



Sojourn Church Membership Covenant

Mission

Our mission is **gospel transformation**. Sojourn Church exists to see the gospel transform everything around us – ourselves, our families, our church, Middle GA, and the world.

The Membership Covenant

The primary purposes of this covenant are ...

1. to establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for Sojourn Church.
2. to clarify the obligations and expectations for both the Elders of Sojourn Church and the Members of Sojourn Church.

Primary Doctrines of Sojourn Church

The following beliefs represent the core of orthodox Christianity from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to sufficiently articulate these beliefs are not required for membership, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership at Sojourn Church.

1. **Revelation** - God reveals Himself to the world through Jesus Christ, the scriptures, and creation. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the “image of the invisible God.” The scriptures, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired word of God and therefore authoritative, sufficient, and without error in their original writings (Psalm 19:7-11; John 5:19; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:15; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-3; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
2. **God (The Trinity)** – There is only one God who eternally exists as one essence and three distinct persons. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are each fully, equally, and eternally God, yet there is one God (Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 45:6-7, 110:1; Isaiah 45:5-6, 46:9-10; Matthew 3:13-17, 28:17-20; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, 12:4-6).
3. **Jesus** – Jesus Christ is the Son of God who has existed eternally. He was born of a virgin, and is both fully God and fully human. He lived a sinless life. He died as a substitute for those that trust Him and look to Him to pay the penalty for their sins. Jesus physically rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will one day physically return (Matthew 1:20, 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 2:52, 24:1-53; John 1:1-4, 1:14, 1:29, 10:1-18, 14:3; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 15:12-34; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 1:1-3, 9:28; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).
4. **Humanity** - All humanity is created in the image of God and therefore possesses intrinsic value and dignity. Every human, Jesus excluded, is sinful by nature and by action. The deserved penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Genesis 1:27-30, 6:5, 2:15-17; Genesis 3:19; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 3:23, 5:8, 5:12-21, 7:18; Romans 6:23; James 1:14-15).



5. **The Resurrection of the Dead** – There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
6. **Salvation** – Salvation is only by grace through faith in the life, the death on the cross, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All who receive the Lord Jesus Christ through faith become children of God and are declared righteous by God. No one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born again (John 3:5-8, 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 10:19-25).

Secondary Doctrines of Sojourn Church

The Secondary Doctrines reflect some of what distinguishes Sojourn Church from other churches who would affirm the Primary Doctrines. These Secondary Doctrines shape the way that Sojourn is led and the direction the church is headed. Sojourn's Elders will preach, teach, and counsel with these views in mind. We do not expect all members to embrace all aspects of these Secondary Doctrines, but members should expect that these doctrines will be maintained in all ministry environments at Sojourn, and members may not teach contrary to them. If you explicitly disagree with any of these Secondary Doctrines, the Elders suggest that you meet with an elder to discuss how it may affect your participation at Sojourn prior to signing the covenant.

1. **Baptism by Immersion for Believers** – Baptism is reserved for professing Christians. Also, immersion offers a beautiful picture of the gospel truths of death to our old way of life and new life through the resurrection power of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42, 18:8; Romans 6:1-14).
2. **The Complementarian Roles of Men and Women in the Church and the Home** – Men and women are equally loved by God and equally valuable. God calls men to lead in their homes and in the church (Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Timothy 2:12, 3:2).
3. **The Active Giving of Gifts to Christians by the Holy Spirit** – The Holy Spirit is still active today and that all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit described in the New Testament are still available to Christians today (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
4. **The Sovereignty of God** – God is sovereign over all things, including salvation. God's sovereignty in no way diminishes the responsibility of man, but the responsibility of man should in no way be allowed to downplay the absolute sovereignty of God over all things (Deuteronomy 32:39; Psalm 147:15-18; Proverbs 21:1; Isaiah 40:26, 46:8-11; Matthew 10:29-30; John 6:44; Acts 4:24; Romans 6:1-23, 8:29-30, 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Galatians 6:8-10; Ephesians 1:4-5, 1:11; 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 6:10).
5. **Perseverance of Christians** – Those who are truly Christians have the Holy Spirit and will continue to believe the gospel and demonstrate evidences of salvation throughout their lives (John 10:28-29; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 3:6, 14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 2:3-4, 19).

Obligations of the Sojourn Church Elders to the Sojourn Church Body

Sojourn Church is and will be led by a plurality of male elders who meet the biblical qualifications of eldership. The elders of a local church are given the responsibilities and privileges of leading, protecting, equipping, and caring for the local church body and its individual members. The following are specific ways the Elders at Sojourn covenant to carry out this responsibility.



The Elders of Sojourn Church covenant ...

