



Vertical

CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP

COVENANT



# Vertical

## CHURCH

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VERTICAL CHURCH EXISTS TO BRING GLORY TO GOD BY MAKING DISCIPLES, LIVING IN GOSPEL-CENTERED COMMUNITY, AND EXTENDING THE GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS.

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### WHAT IS MEMBERSHIP?

Membership at Vertical is participation in a body of believers united to Christ and thus to each other. In many ways, church membership is like being part of a family. The key difference is that unlike your physical family—in which none of us choose our parents or siblings—the church is like a family that you do choose. Thus, membership means calling a specific church ‘home’ and taking responsibility to ensure the health and growth of those in your church family. To put simply, membership means committing to take part in the life of a local church as a sign of our identity in Christ, a means by which to serve our brothers and sisters, and to unify our efforts for the sake of the Gospel.

### WHY IS MEMBERSHIP IMPORTANT?

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 Corinthians 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 (Romans 12:3-8). In Short, contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other! In addition to that, membership brings with it all the benefits of being a part of something bigger than yourself:

1. You are not ashamed to identify with Christ or His people. [Mark 8:38](#); [Matt.16:18](#)
2. You stop trying to be a “lone ranger” Christian. [1 Cor.12:14-20](#); [Rom. 12:4-5](#); [Heb. 13:17](#)
3. You openly demonstrate the reality of the body of Christ. [1 Cor.12:27](#); [Rom. 12:4-5](#)
4. You receive the care of, and become accountable to, spiritual leaders. [Heb.13:7,17](#); [1 Thess. 5:12-13](#)
5. You participate in a stronger, more unified effort of God’s people on mission. [1 Cor.12-4-7](#); [Acts 2:42-47](#), [6:1-7](#)
6. You encourage other believers to become committed to a local body. [Heb.10:24-25](#)

### WHO CAN BE A MEMBER ?

The most obvious (but most important) qualification is that members are followers of Jesus, i.e., people rescued by the grace of God who trust him, love him, and are given new desires to obey him. Because a church is a community of people who rejoice in the gospel and strive to live out its implications for their lives, it makes sense that membership in a church is limited to those who believe the gospel and follow Jesus because their hope is placed in him. Joining a church through membership, therefore, is neither just part of showing up, nor is it an act of duty that earns the grace of God. On the contrary, church membership is a response to the faith in Christ already present in your life, as seen in other signs of faith like baptism or joyful obedience to Jesus’ commands.



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## CONFESSION OF FAITH

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The following beliefs represent the core of central orthodox beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate these beliefs is not required, the explicit rejection of any of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership at Vertical Church.

### GOD

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are coequal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27 // Psalm 90:2 Matthew 28:19 // 1 Peter 1:2 // 2 Corinthians 13:14

### JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is coequal with the Father and Holy Spirit. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all people by death on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days demonstrating His power over sin and death and accomplishing our redemption. He ascended to Heaven where he fulfills the ministry as Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate for His people, and He will return again someday to earth to reign as King.

Matthew 1:22, 23 // Isaiah 9:6 // John 1:1-5, 14:10-30 // Hebrews 4:14-15, 7:25, 9:24 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 // Romans 1:3-4, 5:6, 8:34 // Acts 1:9-11 // 1 Timothy 6:14-16 // Titus 2:13

### THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son of God. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling, empowering, and sealing them unto the day of redemption.

Acts 1:8 // 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16-17, 12:12-13 // John 16:7-13, 14:16-17 Galatians 5:25 // Ephesians 1:13, 5:18 // Romans 8:9 // 2 Corinthians 3:6

### THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the final authority for faith and life. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without error.

2 Timothy 3:16, 1:13 // 2 Peter 1:20-21 // Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6 Proverbs 30:5 // Matthew 5:18 // John 16:12-13

### MAN

People are made in the image of God. People are the supreme object of God's creation, made by Him and for Him. But through Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. All of us are now marred by sin and utterly incapable of returning to God apart from a work of grace. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ alone.

Genesis 1:26-27 // Psalm 8:3-6 // Romans 3:11-23, 5:12,18, 8:8 // Isaiah 59:1-2 // Ephesians 2:1-3, 12 Colossians 1:21 // Philippians 3:18 // James 4:4 // John 8:34 // Titus 3:3 // 2 Timothy 2:26

## SALVATION

Salvation is God's free gift to us made possible through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can never make up for our sin by self improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ and His work alone can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever.

