge that when we remove ourselves from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other Church, of like faith and order, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

# Christian Conduct – What is Expected of Church Members?

## *A Brief Study on the Church Covenant*

### What Do we have in Common? (Paragraph 1)

1. The same spiritual leadership to be a part of this local body of Christ  
“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it;...” (*Psalms 127:1*)
2. The same salvation by grace through faith  
**We require that each member have the same salvation**
3. The same public profession of faith  
**Each member publicly shares their testimony**
4. The same baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
**Public baptism by immersion**
5. The same commitment to live by these principles by entering into the same covenant  
**We join based upon our desire to forsake sin and follow Jesus Christ**

### Our Commitment to the Church (Paragraph 2)

The next four paragraphs state that we are entering into a pledge. What is a pledge?

**A pledge is a solemn commitment, covenant, or promise entered into by two or more people. God takes pledges very seriously. This covenant states that we are taking this pledge before God and the church.**

We pledge to:

1. Walk together in Christian love (*John 13:34-35*)  
**This is one of the two great rules of Christianity: (1) Love God; (2) Love each other**
2. Strive for the advancement of “this church” in:  
**People need to be committed to the church in which they hold membership!**
  - a. Knowledge (*Romans 10:1-2, 2 Timothy 2:15*)  
**Greater knowledge will allow greater service!**
  - b. Holiness (*Romans 6:17-19*)  
**Holiness is separation from sin. The more separated from sin we are, the holier the church becomes and the greater its power with God and men.**
  - c. Comfort (*John 14:15-19*)  
**This is a ministry of the Holy Spirit that we enhance by being “in tune” with the Spirit**
3. To Promote the Church’s:
  - a. Prosperity – Success (*1 Corinthians 14:12*)  
**We should always work for the church and not against it!**
  - b. Promote its Spirituality (*Galatians 5:22-25*)  
**True spirituality produces the fruits (evidences) of the Spirit**
4. To Sustain the Church’s:
  - a. Discipline - How do we accomplish this?
    1. Have a commitment to what is right
    2. Do not tolerate sin
    3. Follow God’s steps for handling discipline (see *Matthew 18:15-20* for specifics)
    4. Be willing to stand behind the church if discipline is necessary – not participating in condoning the sin!
  - b. Doctrine – How do I do this?
    1. Know doctrine (*Ephesians 4:14*)
    2. Embrace doctrine by believing it
    3. Live doctrine – a natural extension to really believing it (*Titus 2:7*)
    4. Teach doctrine to others – by word and example (*Titus 2:1*)

# Christian Conduct – What is Expected of Church Members?

## A Brief Study on the Church Covenant

5. Observe Church Ordinances (*1 Corinthians 11:2*)
  - a. Believer's Baptism (*Acts 8:36-37*)  
This is God's requirement for baptism and we need to uphold this standard
  - b. The Lord's Supper (*1 Corinthians 11:23-29*)  
We are to do this as a body with a great seriousness
6. Contribute Cheerfully and Regularly to: (*2 Corinthians 9:7*)
  - a. Support of the ministry (*1 Timothy 5:17-18*)  
By financially supporting the ministry, you enable them to enhance on their ministry
  - b. Expenses of the Church (*1 Corinthians 16:2*)  
These shouldn't be forgotten. This enables your church to fulfill its ministry.
  - c. Relief of the Poor (*Galatians 2:10*)  
A church has a responsibility toward those that are in need (not those in want)!
  - d. Spread of the Gospel to all nations (*Romans 15:26*)  
By supporting those ministries you take part in their labor and their blessings!

## Our Commitment to Holiness (Paragraph 3)

We pledge to:

1. Maintain family and personal devotions (*Matthew 6:6*)  
The presence of your personal devotions determines your power on Sunday!
2. Religiously educate our children (*Proverbs 22:6*)  
The way you handle this ministry determines whether you are qualified to handle other ministries
3. Seek the salvation of our family and friends (*Colossians 4:5-6*)  
We may be the only Bible they will ever read. They need to see Jesus in our words and actions.
4. To walk circumspectly in the world (*Ephesians 5:15*) – How do we do this?
  - a. Be aware of the wiles of the devil (*Matthew 10:16*)
  - b. Be “in” but not “of” the world (*John 17:15*)
5. Preserve the sanctity of human life (*Exodus 21:22-23*)  
Abortion is murder and a sin against God. We must stand against this abuse.
6. Be just in our dealings and faithful in engagements (*Matthew 5:37*)  
Pay your debts, keep your word, and don't take advantage of others.
7. Be exemplary in deportment – your conduct or behavior (*1 Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:7-8*)  
Those that oppose Christ should have to lie to find something against you.
8. Avoid all:
  - a. Tattling (*Proverbs 18:8*)  
When you talk about someone without seeking to help, you become part of the problem!
  - b. Backbiting – speaking spitefully or slanderously (*Ephesians 4:31*)  
This sin is one of the most hurtful and injurious to the church and must be avoided
  - c. Excessive Anger – sinful manifestations of anger (*Proverbs 25:28*)  
A loss of self control always results in sin.
9. Abstain from the sale or use of:
  - a. Illegal drugs (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*)  
They are illegal and cause the same (or worse) abuses that alcohol causes
  - b. Alcohol as a beverage (*Proverbs 20:1*)  
To abstain allows us to avoid temptation and enhance our witness.

# Christian Conduct – What is Expected of Church Members?

## *A Brief Study on the Church Covenant*

10. Shun:
  - a. Pornography (*Matthew 5:27-28*)  
This evil is invading America. It is it is sinful and leads to more sin.
  - b. Homosexuality (*Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-27*)  
Although this is being embraced by our society, it is an abomination before God!
  - c. Gambling (*Ephesians 5:3*)  
The real issue with gambling is being given over to covetousness. That is a sin.
11. Be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of Christ (*Matthew 6:33*)  
God's will and His work should be a top priority in our life

## **Our Commitment to our fellow Church Members (Paragraph 4)**

We pledge to:

1. Watch over one another in brotherly love (*1 Thessalonians 4:9*)  
Love should be the motivator of all our actions toward one another!
2. Remember one another in prayer (*James 5:16*)  
This is a solemn responsibility that we need to fulfill. This is why we have prayer requests.
3. Aid one another in sickness and distress (*Galatians 6:2, 6:10*)  
We are to bear each others burdens in practical ways
4. Cultivate:
  - a. Christian sympathy in feeling (*Philippians 2:1-2*)  
We should be genuinely compassionate on our brothers and sisters in Christ!
  - b. Christian courtesy in speech (*Ephesians 4:29*)  
Our speech should build up one another and not tear down.
5. Be slow to take offense (*Ephesians 4:1-3*)  
Many people seek to be offended to provide an excuse for sinful conduct – Don't let this be so!
6. Be ready for reconciliation (*Matthew 5:23-24*)  
When you withhold forgiveness from others, God will withhold it from you.

## **Our Commitment to Continue in the Spirit of the Covenant (Paragraph 5)**

We pledge to:

1. If we leave, we will seek out another sound Church where we can continue to follow the principles of this covenant and God's Word  
Your walk with Christ should be supported by this church, but not dependent upon this church. If God takes you elsewhere in your life, you should seek out another church of like faith and order where you can continue to be supported in your spiritual walk.