

## What does a Church Member commit to?

- o **I will be a Functioning Church Member.**
  - Membership means we are all necessary parts of the whole. (1 Corinthians 12-14)
  - Membership means we are different but we still work together. (1 Corinthians 12:26)
  - Membership means everything we say and do is based on a biblical foundation of love. (1 Corinthians 13)
  - Church membership is functioning membership.
    - Serving, financial giving, attending, participating.
  - Key Question: How can I best serve my church?
- o **I will be a Unifying Church Member.**
  - When church members work together, the church is stronger as a whole. (Ephesians 4:1-3)
  - Do not be a source of gossip or other negative talk. (1 Peter 3:10)
  - Unity in the church will not happen if members have unforgiving hearts. (Matthew 6:14-15)
- o **I will not let my Church be about My preferences and Desires.**
  - Church members must choose to be servants. We will never find joy in church membership when we are constantly seeking things our way. (Ephesians 3:7)
  - Church members must grow to have the mind of Christ as the Apostle Paul describes in Philippians 2:5-11.
- o **I will pray for My Church Leaders.**
  - Pray for the Pastor and other church leaders.
  - Pray for Him and his family. (1 Timothy 3:5)
  - Pray for His protection. (1 Timothy 3:2-4)
  - Pray for His physical and mental health.
- o **I will Lead My Family to Be Healthy Church Members.**
  - As a church member, I am responsible for encouraging and leading my entire family to worship together in the church.
  - As a church member, I am not merely to like my church or serve my church well. I am to fall deeply in love with my church. Christ is the bridegroom, and the church is the bride. My commitment is to love that bride with an unwavering and unconditional love.
  - As I grow more deeply in love with my church, I will do all I can in God's power to bring my family with me. We will pray for our church leaders together. We will worship together. And we will serve together.
- o **I will Treasure Church Membership as a Gift.**
  - As a follower of Christ, you have received a gift. That gift includes eternal salvation. It includes forgiveness of sins by Christ's death on the cross. It includes adoption by God the Father. It includes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And it includes becoming a part of the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:27-28)
- **Requirements for Church Membership:**
  - o Aligned with, and not teaching against **Spiritual Values**. (Refer to Page 2)
  - o Aligned with, and not teaching against **Moral Values**. (Refer to Page 3)
  - o Must profess to be a born-again believer in Jesus Christ & have been baptized into the faith.
  - o Must be willing to commit to the Membership Commitments. (Refer to Page 1)
  - o Must show evidence of being a functioning member of Element Church.
  - o Must be 12 years of age or older.

## Spiritual Values

### 1. We value FAITH

The Word of God declares that “without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6). Through faith a believer becomes aware of God and of the reality of His presence. Through faith he becomes confident of God’s mercy, a partaker of saving grace, and conscious of His favor and fellowship. Faith is a means to development. Progress in the Christian life is made through the diligent exercise of faith and the performance of those duties which belong to the life of the believer.

### 2. We value PRAYER

Christ prayed often and said that “men should always pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1, NKJV). We value the life of prayer because Jesus taught His disciples to pray (Luke 11:2-4; Matthew 6:9-13), and gave them that brief but comprehensive pattern of prayer which embodies all the elements of true petition. Prayer is not simply a Christian duty, but also the privilege of every sincere and trusting heart and an absolute necessity for sustaining the life of the soul.

### 3. We value THE WORD OF GOD

We believe that the Bible is crucial in establishing, developing, and sustaining spiritual life. Christ and the apostles and the saints of the ages by precept and example have testified to this great truth. The Bereans were of “more noble character...for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day” (Acts 17:11). “I have hidden your word in my heart,” said the Psalmist, “that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). The Bible should be studied daily, prayerfully, diligently, and systematically so that the believer may “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18), that he may become effective in Christian service, and “that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17).

### 4. We value WITNESSING

We value the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ because by its very nature it is intended for all people and designed for all nations. We value people who are not believers in Christ, so we endeavor to love them as Jesus does (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9). As believers we are called to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). Therefore, we strive to be obedient to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Furthermore, we will graciously pray for, care for, and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with anyone and everyone who does not yet believe in Christ. We will also use whatever means are pleasing to the Lord to enhance the advancement of the Gospel. Therefore, we encourage Christians to refrain from any questionable activity or practice that would injure their witness in any way.

### 5. We value WORSHIP

God is worthy of our worship; therefore, we value authentic individual and corporate worship of God. It is the privilege for all followers of Christ to participate in and to promote the worship of God corporately (Hebrews 10:24) and as a lifestyle (Romans 12:1).

