

New Life Church (EFCA) Membership Covenant

Preamble

Having been saved by God through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, I rejoice that I have been adopted into the family of God.¹ I acknowledge that this family is made up of all believers, everywhere,² but that I have a special relationship with the fellow members of this local church.³ Therefore, I desire to formally affirm my commitment to these brothers and sisters through this covenant.

Membership Covenant

God, in his grace, desires to bring every believer to spiritual maturity by using the members of his church as instruments for purifying and supporting one another.⁴ Therefore, in reliance on the Holy Spirit, I agree to help others and be helped by others in this family as we seek to honor God in the way we live with one another. Though I know that I will not do this perfectly, this means that I, **under the Lordship of Jesus Christ**, desire to:⁵

1. Uphold the unity of my church in the bond of peace
 - By praying for God to unify us by His Spirit⁶
 - By practicing mutual submission & rejecting critical attitudes, gossip, & selfish demands to get my own way⁷
 - By being slow to take offense, quick to forgive, and quick to seek reconciliation with other members⁸
 - By submitting to the spiritual leadership of the church⁹
2. Care for my church's health through acts of love
 - By praying for God to meet each other's needs¹⁰
 - By rejoicing at each other's happiness and sharing each other's sorrows¹¹
 - By sacrificially giving to support this church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through the world¹²
 - By giving and receiving loving challenges to destructive behaviors¹³
3. Support the testimony of my church through a lifestyle of mission
 - By praying for God to advance His kingdom in this world¹⁴
 - By using the gifts God has given me to build up the Body of Christ¹⁵
 - By demonstrating the love of God to those outside of the church through my words and deeds¹⁶
 - By **striving to lead** a holy lifestyle that demonstrates the reality of who I am in Christ and accepting rebuke when my actions contradict the gospel¹⁷

Name: _____

Date: _____

¹ Rom 8:14-17, Gal 4:1-7

² The universal nature of the church can be seen in Eph 1:22-23, Col 1:18, and Acts 9:31.

³ This is supported by the fact that the NT epistles were written to specific local churches with the expectation that obedience to the teaching would primarily be demonstrated towards the brothers and sisters in Christ in those particular local churches. Of course, this does not mean that the universal church is to be ignored (Rom 15:26).

⁴ Sanctification is ultimately God's work (1 Thes 5:23-24). However, God's desire to use the members of the local church to as a means for bringing each other to spiritual maturity is shown by the numerous "one another" passages in the NT; e.g. Gal 6:2 – "Bear one another's burdens," Col. 3:16 – "admonishing one another in all wisdom," 1 Thes 5:11 – "encourage one another and build one another up," Heb 10:24 – "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works."

⁵ This is not a declaration that we will try our best to live up to a standard of performance. It is a declaration that we will try our best to rely on the Holy Spirit to bear His fruit in our lives (Gal 5:16-26). Thus, reliance on the Holy Spirit through faith on the basis of the finished work of Christ is the essential commitment, for apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).

⁶ John 17:20-23

⁷ Eph 5:21, Eph 4:29, Phil 2:3-7

⁸ James 1:19, Eph 4:32, Matt 5:23-24

⁹ Heb 13:17, 1 Cor 11:1

¹⁰ Phil 4:19, 2 Tim 1:3

¹¹ Rom 12:15, 1 Cor 12:26, Heb 13:3

¹² 2 Cor 8:1-6, 2 Thes 2:9, Matt 28:19-20. This is not limited to financial support, but also includes the giving of your time & talents.

¹³ Gal 6:1-2; Matt 18:15-17

¹⁴ Acts 4:24-31, Luke 10:2

¹⁵ Eph 4:11-12, 1 Cor 12

¹⁶ Gal 6:10, Matt 25:31-46

¹⁷ Phil 1:27, Gal 2:11-14