

COVENANT

COMMITTING ONE TO ANOTHER

MEMBERSHIP

Sermon Guide

A Group of People Covenanting Together Grace Covenant Church

We are a people of God, covenanting together as Grace Covenant Church, because of covenant commitments. The covenant commitments of God's "new covenant" are to forgive our sins and to write his law on our hearts and to make us his people and to be our God. This local church is an expression of the unfailing love of Christ as we together have made a commitment to trust Christ and worship God and love each other in all the ways commanded in the New Testament. What makes a group of persons a particular church is a covenant--a solemn pledge to one another that they would believe in Christ and worship and minister in common.

Ephesians 4:4–6 (ESV)

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

God extends the covenant and the promises of the covenant to us through Jesus Christ.

At the last supper Jesus took the cup and said, "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." When Jesus died God's final, decisive, sovereign, invincible act was to create a people for himself--not only by purchasing their forgiveness, but also by purchasing their faith and their obedience in fulfillment of the new covenant promises: "I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them in their hearts." You and I exist as Christians because of the irresistible force of the new covenant promises.

Luke 22:20 (ESV)

“And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

Ezekiel 11:19-20, 27 (ESV)

“And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” ²⁷“And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

Jeremiah 31:33 (ESV)

“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

What is a ‘Church Covenant’?

A church covenant described in five different ways.

- **A church covenant is a promise**—a promise made to God, to a local church, and to one’s self.
- **A church covenant is a summary of how we agree to live**—While our statement of faith is a good summary of what we believe, our church covenant is a summary of how we agree to live – more importantly, it is a summary of how God would have us live. It does not include every explicit command regarding obedience, but it does give a general summary of what it means to live as a disciple of Christ.
- **A church covenant is a sign of commitment**—a commitment to God, to His church, and to personal holiness.
- **A church covenant is an ethical statement**—A church covenant can be an important part of applying a Christian worldview to every aspect of our lives. Inherent in the purpose of a church covenant is the understanding that church membership involves being held accountable to live in a manner consistent with a common understanding of Scripture.
- **A church covenant is a biblical standard**—A church covenant is helpful in a church that is practicing Biblical church discipline. As members of a church, we exhort one another to live holy lives, and we challenge brothers and sisters persisting in sin.

In Conclusion

A church covenant is a challenge simply because there are times when living a godly life is hard. It is also a challenge because each member of the church now bears responsibility for the lives of other believers.

A church covenant is also a comfort. A comfort to know you’ll be cared for and prayed for, not perfectly, but faithfully. Our desire is that there will be great comfort by covenanting with other believers. What a great joy it is to have Christians who are going to build us up when we are down. You have Christians who are so concerned about your spiritual walk, that if they see you break the covenant you have made as a disciple of Christ, they will exhort you to turn back; and if you don’t, they’ll do all they can to make the gravity of your sin clear. This is our ideal, our vision, what we strive for.

Grace Covenant Church’s Church Covenant is rooted ultimately in God’s sovereign call that creates a visible people for himself in fulfillment of the new covenant promises. It is rooted secondarily in the biblical necessity of becoming local expressions of one global covenant people.