



Sojourners Church exists to make eternally joyful disciples of Jesus Christ through his word in the power of the Spirit to the global glory of God.

Membership Covenant

Purpose of this Covenant

The Sojourners Church membership covenant is designed to establish the doctrine and lifestyle of the church body (1 Timothy 4:16) and to make clear the promises between the members and elders of Sojourners Church under the Lordship of Jesus as his bride (Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 5:19). If at any time the elders or individual members of the church fail to keep the agreed upon promises of this covenant, the faithful party is freed from those promises.

The elders are eager to hear any prayerfully thought through concerns from the members on big or small issues. We want to hear and answer your questions well. If there are two or more witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19) of a specific charge of unbiblical conduct or breaking the promises in this covenant against an elder we would encourage those witnesses to bring their concern to that elder. If it cannot be resolved with that elder, we would encourage that elder and the witnesses to bring the concern to the full elder board with the purpose being biblical faithfulness and resolution. (Romans 12:16-18, 21)

If a member of the church is participating in sin we would encourage those aware of and/or affected by the sin to follow the steps outlined in Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5. [see the Sojourners Church Discipline and Distancing document]

Members who enter into covenant with the Sojourners Church elders are held to higher levels of responsibility and called to greater degrees of service than non-members as is appropriate for their circumstances (Ephesians 4:16). They are also the elders' highest priority when it comes to shepherding the church (1 Peter 5:2).

Doctrinal Essentials

The doctrinal essentials of Sojourners Church reflect the central, non-negotiable teachings of orthodox Christianity throughout history as derived from the Scriptures. The ability to perfectly define and persuasively defend these essentials is not necessary for membership, but denial of a single doctrinal essential disqualifies a person from membership at Sojourners Church. Our doctrinal essentials are as follows:

- the Trinity (Romans 8:1-4, John 14-17)
- the full deity and humanity of Christ (Mark 6:45-52; John 1:1-3,14; Romans 9:5)
- the spiritual depravity of the human race (Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 3:9-20, 23)
- the propitiating death and bodily resurrection of Christ (1 John 2:1-2; Romans 4:25, John 20)
- salvation by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10; Galatians 2:16)
- the physical return of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)
- the inspiration, infallibility, and ultimate authority of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16; John 10:35; 2 Peter 1:21)
- the reality that marriage can only exist as the union of one biological man and one biological woman (Genesis 1-2; Matthew 19:4-5) [see Sojourners Statement of Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality]

Doctrinal Distinctives

Sojourners Church is committed to several doctrinal distinctives that, unlike the core beliefs above, are not embraced by all orthodox Christians. Nevertheless, we believe that these distinctives represent our best understanding of Scripture, so our elders passionately preach, teach, and counsel members of the church in harmony with these distinctives. Though it is not necessary for a member to fully embrace these doctrinal distinctives, a potential member must discuss any disagreements over them with an elder before joining the church and agree to remain non-divisive over them after joining the church. Most notably, we affirm the following doctrinal distinctives:

- the sovereignty of God in salvation (Romans 9:14-23; Ephesians 1-2)
- the pursuit of our fullest joy in the glory of God through Christ [“Christian Hedonism”] (Psalm 37:4; Philippians 1:21-23, 3:1-11)
- local church rule by a plurality of elders (1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)
- complementary roles for men and women in the church and home [see Sojourners Statement of Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality] (Genesis 1-2; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Timothy 3)
- believer’s baptism and communion (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:26-28)
- the spiritually nourishing presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)
- desire, discernment, and decency in the use of all the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14)

For a more detailed explanation, the elders of Sojourners Church have adopted, with permission, the *Bethlehem College and Seminary Affirmation of Faith*. This 52-page document is the fullest expression of our beliefs at Sojourners Church and is available in print and electronic formats by request.

Promises by Sojourners Church Elders to Sojourners Church Members

The elders of Sojourners Church promise to:

- Increasingly embody the elder qualifications as seen in 1 Timothy 3.
- Provide cross-centered, Bible-driven preaching, teaching, and counsel (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:1).
- Equip church members for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-13).
- Protect church members from false teachers and heretical doctrine (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1).
- Administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper with regularity and integrity for the edification of church members (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32).
- Oversee care for genuine physical needs among church members (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 5:3-4, 16; James 1:27; 5:14).
- Rule the church selflessly as those who will give an account for their souls (1 Peter 5:1-2; Hebrews 13:17).
- Seek God's will through prayer for the church (1 Timothy 3:4-5).
- Wisely steward the resources of the church (1 Timothy 5:17).
- Appoint elders and deacons in adherence to the standards set forth in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9).
- Exercise church discipline in love for the sake of God's glory, the purity of the church and the soul of the one disciplined (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20). [see Sojourners Church Discipline and Distancing document]
- Model obedient church membership in submission to the other elders through fulfillment of the "**Promises Made by Sojourners Church Members to Sojourners Church Elders**" [see next page] (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:2-3).

Promises by Sojourners Church Members to Sojourners Church Elders

The covenant members of Sojourners Church promise to:

- Submit to the authority of Scripture in all matters pertaining to faith and its practice (Psalm 119:1-176; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4, 19-21).
- Follow the biblical lead of elders, joyfully submitting to their divinely appointed authority and esteeming them for their faithful labors (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17).
- Prioritize the regular participation in the family life of Sojourners Church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- Participate in the sacrament of baptism. Baptisms considered on a case-by-case basis. (Acts 2:39-42, Romans 6:1-11)
- Regularly participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with the church family. (1 Corinthians 10-11)
- Give sacrificially and cheerfully of time, talent, and treasure as God enables (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- Intentionally develop relationships with other members of the body, foster godly affections for all in the body, and express those affections in biblical ways (John 13:34-35; Romans 12:15; Philippians 2:2-4, 4:2-3; 1 John 3:14, 18, 23; 4:7, 11, 20-21; 5:1).
- Engage in ministry to others in the body through prayer, biblical counsel, admonishment, encouragement, and the general exercise of spiritual gifts (Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-13, 25; 6:18; Hebrews 3:13; 1 John 5:16; Jude 1:22-23).
- Participate in the loving discipline of wayward members at the prompting of the elders (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13). [see Sojourners Church Discipline and Distancing document]
- Work to resolve all conflict with other members, involving church leaders and the body if necessary (1 Corinthians 6:1-7; Philippians 4:2-3).
- Live with the knowledge that the world sees our individual actions as a reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ, his Gospel, and his visible church of which we are a part (Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; 2 Corinthians 3:2; 5:20; Ephesians 3:10, 4:1; Philippians 1:27; 1 Peter 2:11-12).

Covenant Agreement

I understand the content of this covenant and the promises required. I have received the supplemental documents, "Church Membership," "Biblical Eldership," and "Church Discipline." I further understand that signing this covenant unites me to the body of Sojourners Church. I agree to gladly submit to its elders, as long as the elders remain faithful to their promises as defined by this covenant.

New Covenant Member (Please Print)

Signature

Date

We, the undersigned, believe that both parties have entered into this covenant with full understanding of its contents and the commitment it requires. We, therefore, welcome the above signatory as a covenant member of Sojourners Church.

Elder

Date

Elder

Date

Elder

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