### 6. We value FELLOWSHIP

We value sharing our life in Christ with other followers of Jesus Christ. The walk with Jesus in this life on earth is to be lived in community with one another. Through that sharing of the common life in Christ we gain and give strength, wisdom, Biblical perspective, comfort, encouragement, discipline, prayer support, accountability, love, and many other positive helps towards a growing walk in Christ (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:4-27).

### 7. We value OBEDIENCE

We value obedience to Christ and His Word (John 14:21; Matthew 28:19-20). We are commanded to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40). We are enabled to obey through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Out of obedience, we are willing to pursue active restoration, through loving church discipline of those who are disobedient and caught up in sin (Matthew 18; Galatians 6:2).

### 8. We value THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

The Holy Scriptures declare that a Spirit-filled believer lives by love out of a pure heart (1 Timothy 1:5). Therefore, we will be marked not only by our testimony, but also by a growing life of personal and corporate holiness as we live under the constant influence of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:15-18; Leviticus 11:45; 1 Peter 1:16).

### 9. We value SERVING OTHERS

Like our Lord Jesus, we live not to “be” served, but “to” serve any and all people (Mark 10:42-45; Galatians 6:10). The “way” we serve will be determined by God’s Word (Matthew 25:31-46; John 13:14-15) and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives.

### 10. We value THE BODY OF CHRIST

Each believer becomes part of Christ's body and receives gifts and graces for the building up of His Church to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:3-13; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11). We understand that Jesus placed great importance on unity within the body. We believe it is our responsibility to demonstrate this unity to the world through our actions as members of the body of Christ (John 17:17-23). We will therefore always "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). We will cooperate with other ministries in the body of Christ to see all people come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

#### 11. We value STEWARDSHIP

We believe that everything is owned by God (Psalm 24:1). Therefore, everything that we have has been entrusted to us by Him. He is our Master and we are His stewards (Matthew 25:14-30). We value giving to God as an act of worship, obedience, and investing in His Kingdom with our time, talent, and treasure. We believe Jesus taught clearly that tithing is our minimum financial responsibility to the Kingdom work of God (Matthew 23:23). We further believe that gambling for financial gain stands opposed to our faith in and dependence upon God to meet our needs. Therefore, our time, our talents, our treasures, the earth we inhabit, and everything else should be invested for Him in a way that brings Him honor (Genesis 1:28-29; Colossians 3:17).

#### 12. We value the LORD'S DAY

The Lord's Day has been ordained by God for rest from unnecessary labor and for the worship of God, spiritual growth, and ministry (Deuteronomy 5:12-13; Hebrews 10:25). We therefore believe that at least one day a week should be set aside for these practices. The Lord also made clear that if "emergencies" arise on that day, we are free to take care of those (Matt. 12:11-12; Mark 2:27-28).

### **MORAL VALUES**

#### 1. We value THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

We believe God is the Creator of human life; therefore, the human life is of inestimable worth and significance in all its dimensions, including the unborn, the aged, the widowed, the mentally impaired, the unattractive, the physically challenged, and every other condition in which humanness is expressed from conception to the grave. We believe that all human life should be both preserved and protected. Consequently, we are opposed to such things as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and any other act terminating life for convenience sake. (Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 139:13-16).

#### 2. We value HUMANITY

We understand that God has created all people in His image; therefore, the church respects human personality, which is inherent in every race, nation, and creed. We believe the Bible teaches there is no basis whatsoever for the belief in the superiority or inferiority of any people (Acts 17:26; Galatians 3:27-28). The church, following the example of Jesus Christ, upholds the rights and privileges of every individual as clearly defined in the Bible. The church calls on its members to commit their attitudes, their actions, and their influences in faithful witness to this fact. The church must continually examine her teaching and practices so to be certain that no violations of human rights are being committed within her fellowship or towards the world. The church must motivate, inspire, and encourage the establishing of fair practices, legislation, and law enforcement which are in harmony with the Gospel as revealed in Jesus Christ. Consequently, we are opposed to such things as prejudice or segregation based upon differences of race or national origin, as well as slavery, prostitution and the trafficking of human lives which demean the value of the human life, body and soul.

#### 3. We value MARRIAGE

We believe that the institution of marriage was intended by God to be a permanent, life-long, growing relationship between a man and a woman regardless of trials, sickness, financial difficulties or emotional stresses that may ensue.

Therefore, as pastors and churches we will:

- a. Cherish only worthy and ennobling thoughts on the subject of courtship and marriage.
- b. Practice deliberation and wisdom in every step leading up to a marriage.
- c. Counsel earnestly with each couple in preparation for marriage in the Christian home.

Since marriage is a divine covenant and the union of one man and one woman entered into mutually, it is sacred and morally binding so long as both shall live and ought not to be dissolved at will. When human failure results in placing the marriage in jeopardy, the church strongly urges the persons involved to seek counsel with their minister in order to effect reconciliation so that the marriage may be preserved. Whenever divorced persons seek marriage through the Church, ministers may solemnize such marriages only after having ascertained the circumstances through counsel with the persons involved, presenting the claims of the Gospel and the Biblical teaching on the Christian home. Ministers may, if it seems desirable, consult with fellow ministers and/or local church officials.

