



# DCC Member Covenant<sup>1</sup>

Having acknowledged our faith in Jesus Christ as our chief shepherd, Lord, and Savior, and knowing that we have been bought with His precious blood so that our lives are no longer our own, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, joyfully covenant with each other.

- We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in joyful submission to Christ, His undershepherds, and His church (Ephesians 4:1-3, 5:21; Hebrews 13:17).
- We will seek to cultivate a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and other means of grace (Psalm 105:1-2; 119:97).
- We will uphold the authority of Scripture, and its teaching, as described in our Statement of Faith<sup>2</sup> (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- We will maintain our gospel witness through regular worship, participating in the ordinances, receiving and practicing gracious correction, and walking together in love<sup>3</sup> (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:5-11, 1 Peter 5:5).
- We will, through the power of the Holy Spirit, walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved us from our sin so that we can live new lives. When we do sin, we will confess our sin to God and to one another, and seek out help in putting our sin to death (2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).
- We will rejoice with those who rejoice and seek to bear each other's burdens by participating in consistent relationships, within this church, for the purpose of discipleship (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; 2 Peter 1:3).
- We will live as ambassadors of Christ within our spheres of influence, by praying for and seeking to share the Gospel with our family and friends (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20).
- We will seek to steward the gifts and resources God has given us through regular service to others and financial giving that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary to support the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and spread of the Gospel to all nations (Proverbs. 3:9-10; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 4:1-16; 5:15-18; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- We will, should we need to leave this church for righteous reasons, notify a pastor and find another Bible-believing church where we can carry out our biblical responsibilities as a believer (Hebrews 13:17).

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.

---

<sup>1</sup> Our member covenant is a summary of the Christian life described in Scripture *and* our agreement, by God's grace, to carry out these responsibilities within the context of this church, for God's glory, our joy, and the good of others.

<sup>2</sup> The Elder Affirmations further guide the teaching ministry of the church.

<sup>3</sup> The practicalities of DCC's membership, leadership, and organizational processes are outlined in our Constitution.

## MEMBER COVENANT GLOSSARY

The following definitions and examples illustrate what the member covenant looks like in our shared life together and keep our member covenant above clear and concise.

**Ambassadors** - As citizens of God's Kingdom, we are sent into the world as representatives to declare the gospel, appealing to all people that they would be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Being ambassadors reminds us that the message, authority, and results are God's, not ours, and our role is faithfulness to our task of proclaiming his message of salvation.

**Authority of Scripture** - Scripture as our authority means that it is our final arbiter in every matter to which it speaks. We uphold the authority of Scripture by allowing it to give shape to our lives and beliefs, individually and collectively. We commit ourselves to continually grow in our knowledge of God's word as part of our ongoing sanctification and growth as disciples of Christ.

**Confession** - Confession of sin is a regular practice of the Christian life, whereby we acknowledge before God and others our transgression against God's moral commands, asking for and receiving fresh grace. When we confess to one another, we are able to remind each other of God's promise of forgiveness in Christ. (Matthew 6:12; James 5:16; 1 John 1:5-10).

We should confess all of our sins to God as often as we are aware of them. If we sin against others, we are to confess and seek forgiveness from God and those we've sinned against (Matthew 5:24). When we find ourselves in patterns of sin (private or public), it can be appropriate to confess to a brother or sister, to bring sin into the light and seek help in putting sin to death. When hearing a confession of sin, we commit to our "no flinch" policy, which recognizes our own sinfulness, treats sin seriously without adding condemnation, and offers grace to one another.

**Correction** - Gracious and loving correction always seeks the flourishing of the individual being corrected and the community around them. Biblical correction, admonishment, exhortation, and encouragement are all centered on God's moral commands in Scripture, not personal preferences. Jesus gives us the process of correction in Matthew 18:15-20, sometimes referred to as church discipline. Following this is the parable of the unforgiving servant, which teaches the corollary practice of forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35).

