

# Membership Covenant

The Coram Deo Baptist Church membership covenant is birthed out of our love for the church body and its individual members whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy which is found in Christ. The primary purpose of this covenant is to serve as a teaching document with three functions:

- To clarify the biblical obligations and expectations for the Elders of Coram Deo Baptist Church and the individual members.
- To establish the teaching and doctrinal parameters of Coram Deo Baptist Church.
- To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

## **Contents**

### ***I. The Church***

### ***II. Covenant: Essence and Role***

### ***III. Coram Deo Baptist Church Statement of Faith***

### ***IV. Biblical Obligations of Coram Deo Baptist Church Elders to the Church Body***

### ***V. Biblical Obligations of the Members to the Church Body***

## **I. The Church**

The church exists to display the glory of God in the world through the preaching of the gospel to all peoples.

The church is both universal (i.e. all believers of all times and places) and local (i.e. a particular group of believers in a locale).

The New Testament is filled with beautiful metaphors of what the church is:

- the household of God (Ephesians 2:19)
- the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2)
- the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)

The church is an assembly of believers covenanted together for corporate worship, prayer, and proclamation to the end that we grow into maturing disciples of Jesus Christ, conformed to his image, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit unto holiness and good works.

## **II. What is a Covenant?**

A covenant is generally defined as “a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary). There are biblical covenants throughout the Old and

New Testament. God establishes relationships with his people through covenants. In some covenants, one party binds themselves to fulfill the obligations of both sides of the covenant. In others, the parties are reciprocally bound to the obligations. A church covenant calls both parties the church body as a whole, including the leaders, and the individual members of the church to faithfulness. If at any time an individual member feels as though the corporate body is not remaining faithful to the requirements of the covenant, it is the responsibility of the individual member to lovingly and humbly express concerns to the Elders. If the Elders are unwilling to change and pursue covenant faithfulness, then the member is freed from his or her membership obligations and encouraged to seek membership elsewhere given the church’s disobedience. In addition, certain circumstances may provide sufficient and righteous grounds to transfer membership elsewhere.

## **III. Coram Deo Baptist Church Statement of Faith**

The following beliefs represent the core of central orthodox beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate these beliefs are not required, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership at Coram Deo Baptist Church.

### *What we believe...*

- The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, written by human authors. The Scriptures are our authoritative and sufficient guide to all truth, doctrine, saving knowledge, faith and obedience. They should be interpreted through the scope of Christ.

*(Ex. 24:4; Deut. 4:1-2; 17:19; Josh. 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isa. 34:16; 40:8; Jer. 15:16; 36; Matt. 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Rom. 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.)*

- There is one eternal triune God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – of the same nature, being, attributes, and glory.

God the Father reigns with providential care over his creation. He is sovereign over all of

history and governs according to the purposes of his eternal will and grace. God the Son existed eternally with the Father. In the incarnation God the Son took on human flesh as the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus lived a sinless life, died for sinners and was raised by the power of God on the third day. Jesus will return one day to judge, rule, and restore all creation.

God the Holy Spirit points people to Christ Jesus, convicts people of sin, of righteousness, and judgment. He is the agent of calling and regeneration. The Holy Spirit indwells believers, empowering them for mission and gifting them for ministry. (Gen. 1:1; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Deut. 6:4; Jer. 10:10; Isa. 48:12; Deut. 5:7; Ex. 3:14; Heb. 11:6; John 5:26; 1 Tim. 1:17; John 1:14-18; John 15:26; Gal. 4:6; Matt. 28:19.)

• People were created in the image of God. God intended for humanity to reflect his glory through worship, obedience, and community. Through the temptation of Satan, Adam and Eve sinned against God bringing a curse upon all humanity. The rebellion separated people from God and our nature is corrupted by sin in every faculty of our being. The consequence of sin is physical, spiritual, and eternal death. The only hope for people is the new birth and reconciliation offered to all in Jesus Christ.