Consequently, we stand opposed to such things that would devalue the sanctity of marriage including homosexual unions or marriages, polygamy and divorce, except on the grounds of adultery or abandonment (Mark 10:4-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16). We stand opposed to the practice of abuse of any form in a marriage.

#### 4. We value the FAMILY

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of a person related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union of Christ and His Church, and to provide a framework for intimate companionship, a channel for sexual expression, and the means for procreation of the human race. Husband and wife are of equal worth before God because both are created in His image (Genesis 1:27) and God has no partiality among persons (Ephesians 6:9).

The general attitude of relationships within the family is one of submission (Ephesians 5:21). Wives are to submit themselves to their husband as to the Lord, and husbands are to give themselves to their wives in the same way that Christ gave Himself up in love for the church (Ephesians 5:22-25). This spirit of mutual submission should permeate the home so that none of its members insist on his or her rights but rather subject themselves to one another in love. The husband has a God-given responsibility to provide for, protect, and lead His family.

The wife has a God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the home and nurturing the children.

If a marriage is lived according to these truths, the love between husband and wife will show itself in listening to each other's viewpoints, valuing each other's gifts, wisdom, and desires, honoring one another in public and in private, and always seeking to bring benefit, not harm, to one another.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. They are to teach their children spiritual and moral values, lead them, through consistent Christ-like example with loving discipline, to faith in Jesus and to make choices based on Biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents (Ephesians 5:21-6:4).

#### 5. We value BIBLICAL HUMAN SEXUALITY

The Scriptures clearly teach that the human race possesses a God-created sexuality characterized by heterosexual expression in a monogamous Biblical marriage. Any deviation from this is sin and goes outside of God's best and blessed expression and experience of human sexuality. However, the grace of God has made provision for the forgiveness of sin, perfect healing and deliverance, and restoration of a life of personal dignity and human sexuality as set forth in the Holy Scriptures (1 Corinthians 6:11).

#### 6. We value CITIZENSHIP

We understand the God-given authority of the government under which we live. We take seriously our privileges and responsibilities under such a God-ordained human government. Therefore we obediently do the following:

- a. Pray for those in governmental leadership (1 Timothy 1:1-2).
- b. Obey the laws of the land unless they conflict with God's higher laws (Acts 4:18-19).
- c. Encourage all people to use any privilege the government allows them that will make a difference in society. This includes consistent, informed voting.
- d. Encourage people who are called by God to serve in government.

#### 7. We value THE HUMAN BODY

The Scriptures clearly teach that through God's forgiving grace the believer's body has become the temple and dwelling place of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Therefore, we believe in the proper care of the human body so that we might in good health and strength serve our God to the fullest potential. Therefore, we would urge the people of God to maintain healthy habits as well as abstain from all practices and substances that would take this "strength to serve" from the body, such as gluttony or the abuse of medically prescribed drugs.

Due to the negative influence on the human body and the devastating effects in personal lives, personal relationships and society at large, we urge followers of Christ to abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages and non-medically prescribed drugs.

#### 8. We value THE HUMAN MIND

The Scriptures teach us that our minds are to think on the positive and godly things of life (Philippians 4:8), that we are to let the mind of Christ be in us (Philippians 2:5), and that we are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). Therefore, we encourage daily reading of God's Word, engaging our minds with materials that would match the mind of Christ, and staying away from materials that would in any way undermine this transforming process (Romans 12:2).

## Statement of Faith:

**We believe...** the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God and without mistakes as originally written. It is the complete revelation of His will for salvation and the only unfailing rule of faith and practice for the Christian life. (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

**We believe...** in one God who is creator of all things. He exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, and these three are of equal dignity and power. (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1, 14, 18; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

**We believe...** in the deity of Jesus Christ as fully God and fully man; His miraculous conception; virgin birth; sinless life; substitutionary death on the cross; resurrection of His body; ascension to the right hand of God the Father; and His imminent return. (Acts 17:3; Hebrews 2:16-17; John 1:14; Isaiah 7:14; 1 Cor. 15:3-8; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 2-5; Rev. 20:11-15)

**We believe...** in the Holy Spirit as proceeding from and is one Being with the Father and the Son who: convicts the world of sin; leads men to the Gospel and into fellowship with God; He comforts, encourages, sustains, empowers, sanctifies and guides each believer into all truth. (John 15:26-27; John 14:16-17; Acts 5:3,4; John 16:8-11; John 16:7, 12-13; John 14:26)