Romans 6:23 // Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10 // John 1:12-13, 3:16, 6:37-40, 10:27-30 // Titus 3:5 Galatians 3:26 // Romans 5:1, 8:1, 31-39, 10:9-10 // 1 Peter 1:18-21 // 1 Corinthians 1:4-8 // 1 Peter 1:5

## THE CHURCH

The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will on earth. We recognize baptism and the Lord's supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church.

Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27 // 1 Corinthians 11:22-26, 12:12-14 2 Corinthians 11:2 // Acts 14:27, 18:22, 20:17 // 1 Timothy 3:1-13 // Titus 1:5-11

## THE CONSUMMATION

According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth to establish his kingdom; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new.

John 3:16 // Romans 6:23, 8:17-21 // 1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17 2 Thessalonians 2:7-10 // Hebrews 9:28 // Revelation 7:9-17, 20:11-15 // 1 Corinthians 2:7-9



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## DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES

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While the doctrines expressed in the “Confession of Faith” are those that are recognized to be universal and primary within the Church, there are a number of secondary beliefs about which the leadership of Vertical Church is passionate. Complete agreement is not required for the sake of membership, but it should be known that Vertical Church will preach, teach, and counsel in accordance with these theological convictions. All members must be committed to preserving unity and peace in regards to these secondary matters found here in Vertical Church’s doctrinal distinctives.

### 1) WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT GOSPEL CENTRALITY.

We believe the gospel is the good news of what God has graciously accomplished for sinners through the sinless life, sacrificial death, and bodily resurrection of his Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, namely our forgiveness from sin and complete justification before God; this gospel is also the foundation for our confidence in the ultimate triumph of God’s kingdom, and the consummation of his purpose for all creation in the new heavens and new earth.

This gospel is centered in Christ, is the foundation for the life of the Church, and is our only hope for eternal life; this gospel is not proclaimed if Christ's penal substitutionary death and bodily resurrection are not central to our message.

This Gospel is not only the means by which people are saved, but also the truth and power by which people are sanctified; it is the truth of the Gospel that enables us to genuinely and joyfully do what is pleasing to God and to grow in progressive conformity to the image of Christ. The salvation offered in this gospel message is received by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone; no ordinance, ritual, work, or any other activity on the part of man is required in order to be saved.

Mark 1:1 // Luke 24:46-47 // John 3:16-18 // Romans 1:16-17 // Romans 1:18-25 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:2; 15:1-4 // 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; 9:13 // Galatians 1:6-9 // Ephesians 1: 7-10 Colossians 1: 19-20 // 2 Timothy 1:8-14 // 2 Peter 3: 11-13 // Jude 3-4 // Revelation 21-22

## 2) WE ENTHUSIASTICALLY EMBRACE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD'S GRACE IN SAVING SINNERS.

We affirm that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, not on the basis of foreseen faith but unconditionally, according to his sovereign good pleasure and will.

We believe that through the work of the Holy Spirit, God will draw the elect to faith in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, graciously and effectually overcoming their stubborn resistance to the gospel so that they will most assuredly and willingly believe.

We also believe that these, the elect of God whom he gave to the Son, will persevere in belief and godly behavior and be kept secure in their salvation by grace through faith.

We believe that God's sovereignty in this salvation neither diminishes the responsibility of people to believe in Christ nor marginalizes the necessity and power of prayer and evangelism, but rather reinforces and establishes them as the ordained means by which God accomplishes his ordained ends.

John 1:12-13; 6:37-44; 10:25-30 // Acts 13:48; 16:30-31 // Romans 3-4; 8:1-17,31-39; 9:1-23; 10:8-10 Ephesians 1:4-5; 2:8-10 // Philippians 2:12-13 // Titus 3:3-7 // 1 John 1:7,9

## 3) WE RECOGNIZE AND REST UPON THE NECESSITY OF THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR ALL OF LIFE AND MINISTRY.

The Holy Spirit is fully God, equal with the Father and Son, whose primary ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ; he also convicts unbelievers of their need for Christ and imparts spiritual life through regeneration (the new birth).

The Spirit permanently indwells, graciously sanctifies, lovingly leads, and empowers all who are brought to faith in Christ so that they might live in obedience to the inerrant Scriptures.