1. to ensure that we instruct the church from the whole of the scriptures through gospel-centered preaching and teaching (Acts 20:27-28; Romans 1:16; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 3:16, 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
2. to make decisions with Sojourn's Mission and Core Values in mind (Matthew 28:18-20).
3. to care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth, and love (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
4. to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
5. to appoint qualified leadership by carefully and prayerfully striving to select only leaders that are biblically qualified (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
6. to prayerfully seek God's will for our church body and to steward the church's resources faithfully and strategically based on the study of the Scriptures, the mission of the church, and the leading of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
7. to be on guard against false teachers and false teachings. We will correct, equip, and/or confront any who are teaching false doctrine in the church (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1).
8. to lovingly exercise discipline when needed by striving to follow the biblical model for church discipline. We will not shy away from exercising discipline for the good of the one being disciplined and the church body as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13).
9. to be positive examples by living lives marked by the gospel and fulfilling the obligations of Sojourn Members that are listed below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

Obligations of Sojourn Church Members to the Sojourn Church Body

The Members of Sojourn are a covenant family and a covenant body. The obligations of this covenant are most definitely NOT an addition to the obligations of believers as taught in the Bible. Instead, this section is a brief explanation of what the Bible teaches about the transformed life that faith produces in one who is filled by the Holy Spirit. This is not intended to be a complete explanation of a transformed life, but one that the Elders believe is culturally timely and helpful. Additionally, this section serves to make clear what the Sojourn Elders and Members ought to expect from each individual Member.

I declare that I...

1. profess faith in Jesus Christ and His shed blood, death, burial, and resurrection as the only possible means of eternal salvation from sin and death that is granted to us freely according to God's grace alone (Romans 1:16-17; Romans 3:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 2:1-10).
2. have been baptized or commit to pursue baptism as a testimony of my salvation in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41, Romans 6:3-7, Colossians 2:11-14, 1 Peter 3:21-22).
3. affirm all of the Primary Doctrines of Sojourn Church.

I covenant...

1. to live out the biblical mission of Sojourn Church, which is to see the gospel transform everything around us - ourselves, our families, our church, our city, and the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 1:16).



2. to humbly submit to the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the final authority in all issues of life (Matthew 5:18; Luke 24:25-27; John 16:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
3. to seek to strengthen my faith and grow in my knowledge of and affections for God through regular Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and the practice of other spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
4. to regularly participate in the life of Sojourn Church by ...
 - a. attending Sojourn's corporate gatherings consistently and frequently (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25).
 - b. making community a priority. I will seek to pursue and strengthen friendships in the church and will invest time and energy into those friendships. I know that God does not intend for Christians to do life isolated and alone (John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; Galatians 6:1-2).
 - c. giving financially to Sojourn Church according to the New Testament model of generous and cheerful giving (2 Corinthians 8-9).
 - d. using my time, talents, and spiritual gifts to serve the body of Sojourn Church (Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:8-11).
5. to care for the others in the body by grieving and rejoicing together, bearing each other's burdens, and humbly admonishing and encouraging each other (Romans 12:9-16; 1 Corinthians 12:25-26; Hebrews 3:13, 10:24).
6. to actively work to maintain the unity of the body by ...
 - a. dealing with any disagreements with humility and love, always seeking to encourage and maintain unity in the body (Psalm 133; John 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Peter 3:8).
 - b. submitting to the governance and leadership of the Elders (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).
7. to follow the biblical procedures for church discipline when sin is evident in my Christian brother or sister and repentance is not evident. Also, I will humbly and genuinely receive biblical and loving discipline by fellow believers. The hope of all church discipline is repentance and reconciliation (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8; Galatians 6:1-5, 8; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Hebrews 12:5-11; Revelation 2:5-7, 14-25).
8. to walk in holiness by God's grace through the power of the Spirit. Believers should seek to live transformed lives due to their faith in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Believers ought to strive to put to death some attitudes and actions as they strive to stimulate and increase other attitudes and actions (Ephesians 4:17-5:21; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 3:5-17; 1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3). A few examples of specific attitudes and action that the Scriptures address are listed below:
 - a. If I am not married, I will strive for complete chastity. If I am married, I will practice complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. I will seek to flee from sexual immorality, which means I will strive to abstain from adultery, premarital sex, and pornography (1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4).
 - b. I will honor marriage by meeting with at least one Elder before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matthew 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 6, 7:10-11; Hebrews 13:4).
 - c. I will strive to refrain from drunkenness, drug abuse, gossip, and other attitudes and behaviors that are sinful according to the Scriptures (Romans 1:28-32; Romans 13:13; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:3-18).



- d. I will confess my sin to God and to fellow believers when I do sin (James 5:15-16; 1 John 1:6-10).
 - e. I will repent of my sin and seek help from others in the body of Christ in putting my sin to death (Romans 2:4, 8:13; 2 Corinthians 7:5-13; Colossians 3:5).
9. to do the following if I leave the church in good standing:
- a. Notify an Elder of Sojourn Church in writing (email or handwritten note) of your decision to leave the church and remove yourself from membership with Sojourn Church in order to help the Elders of Sojourn know who is currently under their care (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17).
 - b. Pursue membership with another Bible-believing church (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 2:19; Ephesians 5:29-30; Hebrews 13:17).