



## Sojourn Church Membership Covenant

### Mission

**Our mission is gospel transformation.** We exist 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.
3. to serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

### Primary Doctrines of Sojourn Church

The Primary Doctrines represent what we believe to be core elements of the Christian faith. All members are expected to affirm these doctrines. 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: *We believe God has graciously made Himself known to the world in creation, the Scriptures, and Jesus Christ.***

God has revealed His eternal power, divine nature, and glory in creation, so that the creation bears constant witness to its Creator. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the perfect revelation of who God is — “the image of the invisible God” and “the exact imprint of his nature.” The Scriptures, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God, which is authoritative and without error in its original writings, complete in its revelation of His will for salvation, and sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do. (Psalm 19:1–11; John 1:18, Colossians 1:15, Romans 1:20; Hebrews 1:1–3; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:20–21)

#### **2. God (The Trinity): *We believe in one God, eternally existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons who share one divine essence.***

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: *We believe Jesus is the eternal Son of God who lived sinlessly, died sacrificially, rose victoriously, and will return.***

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: *We believe that all humanity is created in the image of God and therefore possesses intrinsic dignity and is sinful by nature and therefore is in need of salvation.***

All humanity is created in the image of God and therefore possesses intrinsic value and dignity.

Every human, excluding Jesus, 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. Salvation: *We believe salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.***

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)

**6. Resurrection of the Dead: *We believe that Jesus Christ is returning to the world in the future to judge the living and 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)

### **Secondary Doctrines of Sojourn Church**

The Secondary Doctrines reflect some of what distinguishes Sojourn Church from other churches who would affirm the Primary Doctrines. Sojourn's Pastors will preach, teach, and counsel with these views in mind. All members are not expected to embrace all aspects of these Secondary Doctrines, but members should expect that these doctrines will be maintained in all ministry environments at Sojourn. Members may not teach contrary to these doctrines in ministry environments. If you explicitly disagree with any of these Secondary Doctrines, the Pastors suggest that you meet with a pastor 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. 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. Complementarian Roles of Men and Women in the Church and the Home**

Men and women are equally loved by God and equally valuable. They are also distinct by divine design. As part of God's good created order, men and women are to have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the home and church. As it relates to the church, men and women are both able to lead; however, the office of elder is reserved for qualified men. (Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Timothy 2:12, 3:2; Titus 1:5-9)

**3. Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is still active today and the gifts of the Holy Spirit described in the New Testament are still available to Christians today. These gifts did not cease with the close of the New Testament



or the death of the last apostle. (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

#### 4. 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 cannot lose their salvation. They will continue to believe the gospel and demonstrate evidence 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)

### **Theological Affirmations**

The following are statements or creeds that we affirm to further explain our theology to members of the church and others who desire to know what our church believes. You can find these statements and creeds at <https://sojournchurch.net/theological-affirmations>.

- The Apostles' Creed
- The Nicene Creed
- The Nashville Statement

### **Obligations of the Sojourn Church Elders to the Sojourn Church Body**

We believe the words "pastors," "elders," and "overseers" are used in the Bible to describe the same office. Sojourn Church is to be led by a plurality of male elders who meet the biblical qualifications of eldership. The pastors 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 of Sojourn covenant to carry out this responsibility.

### **The Elders of Sojourn Church covenant ...**

1. to 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 care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth, and love. (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
3. to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry. (Ephesians 4:11-16)
4. to make decisions prayerfully and with biblical wisdom. (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:5)
5. to appoint qualified leadership by carefully and prayerfully striving to select only leaders that are biblically qualified. Specifically, we will appoint elders and deacons according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures. (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
6. to steward the church's resources faithfully and strategically to the best of our ability based on our understanding of the Scriptures and the leading of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:3-5; 1 Peter 5:1-4)



1 Peter 5:1-4)

7. to be on guard against false teachers and false teachings. (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1)
8. to lovingly exercise discipline when it's needed for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the health of the church as a whole. (Matt. 18:15–20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19–20)
9. to be positive examples by living lives marked by the gospel and fulfilling the obligations of Sojourn Members. (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3)

### **Declarations and Obligations of Sojourn Church Members to the Sojourn Church Body**

The Members of Sojourn are a covenant family and a covenant body. Much of this section functions as an accessible explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the transformed life that faith produces. It is by no means exhaustive, but our elders believe it is culturally timely and helpful. There are obligations that are not required biblically, but that flow out of biblical principles and that our elders believe are wise and helpful. These declarations and obligations are intended to make clear what the Sojourn Elders and Members ought to expect from each individual member.

#### **I declare that ...**

1. I profess faith in Jesus Christ and His 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. I 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. I affirm all of the Primary Doctrines of Sojourn Church.

#### **I covenant...**

1. 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 will strive to care for others in the body by grieving and rejoicing together, bearing each other's burdens, and humbly admonishing and encouraging each other. (John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:9-16; 1 Corinthians 12:25-26; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 3:13, 10:24)
  - 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)
2. to humbly submit to the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the final authority in all issues of life. (Psalm 119; Luke 24:25-27; 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 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 as long as their decisions are not unbiblical. (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5)
5. 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)
6. to strive 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 presence 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. A few examples of specific attitudes and actions that the Scriptures address and our elders specifically desire to include here are listed below:
  - a. If I am not married, I will strive for complete chastity. If I am married, I will strive for 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. (Matthew 15:19-20; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4)
  - b. I will strive to refrain from drunkenness, drug abuse, gossip, obscene talk, grumbling, quarreling, jealousy, conceit, covetousness, and other attitudes and behaviors that are sinful according to the Scriptures. (Romans 1:28-32; 13:13; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:17-5:21; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 3:5-17; James 3:3-18; 1 Peter 1:13-19, 4:1-5)
  - c. I will confess my sin to God and to fellow believers when I do sin. (James 5:15-16; 1 John 1:6-10)
  - d. 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)
7. to honor marriage and the role pastors are to have in a church member's life by meeting with at least one pastor before pursuing divorce from my spouse. (Matthew 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 6:17; 7:10-11; Hebrews 13:4)
8. to do the following if I leave the church in good standing:
  - a. Notify a pastor of Sojourn Church in writing (email or paper) of your decision to leave the church and remove yourself from membership with Sojourn Church in order to help the Elders 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)