While we want to fight against all sin, we expect that there will still be sin in our midst as we remain in the flesh. And as such, we want to be ready to deal with sin biblically, practicing confession and forgiveness as often as necessary. Formal church discipline for sin that is ongoing, unrepentant, significant, and public will proceed according to Matthew 18:15-20 as outlined in the DCC Constitution, with the same goal of restoration and flourishing of the individual and church.

**Covenant** - a mutual agreement between multiple parties. Our member covenant is our mutual agreement as adopted children of God to carry out these responsibilities as a summary of the Christian life described in Scripture, by God's grace, within the context of this church, for God's glory, our joy, and the good of others.

A covenant is not a contract or legally binding document but, more substantially, a commitment we freely make with one another before the Lord. While we do not expect ourselves or others to live out this covenant perfectly, we do commit ourselves and expect each other to strive to uphold this covenant faithfully, as we do with all of our other commitments (James 5:12). Neglect or abuse of the covenant, as a summary of the Christian life, is a basis for interpersonal correction, and if prolonged and unrepentant, the basis for church discipline as outlined in our church constitution.

**Holiness** - To be holy is to be set apart; to pursue holiness is to seek to live in obedience to all of God's commands.

Under the Lordship of Christ, through the power of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, believers should strive to "put off" sin and to "put on" righteousness through obedience (Colossians 3:1-17). A full exposition of this obedience is well beyond the scope of this glossary and is the source of substantial literature. The following examples are particularly salient for our context:

- **Sexuality** - Christians are called to practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual, monogamous, marriage by abstaining from sexually immoral practices such as cohabitation, masturbation, pornography, adultery, homosexuality, transgenderism, and fornication (Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 22:5; Proverbs 5; Matthew 5:27-30; Romans 13:12-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-7:16; Colossians 3:5; Hebrews 13:4).
- **Marriage** - Marriage is a God-ordained institution that involves a life-long covenant commitment between one man and one woman, which Jesus affirms, and Christians are invited, but not required, to solemnly enter (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, 25-40).
- **Divorce** - While Scripture permits divorce in rare cases (i.e., adultery and desertion by an unbelieving spouse), Christians should always first aim for reconciliation. Marriage is meant to be a living parable of the relationship between Jesus and his bride, the church, and he never gives up on his bride. Therefore, careful attention to the specific situation is needed, especially in cases of abuse, to determine the most faithful path forward in light of Scripture's teaching, which should be done with the prayerful counsel of the elders (Hosea 1:2, 2:19-20; 3:1-5; Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16; Ephesians 5:25-32).
- **Substances** - Christians are to refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible and conscience dictate (Romans 1:28-32, 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:18; James 3:3-18).
- **Foolishness** - Christians are to refrain from activities that the Scriptures deem foolish (Proverbs 17:25; Ecclesiastes 4:5; Matthew 25:1-13).
- **Matters of Conscience & Christian freedom** - Christians are to take the responsibility of Christian freedom seriously, especially actions or situations that could present a stumbling block to another (Romans 14:1-15:7, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13).

**Giving** - As members of this local family, we commit to faithful stewardship of our lives - including our time, talent, and treasure - as an act of worship to God, who has saved us by his grace. Financial giving that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary supports our shared mission and is a tangible expression of our love for God and of God's provision for us.

We aim for financial transparency and accountability as faithful stewards, which is achieved through several financial controls, including external bookkeeping and regular audits, a Financial Advisory and Compensation Team, and regular financial reports to the members of DCC.

**“Leaving this church for righteous reasons”** - Because we are covenanting to be a local family, ending or breaking our covenant is not a decision to be made lightly or flippantly. There are still occasions when parting is necessary - most often, a physical move or participation in a geographically closer church, or less often, a change in convictions on secondary matters. We should not leave this church (or any church) for reasons less than these.

