



REDEMPTION

COVENANT OWNERSHIP MANUAL

Redemption Church exists "to connect people to Jesus for life change."

Membership at Redemption Church

Membership at Redemption Church is Covenant Ownership. Why is membership called something different? We desired to call Redemption Church members "owners" (*One who carries out the purposes of God for the glory of God*) because it communicates more clearly what we desire to be true of our members. We do

An **OWNER** is one who carries out the purposes of God for the glory of God.

not view membership as being at the country club where you pay a fee to be served, but we view it as having an *active role* in seeing the mission of "connecting people to Jesus for life change" move forward. We view membership not as, "come and see" what we are

doing but, "come and die" (give your life) to advance the Gospel!

Why does Covenant Ownership matter?

INTRODUCTION

Here at Redemption Church we love meaningful church membership. We love membership because we love the local church. We love the church because Jesus loves the church. We will likely have a different type of membership process than you have probably experienced before and it is because ***we want to get to know you so we can shepherd you as best we can.*** We want you to know that you are more than just a number or name on a list. When you join as a member we are welcoming you into a family, and we take that very seriously. We want you to feel that in a tangible way, and not feel like you are just being shoved through a system.

Unfortunately, in our evangelical culture, membership is often reduced to checking a box on a card if it is even practiced at all. We think that's unhelpful so ***we want to communicate and cultivate membership that actually means something.***

What is church membership and what will it mean at Redemption Church?

We desire to share four primary reasons why church membership matters.

1. The Biblical Basis for Membership

The Scriptures are the authority of our church along with Jesus being the center of our church. We imagine when you hear the word membership, images of a country club or Costco come to mind. You might think of a special card or privileges members receive because of the dues they pay. This is not at all the vision for Biblical membership to a local church. So then, what is the Biblical basis for church membership?

Membership is not "come and see" but "come and die" to **ADVANCE THE GOSPEL!**

Church membership is all about a church taking responsibility for you and you taking responsibility for a church.

It is a dynamic relationship, not one sided or static. ***Membership carries with it a connotation of active participation.*** It is a family. That is why Christians have called each other "brother" and "sister" since Christianity was born. You won't see that happen at Costco!

Jonathan Leeman uses this definition: "*Church membership is a formal relationship between a church and a Christian characterized by the church's affirmation and oversight of a Christian's discipleship and the Christian's submission to living out his or her discipleship in the care of the church.*"

We run into people sometimes who are struggling with or even combative towards local church membership and their primary argument is that "there is no membership in the Bible"! What they mean by that is that the word "membership" in regards to a local church is not found in the Bible and that is true. We can not give you a greek

word or verse to prove membership is valid. **The word membership is not found in the Bible, but we believe it is implied. The position we take is that membership is a church structure that is Biblically faithful, and culturally necessary.**

*We believe that **membership** is a church structure that is **Biblically faithful**, and **culturally necessary**.*

That is the first reason we believe membership matters. We believe there is overwhelming evidence for the principles of membership all through the New Testament and we will get to some specific examples shortly.

Membership is a strikingly counter-cultural concept and structure that we believe is vital to the health of the church. **It is necessary because the culture we live in hates authority, is commitment averse, and is radically individualistic to the core, especially to the things of God.**

Here is what might be a shocking statement for some of you. **There simply is no category for believers in the New Testament who were not meaningfully engaged in the life of a local body. There was no such thing as a Christian who was not a member of a local church.**

That is why the writers of the New Testament wrote letters to specific churches. That does not mean they went through a nine week class, but it does mean there was a deep, covenantal understanding of what it meant to be a part of a local church. Let us give you an example:

Acts 5 tells us this fascinating story of Ananias and Sapphira, who were killed by the power of God because they tried to swindle Him, and Acts 5:13 tells us no non-Christians “dared join them [the church], but the people held them in high esteem.” The Greek word for join here has **strong connotations of commitment**. It is meant to communicate the concept of cleaving to something, sticking to it like glue. The same word is used to speak of sexual relationships and joining to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:16-17).

The people knew that to “join” the church was a big deal, with a big commitment. It would change their life. **We live in a culture that hates authority but needs authority, and hates commitment but needs commitment, and rages against authentic community but needs authentic community. We are living in a culture that NEEDS membership.** We believe it is what will serve you best. We believe it is biblically how God intended us to live.

Other Biblical evidence for membership includes:

- A numerical record was kept of the church (Acts 2:37-47)
- Records were kept of widows for their care and protection (I Timothy 5:3-16)
- Deacons were chosen by the body of members (Acts 6:1-6)
- There was an awareness of who was a church member (List in Romans 16:1-16)
- Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us that some were falling away from the faith due to a lack of commitment
- * Membership in a local body is the way in which you embody and experience Biblical images for the Church like Temple, Body, Family, Flock, etc. *(For instance, to build something like a Temple, it requires that you know what the parts are. Know each of the stones, so to speak)*

Not only do we see from Scripture a Biblical basis for church membership, but we also see that membership provides structure and accountability for the Christian life.

2. Provides Structure and Accountability for the Christian Life

Membership puts our claim to love and follow Jesus in a real life setting where spiritual authority can be exercised

over us to correct us when we stray, and to encourage us when we are broken. Because of the covenant we are united by, other believers now have the ability to speak into our lives in a way that keeps us accountable and pushes us towards Jesus. ***This is vital because we all tend to drift from faith in Jesus and need the body of Christ to remind us of the truths of the gospel and help us live out its endless applications.*** It provides accountability for us.

As we strive together to live out the gospel through the Holy Spirit, may each member be eagerly and continually:

a) Working to preserve unity

Another way to think about it is the difference between a party and a family. If something weird or uncomfortable happens at a party, you can just leave and never hang out

"Unity is gained slowly and lost quickly, therefore it must be worked for continually."

with those people again. And unfortunately, that is how a lot of people view the Church. But ***in a family, if something weird or hard or frustrating happens, you are forced to work through it together*** – to dialogue, to repent, to love each other.

That is what we want for Redemption Church. May we never view the church as a party, but as a family.

b) Giving sacrificially of our time, energy, gifts, and money

That you would faithfully steward the resources God has given you, including your time, your talents, your spiritual gift(s) and your finances. This would include regular financial giving, regular service and regular participation in church life that is sacrificial, cheerful and voluntary (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11). This encourages each of us to prioritize and use our limited time and resources to build up the body of believers.

c) Living on mission in Biblical community

We can't engage in God's mission for the world alone. We need each other as we seek to bring the Gospel to those in our spheres of influence. It's a communal mission we've been called to.

This is the second reason membership matters, it provides structure and accountability for the Christian life, while we work together to preserve unity, give sacrificially and live missionally in Biblical community.

3. Gospel Hospitality

Membership also provides the boundaries for us to practice Gospel hospitality as a family. What we mean by this is that it is impossible to be hospitable without boundaries. You cannot invite someone into your home for dinner if you do not have a home. What membership does is provide the markers and identification for the family that we are welcoming people into at Redemption Church.

If you have ever entertained any guests in your home you probably take their coat, ask if they would like a drink and give them the best seat in the house. They are your guests! Guests have no ownership of your home, no sense of responsibility, no intimate knowledge of the goings on in your home. It is simply a place they are enjoying as guests.

Now this is where the illustration breaks down because the point is not to make anyone feel guilty or awkward for being a guest because we are really glad you are here and we were all guests at one point. But what we are saying is, the fact that you are attending Redemption Church is

"Owners model for everyone else what living in Christian community looks like."

telling us you probably do not have a church family. We would love to: (1) invite you into our "home" and "family" of membership, or (2) help you find another place that you can call home, or (3) encourage you to stop playing at

our house and go back to your true church home because they need you!

When we look at our members we see the people that have covenanted together to serve, love, and engage

*When we **look at our members** we see the people that have **covenanted together** to serve, love and engage our congregation and city by **pursuing the mission** of connecting people to Jesus for life change"*

our congregation and city by pursuing the mission of connecting people to Jesus for life change. This means that they are our missionaries. They go out of their way to be hospitable to attenders like you, to park farther away, to serve more, to sit in the bad seats, to give more, to truly own the vision, mission, and life of the church in such a way that they are

setting the pace for the rest of the congregation. **Owners (members) model for everyone else what living in Christian community looks like.**

Ownership (Membership) should make a church MORE hospitable, not exclusive or cliquish.

4. Helps Christian Leaders Lead

Lastly, we believe membership matters because it helps Christian leaders lead more effectively.

a) Lets leaders know the sheep they are specifically responsible/accountable for (Heb. 13:17, Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:2 – Flock language)

This helps our elders prioritize their time. **Our members get priority in focused care.** This does not mean we don't care about you if you are not a member, but if you had a neighbor ask you to do something and your wife ask you to do something, you are going to serve your wife first because that is who you are accountable to

and in a covenant relationship with.

b) Lets you know whose spiritual authority you are specifically under (in submission to) – Who do you listen to on sticky issues?

c) We are not a congregational led church. What this means is we do not vote on the color of the carpet or anything for that matter. This frees our elders from having to clear every decision with a majority vote, and frees you to do the work of the ministry instead of being stuck in member's meetings all the time, so that the kingdom of God can advance in our city!

d) We are an elder directed, staff led and member informed church, which means our elders are not just making rogue decisions.

They actively seek out and take into account feedback from our members and staff, before moving forward with large plans. If there is a conflict or disagreement or concerns raised, those things are going to be heard very differently by a member raising them as opposed to someone who is not fully invested in our mission.

Redemption Church is an elder directed, staff led and member informed church.

In addition to these four reasons, here is one that is maybe less academic: Membership gives us an opportunity to commit ourselves to other people, despite their junk. This means you can look someone in the eye and say *"Because of the sacrifice of Jesus on my behalf, my life is YOURS. I'm with you, I'm in your corner, for the sake of God's glory and the good of our city, despite our preferences or differences."*

What we all truly want is this authentic community, without the baggage that comes with it, so that we together may exalt the work of Jesus in our own lives, in our families and in our community.

Redemption Church Covenant Ownership 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 the presence of the Lord. **The primary purpose of this covenant is to serve as a teaching document with three functions:**

1. To clarify the biblical obligations and expectations for both the elders of Redemption Church and the individual members of Redemption Church body.
2. To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for Redemption Church.
3. To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

Each of these functions is in accordance with the document's overall purpose to provide an accessible explanation of the Scriptures in hopes that Redemption Church would grow in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

Redemption Church Covenant Ownership Manual is comprised of a section on the Church, the nature of covenants, the Statement of Basic Beliefs, the Statement of Theological Distinctive's, the obligations of Redemption Church elders to the Redemption Church body and the obligations of members to the Redemption Church body.

What is the Church?

The church exists for the display of the glory of God because all things exist for His glory. Those of us who trust in and follow Jesus are caught up in something much bigger than ourselves. We have graciously been invited into God's redemptive purposes in the world. Since the beginning, God has been creating and calling forth His people for the display of His glory in a grand narrative of redemption and reconciliation. Though creation now suffers the curse of Genesis 3, the gospel is the means by which the world is being made right. The gospel also carries with it the promise of ultimate

renewal, a restoration even more glorious than Eden, and thus believers eagerly anticipate the return of Christ. The Church universal (i.e., all believers, everywhere) is the means by which God is fulfilling His purposes in the world (2 Cor. 5:17-20). ***The Church universal is being used to write God's beautiful and dramatic story of redemption and reconciliation.*** In light of this reality, the opportunity to join a local church body (i.e., a particular group of believers in a particular locale) is much more than a commitment to consistent attendance or active involvement in community. ***It is also a sacred call to be involved in the redemptive work of our sovereign God to push back the darkness of a fallen world through the power of the Holy Spirit with the light of His Son, Jesus Christ.***

*Since the beginning, God has been **creating and calling** forth His people for the **display of His glory** in a grand narrative of **redemption and reconciliation.***

The church is the gathering of the redeemed, the household of God (Eph. 2:19), the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:2,9) and the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-31). First Corinthians 12 speaks of many members within the same body. Just as a human body relies upon mutual dependence of individual members for proper functioning, so the body of Christ requires sacrificial and responsible service by its individual members. As the Scriptures say, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Cor. 12:21). Likewise, a member of the church cannot say to another member that he or she is unnecessary. We all have gifts that differ according to the gracious provision of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:3-8). Contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other.

Membership at Redemption Church is participation in a family, a microcosm of the universal household of God. All members are united to Christ and thus to each other.

Unity within the church is expressed in a love for God and a love for others, both those within the family and those who are not. Because of the identification of Christ with His Church, Christians are expected to display His gospel in a manner which is worthy of Him (Eph.4:1).

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.”* Within the

*A covenant is a **written agreement** or **promise** usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the **performance of some action.***

Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants, some between God and man (Gen. 6, 9, 15; Ezek. 20; Hos. 2; Jer. 31; Matt. 26), while others are solely between men (1 Sam. 18; 2 Sam. 5).

In some covenants, one party binds his or herself to fulfill the obligations of both sides of the

agreement. In others, the parties are reciprocally bound to adhere to the obligations. While God's covenant with the Church universal is an example of the former, the local church covenant represents the latter. If at any time one of the parties of this church covenant continues in a state of unfaithfulness to its provisions, the other is released from certain obligations.

The covenant of Redemption Church contains many conditions that are merely general Christian obligations. For example, all Christians, whether members of Redemption Church or elsewhere, are required to submit to the Scriptures, pursue holiness, steward resources, etc. Such requirements are universal obligations for the Christ-follower, regardless of any failure on the part of local church to live up to her covenant obligations. If at any time an individual member feels as though the corporate church 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 leadership of the church. If the church 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 to the authority of God's Word. However, not all issues or concerns on the part of the member are necessarily sin issues that require repentance on the part of the Elder board. For instance, some concerns may ultimately be a disagreement on the vision, mission, methods or style of Redemption Church. In this scenario we would encourage unity and moving forward in submission to the elder board. In addition, certain circumstances may provide sufficient and righteous grounds to transfer membership elsewhere.

While focusing primarily in language on the responsibilities between the individual parties, the corporate church body, her elders and her individual members, the covenant is first and foremost an acknowledgement of general Christian obligations and an agreement to enter into those duties for God's glory and the good of the body and bride of His Son.

Statement of Basic Beliefs

The gospel is the hope of the world. As we read the Scriptures, we see the overarching themes of God's providence, power and provision to reconcile mankind and the created world to Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ. In light of this, we aim to be explicitly gospel-centered in all that we preach, teach and practice.

1. THE TRIUNE GOD

We believe in the only true God (John 17:3), eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). These three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same glory, confidence and obedience (Mark 12:29; John

1:1-4; Matthew 29:19-20; Acts 4:3-4). He created all things (Revelation 4:11) and upholds all things by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). He is a God of truth and without iniquity, He is just and right (Deut. 32:4) and He shall judge the world (Psalm 9:8).

2. GOD THE FATHER

We believe God the Father created all things in six literal days for His glory according to His own will (Revelation 4:11), through His Son, Jesus Christ. He upholds all things by the Word of His power and grace, exercising sovereign headship over all creation, providence, and redemption (Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3). His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love Him and, in His unfathomable grace, gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. He made all things for the praise of His glory and intends for man, in particular, to live in fellowship with Himself.

3. GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, moved by love in accordance with the will of the Father, took on human flesh (John 1:1, 14, 18). Conceived through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the virgin Mary. He, being fully God and fully man (John 14:8-9), lived a sinless life and sacrificially shed His blood and died on a cross, in our place, accomplishing redemption for all who place their faith in Him. We believe in the resurrection of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. He arose visibly and bodily from the dead three days after His death on the cross and then after appearing to many, He ascended into heaven, where, at the Father's right hand, He is now Head of His Body the Church. Jesus is the only Savior and Mediator between God and man, our High Priest and Advocate, and will return to earth in power and glory to consummate His redemptive mission (1 Timothy 3:16; Acts 1:3; Acts 1:9; Hebrews 7:25-26; I Corinthians 15:1-34).

4. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ during this age. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He draws the unredeemed to repentance and faith, and at salvation imparts new spiritual life to the believer, bringing that person into union with Christ and the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit sanctifies, seals, fills, guides, instructs, comforts, equips, empowers, permanently indwells at salvation, and bestows spiritual gifts to the believer for Christ-like living and service (John 16:8; 13:15; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; 12:4-8; I Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-5, 11-13, 19; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

5. SCRIPTURES

We believe the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament are verbally inspired by God and inerrant in their original writings. We believe the 66 books of the Old Testament and the New Testament are God's complete and sufficient revelation and therefore carry God's authority for the total well-being of mankind (Psalm 119:97-104; Psalm 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-16; II Peter 1:20-21).

6. MAN

We believe man – both male and female – was created in God's image in innocence under the law of his Maker but, by voluntarily transgressing, fell from his sinless and happy state. Consequently, all mankind is sinful. All people are sinners not only by inheritance, but by their own choice and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse. We believe that without exception every man and every woman is totally depraved and needs a Savior (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 1:18, Romans 1:32; Romans 5:1-2).

7. SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as the substitutionary

atonement in our place, and that salvation is found in none other than Jesus Christ. Before Creation, God chose those who would be saved and granted this unearned grace solely based on His sovereign good pleasure. Jesus Christ's death on the cross was the sole and complete payment for sins, fully satisfying God's righteous wrath, for each person that turns from sin in repentance and places their faith in Christ alone by grace alone. At salvation each person is made a new creation by the Holy Spirit, declared righteous before God, and secured as an adopted child of God forever. Genuine faith continues in obedience and love for Jesus Christ with a life eager to glorify God and persevere to the end (Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

8. CHURCH

Upon placing one's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, a believer becomes part of His body, which is the church. There is one church universal, composed of all those throughout the world who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scriptures command believers to gather in order to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances (baptism and communion), fellowship, service to the body through the development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world in fulfillment of the command of Christ to make disciples of all believers (Ephesians 5:23; Romans 12:1; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Matthew 28:18-20).

Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church – under the oversight of a plurality of biblically qualified elders and other supportive leadership (Titus 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-16). The church's members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ (Ephesians 4:16).

9. MISSIONS

Realizing that the cause of Christ extends beyond any one local fellowship, we commit ourselves to an ongoing ministry of extending the call of Christ to make disciples

in our own community and also around the world (Matthew 28:19-20). We believe the primary focus and priority of this call is centered on efforts that establish, strengthen, and reproduce biblically-based churches, which will then plant churches that plant churches for future generations and God's glory.

10. HEAVEN, HELL, AND THE RETURN OF CHRIST

We believe in and expectantly await the glorious, visible, personal, premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ. His return has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost. The saved are raised to eternal, conscious bliss in heaven (Matthew 25:34; John 14:2; 2; Corinthians 5:1; Revelation 2:7), and the lost are raised to eternal torment in hell, in conscious separation from God, paying the penalty for their sinful rebellion against God. (Matthew 8:11; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 13:49-50; Mark 9:47-48; Luke 12:5; Revelation 21:8).

Statement of Theological Distinctive's

While the doctrines expressed in the Statement of Basic Beliefs are recognized to be universal and primary within the Church, there are a number of secondary beliefs that we are passionate to proclaim. Not all Christians hold these beliefs, but they are nonetheless important and true as we understand the Scriptures. Complete agreement (*) is not required for the sake of membership, but it should be known that we will preach, teach and counsel in accordance with these convictions.

Please reference and read our theological distinctive's on our website at redemptionchurchmi.com.

* All members **must** fully stand in agreement with Redemption's Church's view on marriage, gender and sexuality.

We ask that you understand the importance of submission to church leadership, that you will be diligent to preserve unity and peace, that you will adhere to the Statement of Basic Beliefs, and that you will not be divisive over the theological distinctive's.

The Elders Commitment to Redemption Church Members

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members. The following is a rather extensive overview of the requirements for elders as spelled out within the Scriptures.

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 Scriptures (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 church resources** to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following of 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; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- To **provide teaching and counsel** from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).
- To **equip the members** of the church for the work of 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, for the good (repentance and restoration) of the one disciplined and for the health of the church as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20). We believe God's Word directs the elders to carry out church discipline for covenant owners who are unrepentant about their sin. The primary goal of church discipline is to restore a covenant owner back into a healthy relationship with the church body. We believe that church discipline is a patient and gracious process that is carried out over an extended season of time.

- To **set an example** and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership as stated below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

A Members Intention and Desire at Redemption Church

As those who have experienced the grace of a life changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this reality as "living by the Spirit" (Rom. 8). The requirements of the Covenant Ownership are in no way intended as an addition to the biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, this document functions primarily as an accessible yet non-exhaustive explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces.

The Elders of Redemption Church believe it should be the *intention and desire* of each owner to participate in these things...

- To **submit to the scriptures** as the final authority on all issues (Psalm 119; 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 (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).

- To understand and **share my "Redemption Story"** with those in my sphere of influence.

- To **follow the command and example of Jesus** by participating in the **two ordinances** (baptism and communion) prescribed to His Church:

1. By being **baptized** (immersion) after my conversion. *We believe and practice believers baptism at Redemption Church (Matthew 28). If I have not been baptized by immersion, I will prayerfully consider the example of Jesus and the command given by Jesus to carry out baptism as an act of obedience.*

2. By regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through **communion**.

- To **regularly participate** in the life of Redemption Church by attending weekly services, engaging in an E3 Group (small group) and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).

- To **faithfully 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).

- To **walk**, by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, **in holiness** in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3). Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Holy Spirit. Below are a few examples of actions addressed in the Scriptures:

- I will practice complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Complete chastity and fidelity means, among other things, that regardless of my marital status, I will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, homosexuality, premarital sex and pornography (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 first walk through the steps of biblical reconciliation at Redemption Church before pursuing divorce from my spouse. *(Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; for the role of the church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for the resolution of legal matters within the assembly of the church in 1 Corinthians 6).*

- 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 3:3-18).

- 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 a 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 (Eph 4:1-3; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:5).

- To **do the following should I leave the church for righteous reasons:**

- To notify one of the Redemption Church Elders
- To seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer.

We understand that your season or circumstance of life and/or biblical interpretation may bring up questions you have regarding the intentions and desires of an owner here at Redemption. We welcome that and look forward to getting to know you personally in the membership interview process. It's in this interview setting that we would love to discuss and answer any questions you may have regarding these ownership steps and care for you as you seek to pursue what God's Word teaches.

Renewable Church Membership

We will practice renewable church membership every year at Redemption Church. We desire to make sure each member is committed to the mission of Redemption as well as being committed to our core values. We also want to use this yearly renewal as a time to hear how we can best serve you and your family over the upcoming year. We will communicate with you each year regarding the renewing of your membership at Redemption Church.

Covenant Ownership Process

1. **Read the Redemption Church Covenant Ownership Manual & Fill out Application.** *Please contact us at info@redemptionchurchmi.com when you are ready for your membership interview.*
2. **Watch or listen to the 3 part "Own the Mission" series** through the church APP or on the sermons page of our website.
3. **Go through the Covenant Ownership Interview**
 - A. This is designed for us to get to know you.
 - B. This is designed for us to see how we can best care for you and serve your family.
 - C. This is designed to make sure you know how to share the Gospel.
4. **At the next Elder meeting your application will be processed.**



REDEMPTION
COVENANT OWNERSHIP
MANUAL