(Gen. 1:27; Gen. 2:7; John 1:23; Gen. 3:4-7; Gen. 3:22-24; Rom. 5:12, 14, 19, 21; Rom. 7:23-25; Rom. 11:18, 22, 32-33; Col. 1:21.)

• Salvation is wholly a gracious work of God through Jesus Christ for sinners. God through Jesus reconciles sinners to himself. Jesus died as our substitute, paying the penalty due to us for our sins against God. On the cross Jesus became the object of God's just wrath toward sin. God raised Jesus from the dead vindicating him and securing our justification. The biblical response to the gospel is to repent and trust in the person and redeeming work of Christ on our behalf. The believer is regenerated, united with Christ, justified, adopted, and sanctified. Sanctification is becoming in practice what God declares to be true of us, that is holy and righteous in Christ. Those who repent and believe are indwelt and sealed with the Holy Spirit and will persevere in faith.

(Gen. 3:15; Ex. 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matt. 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21, 36; 5:24; 10:9, 28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Rom. 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18, 29-39; 10:9-10, 13; 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 1:18, 30; 6:19-20;

15:10; 2 Cor. 5:17-20; Gal. 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephes. 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 2 Tim. 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8, 14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Rev. 3:20; 21:1-22:5.)

• The church is the community formed by the gospel and exists for the proclamation of the gospel to the nations. Members of the church are those who believe the gospel and have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The gathered church worships, studies the Bible, exercises discipline, and celebrates the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper.

(Matt. 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; Acts 20:7; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 10:16, 21; 11:23-29; Col. 2:12.)

• We realize there are multiple views concerning the end of time. Essentially we look forward to a certain and visible return of Jesus Christ. When he finally returns all the dead will be raised and Jesus will judge all people. Those who believed the gospel will enjoy eternity with the triune God. Those who rejected the gospel will experience hell and suffer the judgement of God toward sin. God will establish his final and eternal reign in the new heaven and the new earth.

(Isa. 2:4; 11:9; Matt. 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40, 48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; 15:24-28, 35-58; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thess. 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Rev. 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.)

Further statements of belief can be found in the *Abstract of Principles*.

#### **IV. Obligations of Coram Deo Baptist Church Elders to the Coram Deo Baptist Church body**

As shepherds, elders, and overseers of a local church, Elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping and caring for the local church and the individual members. *The Elders covenant...*

- to appoint Elders and deacons (including staff members who serve in these offices) according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- to prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following the Holy Spirit

(Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

- to care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth and love (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14)
- to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 5:14)
- to equip the members of the church for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 John 4:1)
- to lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined and the health of the church as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20)
- to set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3)

#### **V. Biblical Obligations of the Members to the Coram Deo Baptist Church Body**

*As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, I covenant...*

- to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- to pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and practice of spiritual disciplines (Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).
- to follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to his church:
  - by being baptized after my conversion
  - by regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through the Lord's supper
- to regularly participate in the life of Coram Deo Baptist Church by attending weekly gatherings, and living on mission in my family, community, and job (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14)
- to steward the resources God has given me, including time, talents, spiritual gifts and finances. This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful and voluntary (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

- by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ. Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit.
- I will practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex and pornography and avoid situations that would be particularly tempting in this regard. (Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 10:8; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
- I will seek to preserve the gift of marriage and agree to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Baptist Church before pursuing divorce from my spouse (Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11)
- I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (Romans 1:28-32; 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:2-18)
- to refrain from such activities that the Scriptures would deem foolish (Romans 14:14-23)
- to take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present stumbling block to another (1 Corinthians 8:1-13)
- to submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by:
  - following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another - the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration.
  - receiving righteous and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:5-11).
  - to do the following when I sin:
    - confess my sin to God and to fellow believers.
    - repent and seek help to put my sin to death (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).
    - to submit to the Elders and other appointed leaders of the church and

diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

- to do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:
- to notify the appropriate staff member
- to seek another church with which I can

carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer.

(Adapted from The Membership Covenant of The Village Church © 2011 *The Village Church*. All rights reserved.)

**I understand, agree, and covenant with  
Coram Deo Baptist Church.**

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