Some helpful resources: [factors to consider](#),<sup>4</sup> [theological triage](#),<sup>5</sup> and [leaving well](#).<sup>6</sup>

**Means of grace** - Broadly, the means of grace are those activities that edify the believer, especially within the fellowship of the church. Narrowly defined, the means of grace are the Word, the ordinances of baptism and communion, and prayer. In other Christian traditions, the means of grace are referred to as spiritual disciplines, church practices, or marks of the body of Christ. Understanding them as means of grace conveys that they are God-centered activities, wherein God is active with us in giving us fresh grace through the “outward and ordinary” means that he himself has promised to use for the edification of the believer.

**“Notify a pastor and find another Bible-believing church”** - In light of our mutual covenant, especially the commitment of leaders and pastors to shepherd and give an account for each member (Hebrews 13:17), membership will continue until a member has found a new church to participate with regularly.

Because church membership practices vary widely, one does not need to become a member at their new church but take active steps to be known and begin fulfilling their Christian duty in that church. We have a simple formal membership resignation process that we walk through together to help ensure that there is pastoral care and a healthy transition into a new church.

**Ordinances** - the ordinances, or sacraments, are those practices that Jesus established and commanded his people to continue together until he returns. They are the practice of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, also called communion (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 22:19). These are not to be confused with the Roman Catholic sacraments, which take their definition and function in an extra-biblical manner. They are means of grace, whereby God acts to remind and assure us of his promises in Christ.

**Relationships within this church** - An intentional prioritization of purposeful relationships within our church family. This does not imply the exclusion of relationships outside the church but simply a primacy for relationships within the church.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.9marks.org/message/known-when-its-time-to-leave-a-church/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/leave-your-church/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-is-a-healthy-way-to-leave-a-church/>

**Serving** - As part of our stewardship and commitment as part of the DCC family, we commit to serving others with our time and talents, as well as our financial giving. As there are many parts to the body, there are many different ways to serve and just as many needs to enable our family life together.

**Submission** - the willing yielding to those in a sphere of authority.

**Our submission to Christ** - is total. Jesus, as God and as our redeemer, has complete authority over everything, including every aspect of our lives. (Matthew 28:18, John 1:49)

Submitting to Christ means we seek to have every aspect of our lives (our thoughts, words, and actions) in line with his commands and revealed will. Any refusal to live according to these is a sin called rebellion because of his rightful claim to authority over us.

**Our submission to his under-shepherds, the elders of DCC** - is within the sphere of the church and spiritual matters to which they are entrusted, including the teaching, direction, and care of the church (Hebrews 13:17)

Submitting to the elders can include seeking pastoral instruction, counsel, and care. It includes accepting decisions made by the elders within their responsibility for matters of the church, even where there may be disagreement. Submitting to the elders does not limit interaction, input, or disagreement in every matter, nor does it require the adoption of personal preferences or convictions in matters of conscience.

**Our submission to his church, the fellow members of DCC** - is within the sphere of the church and the spiritual matters to which we are entrusted, including the acceptance and removal of members, leaders, and the church budget. (Ephesians 5:21)

Submission to the church means accepting the vote of the members, as outlined in the church constitution, as final in every matter which is subject to the vote of the membership, independent of the personal vote on those matters. There may be times when we are not personally aligned with the result of a membership vote, but we can willingly submit to the wisdom of our membership in good conscience because the members have been given this responsibility and authority together as one body.

**Unity** - the objective outcome of being joined and brought together through faith in Christ. Our unity-amidst-diversity is seen across countless dimensions, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, language, culture, age, life stages, education, vocation, male and female, physical and mental abilities, etc. Christians will retain these God-given attributes, but they become secondary to our new shared identity in Christ, which puts God's power, wisdom, and glory on display (Ephesians 2:11-3:10; Galatians 3:28).

Maintaining our unity-amidst-diversity happens as we intentionally welcome, honor, and build relationships with members who are different from us (across many dimensions). Unity is not an expectation of uniformity nor ignorance of those characteristics which differ between us, but a celebration of what we share in Christ amidst those differences.