

COLCHESTER  
Baptist Church



# Membership Covenant

Agreed by the Church Meeting held on 15th April 2010

Church Membership is a commitment between Christians in a local church. We describe it here as a Covenant because it reflects the Covenant relationship that God has with us. It is based on mutual commitment, responsibilities and promises to love, support and encourage one another and be involved in the mission of the church.

This leaflet explains what it means to be a Member of this church and needs to be read alongside our Church Constitution, which defines practical issues relating to becoming a Member and Church Meetings, as well as other issues relating to the life of the church. (Copies are available on request from the Church Office). We grow together as a body of believers as we worship with, share, pray for, support, encourage and bless one another.

## Who can be a Member?

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Anyone who is a follower of Jesus Christ can be a member of this Church. Normally this faith in Jesus would have been expressed in Believers' Baptism, but we also invite believers who have not been baptised in this way but want to express their commitment to Christ and this church to become members.

Those wishing to become a member should contact one of the Ministers or Deacons. Soon afterwards we will arrange for two people from the church (at least one of whom will normally be from the Leadership) to meet with you and talk about what membership involves. Following that meeting a recommendation will be brought to the next Church Meeting. Successful applicants will be welcomed into membership in a church worship service, normally as we share Communion.

## What does Membership involve?

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Members of the church **regularly attend worship services** and participate in other church activities unless they are physically unable to attend.

**Personal prayer and Bible study** are important activities through which we nurture our faith and deepen our relationship with God. In addition, members are encouraged to join a **House Group** and attend the **monthly prayer meetings** in order to receive and give support and encouragement to each other and support the life and ministry of the church in prayer.

It is the privilege of believers to **share together in Communion (also known as the Lord's Supper)** and as members we seek to do this together as an expression of our shared faith and received forgiveness.

God has given us all gifts, talents and abilities to use in serving him, his church and the wider community. Members seek to **use our gifts, talents and abilities** to help one another follow Jesus and to make him known. God relies on us to **share the Good News of Jesus** with our friends, family, colleagues and neighbours.

The church seeks to discern God's will and make decisions about the life and work to which he is calling us at **monthly Church Meetings**. We believe that God speaks through all of us, so it is important for members to attend these meetings if possible in order that we might follow his will most effectively.

The church relies completely on God to sustain his mission through the generosity and faithful giving of those who attend. Members are asked particularly to consider a **regular financial commitment to the church** in proportion to their personal resources and circumstances. Please speak with the Treasurer for details on how to make regular payments, (For taxpayers, if giving is Gift-Aided the value of the gift is increased significantly, currently by 28%.)

Believers in Jesus rely on God for strength to live in a manner that is worthy of him and which demonstrates to others our faith in him. We recognise that one of the ways in which he gives us this strength is

through each other. As a community of Christian Believers we seek to **show love, respect, serve, encourage and help each other and work together** to help fulfil the purpose and beliefs of the church. We can do this through sharing in prayer triplets, offering hospitality, visiting others, praying for one another and giving practical help.

## What can members expect from the church?

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**Members should pray for one another.** One of the ways in which this is encouraged is through the weekly news sheet, where special prayer needs are recorded. Members may also find it helpful to pray their way through the Church Directory, offering prayer for one another on a daily basis. In this way we are all supported in prayer.

This church is committed to **Biblical teaching**. All that we do is shaped by what we know of God, as revealed to us in the Bible, and particularly in the person of Jesus. On Sundays and on other occasions the Bible is expounded and applied to our daily lives.

The New Testament describes churches as the 'Body of Christ'. All parts of the body are equally significant and all are required for the body to function properly. When one part of the body suffers the whole body suffers, and when one part is honoured the whole body rejoices with it. Members should experience this **mutual love, support and commitment**.

We seek to offer **opportunities for members to use their God-given gifts and talents** in his service and in the service of others. We will seek to enable you to discover those talents and to enhance them through their use and to **grow in faith** as you do so.

Because we value and respect the membership covenant we **review the membership list** from time to time. This enables us to renew relationships with members who have drifted from us, to remove those who have moved to new churches, and, with pastoral sensitivity, to remove those who are no longer in a covenant relationship with us.