

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.

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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
3. The same public profession of faith
4. The same baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
5. The same commitment to live by these principles by entering into the same covenant

Our Commitment to the Church (Paragraph 2)

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

We pledge to:

1. Walk together in Christian love (*John 13:34-35*)
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*)
 - b. Holiness (*Romans 6:17-19*)
 - c. Comfort (*John 14:15-19*)
3. To Promote the Church’s:
 - a. Prosperity – Success (*1 Corinthians 14:12*)
 - b. Promote its Spirituality (*Galatians 5:22-25*)
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 is 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*)

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5. Observe Church Ordinances (*1 Corinthians 11:2*)
 - a. Believer's Baptism (*Acts 8:36-37*)
 - b. The Lord's Supper (*1 Corinthians 11:23-29*)
6. Contribute Cheerfully and Regularly to: (*2 Corinthians 9:7*)
 - a. Support of the ministry (*1 Timothy 5:17-18*)
 - b. Expenses of the Church (*1 Corinthians 16:2*)
 - c. Relief of the Poor (*Galatians 2:10*)
 - d. Spread of the Gospel to all nations (*Romans 15:26*)

Our Commitment to Holiness (Paragraph 3)

We pledge to:

1. Maintain family and personal devotions (*Matthew 6:6*)
2. Religiously educate our children (*Proverbs 22:6*)
3. Seek the salvation of our family and friends (*Colossians 4:5-6*)
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*)
6. Be just in our dealings and faithful in engagements (*Matthew 5:37*)
7. Be exemplary in deportment – your conduct or behavior (*1 Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:7-8*)
8. Avoid all:
 - a. Tattling (*Proverbs 18:8*)
 - b. Backbiting – speaking spitefully or slanderously (*Ephesians 4:31*)
 - c. Excessive Anger – sinful manifestations of anger (*Proverbs 25:28*)
9. Abstain from the sale or use of:
 - a. Illegal drugs (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*)
 - b. Alcohol as a beverage (*Proverbs 20:1*)

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10. Shun:
 - a. Pornography (*Matthew 5:27-28*)
 - b. Homosexuality (*Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-27*)
 - c. Gambling (*Ephesians 5:3*)

11. Be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of Christ (*Matthew 6:33*)

Our Commitment to our fellow Church Members (Paragraph 4)

We pledge to:

1. Watch over one another in brotherly love (*1 Thessalonians 4:9*)

2. Remember one another in prayer (*James 5:16*)

3. Aid one another in sickness and distress (*Galatians 6:2, 6:10*)

4. Cultivate:
 - a. Christian sympathy in feeling (*Philippians 2:1-2*)
 - b. Christian courtesy in speech (*Ephesians 4:29*)

5. Be slow to take offense (*Ephesians 4:1-3*)

6. Be ready for reconciliation (*Matthew 5:23-24*)

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