

(Article 7)

THE CHURCH COVENANT

The church covenant is a voluntary agreement by members of a Baptist church whereby they promise to conduct their lives in such a way as to glorify God and promote the ongoing of His church. Every member should study it carefully, refer to it often, and seek to live by it. It clearly outlines the obligations of church membership. The form of covenant in wide use in Baptist churches is as follows:

COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive 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 Ghost, we do now in the presence of god, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this prosperity and spirituality; holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and sacred devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; 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 intoxicating drinks as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and 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 engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

BASIS OF COVENANT

The obligations of church membership outlined in the covenant are all scriptural, as may be seen from the following study.

I. Salvation and Baptism (John 1:11–12; Matt. 28:19-20)

II. Duties to the Church

- 1. To walk together in Christian love (John 13:34-35).**
- 2. To strive for the advancement of the church and promote its prosperity and spirituality (Phil. 1; 27; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Peter 3:11).**
- 3. To sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine (Heb. 10:25; Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:23-26; Jude 3).**

4. To give it pre-eminence in my life (Matt. 6:33).
5. To contribute cheerfully and regularly (ICor. 16:2; 2Cor. 8:6-7).
6. To carry my membership when I move and be active in church work wherever I live (Acts 11:19-21; 18:24-28).

III. Duties in Personal Christian Living

1. To maintain family and secret devotions (I Thess. 5:17-18; Acts 17:11).
2. To religiously educate the children (2 Tim. 3:15; Deut 6:4-7)
3. To seek the salvation of the lost (Acts 1:8; Matt. 4:19; Psalms 126:5-6; Prov. 11:30).
4. To walk circumspectly in the world, and to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment (Eph. 5:15; Phil. 2:14-15; 1 Peter 2:11-12).
5. To avoid gossip and excessive anger (Eph. 4:31; 1 Peter 2:21; Col. 3:8; James 3:1-2).
6. To abstain from sale or use of liquors. (Eph. 4:31; Hab. 2:15).
7. To be zealous in our efforts for Christ (Titus 2:14).

IV. Duties to Fellow Members

1. To watch over one another in love (I Peter 1:22).
2. To pray for one another (James 5:16).
3. To aid in sickness and distress (Gal. 6.2; James 2:14-17).

- 4. To cultivate sympathy and courtesy (I Peter 3:8).**
- 5. To be slow to take offense, always ready for reconciliation (Eph 4:30-32).**

**Reference: Joe T. Odle, Church Member's Handbook:
Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee**