



TRANSFORMATION

COVENANT MEMBERSHIP

MANUAL

Transformation Church exists to see lives transformed by the Gospel.

Who is Transformation Church?

Transformation Church is a Christian community committed to...

Vision: *To See Lives Transformed by the Gospel.*

Mission: *Connecting People to Jesus for Life-Change.*

Transformational Discipleship: *Encountering God, Embracing Others, and Engaging the World.*

Membership at Transformation Church

What does it mean to be a member at Transformation Church? We do 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 vision of ***"lives transformed by the Gospel"*** become a reality.

The church is many things: It's a family, it's a bride, and we believe it's also a battleship. Notice we did not say a cruise ship. A battleship focuses on completing the mission while cruise ships prioritize comfort and entertainment. At Transformation, God has given us the mission of ***"connecting people to Jesus for life-change."*** That is the priority of every Covenant Member. Covenant Membership at Transformation Church is about being transformed and seeing others transformed, which only happens through the Gospel of Jesus.

Why does Covenant Membership matter?

INTRODUCTION

Here at Transformation 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 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, you

are a part of a team. When you join as a member we are welcoming you into a family and we take that very seriously.

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

What is church membership and what does it mean at Transformation Church?

We desire to share three 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?***

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 consistent, 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.

Covenant 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 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 lives. ***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

Not only is there evidence in Scripture for church membership, but church membership provides the setting for Biblical Christian community.

2. Setting for Biblical Community.

Membership puts our claim to love and follow Jesus in a real life setting where we benefit from the community that we were made to be part of. We are better together and biblical church membership puts that on display.

In biblical church membership we:

a) Grow alongside others.

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.***

b) Are part of a family.

If something uncomfortable happens at a party, you can just leave and never hang out with those people again. Unfortunately, that is how a lot of people view the Church. But, ***in a family, if something hard or frustrating happens, you work through it together***

– to dialogue, to repent, to love each other. That is what we want for Transformation Church. May we never view the church as a party, but as a family.

c) Participate in something bigger than ourselves.

God has called us to take part in something special. Biblical church membership provides the setting to steward the resources God has given us, including our time, our talents, our spiritual gift(s) and our finances for the cause of Christ. 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 for something greater.

d) Live on mission.

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. God has given us a message and teammates to carry out the mission. Together, the local church is a bright Gospel light to those near and far.

This is the second reason membership matters: it provides the setting for Biblical Christian community.

3. Structure for Christian Leadership.

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)

We are a family and we desire to be a healthy one. For this to be possible, our leadership needs to know how to best lead those that God has placed under their care. It is also important for members to know whose spiritual authority they are submitting to.

b) We are not a congregational led church.

What this means is we do not vote on the color of the carpet. This frees our elders to make decisions and practice biblical servant leadership. It also frees both leaders and members to do the work of the ministry so that the kingdom of God can advance in our community!

c) We are an elder led, team served, and member informed church.

Our elders are not just making rogue decisions. They actively seek out and take into account feedback from our members before moving forward with large plans. If there is a conflict or disagreement or concerns are raised, those things are going to be heard and they will be heard very differently by a member raising them as opposed to someone who is not fully invested in our mission. Transformation will hold an annual Family Meeting to discuss how God is leading us to carry out the vision of **seeing lives transformed by the Gospel.**

Transformation Church Covenant Membership is birthed out of a love for Jesus, His church, and the desire to serve both well. **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 Transformation Church and the individual members of the Transformation Church body.
2. To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for Transformation Church.
3. To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness.

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

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being; the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. (Genesis 1, John 1, John 8:58/Exodus 3:14, John 14, Matthew 3:16-17, 2 Corinthians 2:21-22)

2. GOD THE FATHER

God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11.; 20:1; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7)

3. GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST

God the Son, Jesus Christ, moved by love in accordance with the will of the Father, took on human flesh. Conceived through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the virgin Mary. He, being fully God and fully man, 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. (John 1; John 14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Acts 1:3; Acts 1:9; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Corinthians 15:1-34)

4. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

God the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and fully divine. In all that He does, He glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ during this age. He convicts the world of sin, draws the unsaved 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; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-5, 11-13, 19; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12)

5. SCRIPTURES

The Holy Bible was written by men, divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true

and trustworthy. The Scriptures are complete, sufficient, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation. (Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

6. MAN

Man – made male and female – is the special creation of God and was created in God's image. Man was created innocent 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 every man and every woman is totally depraved and needs a Savior. (Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 1:18; 1:32; 3:23; 5:1-2)

7. SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and salvation is found in none other than Jesus Christ. 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. This is the free gift of God. 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 biblically qualified elders and other supportive leadership. The church's members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ (Titus 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-16; Ephesians 4:16).

9. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience, symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, remember the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. (Matthew 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; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12)

10. MISSION

Christ commands the church to make disciples of all Nations. We are called to make disciples in our own community and also around the world. It is the privilege of every follower of Jesus to take part in the mission of

God, through the power of The Holy Spirit, as an ambassador for Christ. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20)

11. HEAVEN, HELL, AND THE RETURN OF CHRIST

We believe in and expectantly await the glorious, visible, personal 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).

12. FAMILY

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

(Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.)

2. By regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through **The Lord's Supper**.

Statement of Intention

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 Membership 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 Transformation Church believe it should be the *intention* of each member 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 "Transformation Story"** with those in my sphere of influence.
- To **follow the command and example of Jesus** by participating in the **two ordinances** (baptism and The Lord's Supper) prescribed to His Church:
 1. By being **baptized** (immersion) after my conversion. *We believe and practice believers baptism at Transformation Church (Matthew 28).*

- To **regularly participate** in the life of Transformation Church by attending weekly services, engaging in a 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 steps of biblical reconciliation at Transformation 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 Transformation 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 of an member here at Transformation. We welcome that and look forward to getting to know you personally in the membership conversation process. It's in this 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.

The Elders Commitment to Transformation 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 an overview of the elders' commitment to the members of Transformation Church.

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 Pet 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 members 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 in the Statement of Intention. (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

Covenant Membership Process

1. **Read the Transformation Church Covenant Membership Manual.**
2. **Fill out the Transformation Church Covenant Membership application.**
3. **Go through the Covenant Membership Conversation. (With one of our elders or a member of the ministry leadership team)**
 - 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.

Your application will be processed by the Elders after the Covenant Membership Conversation is complete.

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