**We believe...** that man was created BY and made FOR God; that through Adams initial disobedience man has inherited a sinful nature that leads to acts of disobedience. These acts result in spiritual death as a consequence; and that, because of this separation, man is in need of divine intervention and salvation. (Ephesians 2:1; Romans 3:10-18, 23; Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; John 3:3-7)

**We believe...** the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and that all who believe in Him are declared righteous because of His sacrificial and substitutionary death and are, therefore, in right relationship with God. (John 19:30; Hebrews 7:26-27; 9:26; 10:12)

**We believe...** in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, who indwells all believers thus enabling and empowering them to live their new life in Christ. That God is able and does fill entirely the heart of the believer who seeks the fullness of His Holy Spirit. This deeper work of grace is conditioned upon full surrender and faith. It involves both a cleansing of the Christian's heart from the inherited inclination to sin and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It results in a new power to love God with our whole heart and our neighbors as ourselves. (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1, 14, 18; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

**We believe...** that good works themselves do not save us, but are the necessary fruits of the new birth and therefore serve as evidence that we are converted just as a tree is discerned by its fruit. That the believer is secure in Christ as long as obedience and faith are maintained. That it is possible to forfeit one's salvation by falling into deliberate, unrepentant sin, and if one remains in this state, to be finally lost. However, by the grace of God and through repentance and faith, the backslider can be restored to righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 2:10; Galatians 2:16; James 2:16-17; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 10:26-31; Galatians 6:1)

**We believe...** in the sacrament of water baptism as a public declaration of faith for those who have come to know Christ and intend to follow Him. (Mark 1:9; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 John 2:3)

**We believe...** in the sacrament of communion (Lord's Supper) as directed by Christ to be done in remembrance of His sacrifice for us. That communion itself does not offer remission of sins but points us to the One who does, Jesus. We do not require membership for communion but do hold to the Scriptural teaching that one who partakes is to believe in Jesus as Savior and intend to follow Him. (Luke 22:19-22; 1 Cor. 11:23-29; Acts 2:38-42)

**We believe...** in the bodily resurrection of everyone who has lived, an everlasting blessedness and reward in Heaven for those who have received God's forgiveness, believed in and followed Christ, and an everlasting punishment in Hell for those who have rejected God's forgiveness, have not believed in and followed Christ. (John 5:22; 2 Cor. 5:8-10; Isaiah 35:8-10; Rev. 20:11-15)

## What we believe:

Here at Element Church, we follow a practice that many people believe originated from the teaching of St. Augustine: *"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity."*

All doctrinal matters are important. However, we believe Essential Doctrines are worth dividing over, and generally Non-Essentials are not.

### Essentials:

#### Jesus is Lord: (*Acts 4:12; John 1:14; Matt. 1:23*)

- We believe that Jesus is Lord, and that salvation is only given through faith in Him.

#### Salvation through Faith: (*Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 7:26-28*)

- We believe that people are saved by the grace of God, through their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot save ourselves. Saving faith requires genuine belief and repentance of sin.

#### The Holy Trinity: (*Genesis 1:1; John 1:1, 14, 18; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14*)

- We believe in one God. Though God is one, we believe the scriptures declare He exists in 3 persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. All 3 persons of the Trinity are co-equal, and co-eternal.

#### The Authority of Scripture: (*2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21*)

- We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God, without error, and the final authority of truth.

#### The after-life: (*2 Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 20:11-15*)

- We believe in a real heaven and a real hell, and real people go there for all of eternity.

#### The return of Christ: (*1 Thessalonians 4:15b-17*)

- We believe Jesus will return again for His church and to fulfill the prophecies about His victory over all evil.

### Non-Essentials:

#### The pre-destination of the individual: (*John 3:16; Romans 3:23-26; 1 Tim. 2:3-4*)

- We believe God predestines all people to be saved; that His loving wish is that all people would be saved. However, we believe God has given humanity a free-will to choose to follow, or reject salvation in Christ.

#### The security of the believer: (*Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 10:26-31; Galatians 6:1*)

- We believe that the believer is secure in Christ as long as he or she walks in obedience with Christ. We do not believe someone can flippantly "loose" their salvation. We believe intentional sin against the known will of God separates us from God. If we sin in this way, we must turn back to God in repentance.

#### The filling of the Holy Spirit: (*1 Thess. 5:23-24; Romans 8:1-4; 1 John 3:3*)

- We believe the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is Righteous Living and Perfect Love. We do not practice or promote the speaking of tongues (unknown spiritual languages) at Element Church.

#### The time of Christ's return: (*Matthew 24:36*)

- We believe Jesus is returning; however, we believe the timing of His return is unknown by anyone but God the Father.

*\* For more information, read our full statement of faith or e-mail a pastor for more clarification.*