

# FELLOWSHIP COMMITMENT of



# REDEEMER BIBLE CHURCH

Documents like this are normally called Church Covenants. With a church covenant the members of a church make a vow, a covenant, to each other and to God to live the Christian life as described in the covenant. While we may agree with the content of a church covenant, they set people up for failure because the promise to live a certain way is unattainable every moment of every day, and so the vow is constantly broken. This puts a child of God in conflict with the teaching of God and with His people (*Mtt 5:33-37, Jam 5:12*). Broken vows, like legalism, turn the Christian life into an existence of constant failure which removes joy and peace from life. And, vows and covenants have been wrongly used to police the conduct of people in church. The result is that people hold back and hide their true self, they keep others at arm's length, and don't develop deep relationships, and they learn to act the part of a person who "needs to grow in some areas" but otherwise is able to keep it together, at least for a few hours on a Sunday morning.

God describes the life of His people on this earth as one of peace, hope, joy, and victory (*Rom 15:13, 1Cor 10:13, 15:57*), but mingled with pain and suffering (*Jn 16:33*). We do not want to add to the pain and constraints of life. We do not want to place burdens on people that God does not, or put anyone in a place where they sin against God and His people by breaking vows they have unnecessarily made. Nor do we want to turn the Christian life into drudgery and failure because we don't meet a certain standard. And we certainly don't want to use any document to control anyone.

But, it is helpful to be reminded that this world is not our home and we are God's children who desire to live with Him in His kingdom, and we do need to live like children of the King. So, we have a Fellowship Commitment that reminds us of this and gives us some direction and identity. Our Fellowship Commitment is framed and presented as our desire and intent, not as a vow or covenant. In this way we can be real about ourselves and our lives and our failures without fear of condemnation and censure and we can rejoice in our victories and obedience without pride or self-satisfaction.

## Our Fellowship Commitment

Having been brought by God's grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we now confess our desire and intent to live as children of God. We stumble in so many ways (*Jam 3:2, 1Jn 1:8*) and we will not always live as we desire and intend (*Rom 7:13-25*). But, through reliance on the Holy Spirit, direction from God's word, our ministry to one-another, and the personal pursuit of holiness, we at Redeemer Bible Church desire and intend . . .

- to glorify and enjoy the God of our salvation, from whom and through whom and to whom are all things: to Him be all glory forever! *1Corinthians 10:31, Romans 11:36*.
- to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace by walking together in love and in the Spirit and by putting away all bitterness, anger, and injurious speech, *Galatians 5:16, 25, Ephesians 4:3, 29, 31*.
- to rejoice in the happiness of other believers and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear both their burdens and sorrows with them, *Romans 12:15*.
- to live the 'one another' and 'each other' commands in scripture beginning with loving one another, being kind to one another with humility and gentleness and patience and love, forgiving each other even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, *Luke 17:3, Ephesians 4:1-2, Colossians 3:13, 1Thessalonians 5:11, 1 Peter 1:22*.
- to seek, by Divine power, to live a self-controlled, upright, and godly life in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation to lead a new and holy life, *Galatians 5:22-24, Titus 2:12, 1Peter 1:14*.
- to endeavor to disciple others in the love and instruction of the Lord, and by proclaiming and living the gospel to seek the salvation of family and friends, *Ephesians 6:4, 1Peter 3:1, Acts 1:8*.
- to not forsake the assembling together of the saints, nor neglect to pray for all, *Colossians 4:2, Hebrews 10:25*.
- to exercise spiritual gifts consistent with the leading of the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church, *Romans 12:4-21, 1Corinthians 12:1-28, Ephesians 4:11-16*.
- to work together for the continuance of a faithful gospel centered ministry in this church, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations, *Matthew 18:17, 28:19, Luke 12:33, Acts 2:38, 1Corinthians 5:13, 11:26, 2Corinthians 9:7, 2Timothy 4:2*.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.