The model for our reliance upon the Spirit and our experience of his indwelling and empowering presence is the Lord Jesus Christ himself who was filled with the Spirit and entirely dependent upon his power for the performance of miracles, the preaching of the kingdom of God, and all other dimensions of his earthly ministry

The Holy Spirit who indwelt and empowered Christ in like manner indwells and empowers us through spiritual gifts he has bestowed for the work of ministry and the building up of the body of Christ. We all recognize that they are divine provisions central to spiritual growth and effective ministry and are to be eagerly desired, faithfully developed, and lovingly exercised according to biblical guidelines.

Matthew 3:11; 12:28 // Luke 4:1, 14; 5:17; 10:21 // John 1:12-13; 3:1-15, 34; 14:12; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Acts 2:14-21; 4:29-30; 10:38 // Romans 8:9; 12:3-8 // 1 Corinthians 12:7-13; 12:28-31; 14:1-33 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 // Galatians 3:1-5 // Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18

#### **4) WE ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED BOTH TO THE FUNDAMENTAL SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EQUALITY OF MALE AND FEMALE AS WELL AS THE PRINCIPLE OF MALE HEADSHIP IN THE CHURCH AND HOME.**

Both men and women are together created in the divine image and are therefore equal before God as persons, possessing the same moral dignity and value, and have equal access to God through faith in Christ.

Men and women are together the recipients of spiritual gifts designed to empower them for ministry in the local church and beyond. Therefore, women are to be encouraged, equipped, and empowered to utilize their gifting in ministry, in service to the body of Christ, and through teaching in ways that are consistent with the Word of God.

Both husbands and wives are responsible to God for spiritual nurture and vitality in the home, but God has given to the man primary responsibility to lead his wife and family in accordance with the servant leadership and sacrificial love modeled by Jesus Christ.

The Elders/Pastors of each local church have been granted authority under the headship of Jesus Christ to provide oversight and to teach/preach the Word of God in corporate assembly for the building up of the body. The office of Elder/Pastor is restricted to men.

Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18 // Acts 18:24-26 // 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 // Galatians 3:28 Ephesians 5:22-33 // Colossians 3:18-19 // 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-7 // Titus 2:3-5 // 1 Peter 3:1-7

#### **5) WE EMBRACE A MISSIONARY UNDERSTANDING OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND ITS ROLE AS THE PRIMARY MEANS BY WHICH GOD CHOOSES TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM ON EARTH.**

The church has a clear biblical mandate to look beyond its own community to the neighborhood, the nation, and the world as a whole; thus mission is not an optional program in the church but an essential element in the identity of the church.

We are called to make Christ known through the gospel and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring his lordship to bear on every dimension of life.

The primary way we fulfill this mission is through the planting of churches that plant churches and the training of their leaders. Our aim is that Jesus Christ would be more fully formed in each person through the ministry of those churches God enables us to plant around the world.

We also believe we are responsible neither to retreat from our culture nor to conform to it, but with humility, through the Spirit and the truth of the gospel, to engage it boldly as we seek its transformation and submission to the lordship of Christ.

Isaiah 52:7 // Matthew 10:5-25; 28:18-20 // Luke 4:18-19; 24:46-47 // Acts 28:31 Romans 10:14-15 // 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 // Galatians 2:10 // Ephesians 3:10; 4:11-16 2 Timothy 4:1-5 // Hebrews 10:23-25 // 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10



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## MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

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As Christians, we are members of God's household (Eph. 2:19) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10; 4:12). Vertical Church holds its members in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the gospel to the culture. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, so that we might know him and make him known (Acts 17:26-27).

"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them." - Romans 12:3-8

Being a member of Vertical Church is really about being part of a family. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. Members who enter into a covenant with their local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, the elders and deacons are covenanted to assist members first and foremost, to love and lead, provide counsel and aid, and pray for, teach, and guide them.

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

## WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is a two-way promise that is made between two parties. Within the Scriptures, we find a number of examples of covenants, some made between God and man (Genesis 6,9,15; Ezekiel 20; Hosea 2; Jeremiah 31; Matthew 26), while others are solely between men (1 Samuel 18, 2 Samuel 5). Our covenant includes a statement of faith in Christ, a summary of core biblical doctrines, the promises of members to Vertical Church, and the promises of Vertical Church to the members. Though the covenant defines the relationship between members and the local church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to His bride, the Church (Eph.5:25).

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

I am a Christian saved solely by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ and His perfect life, substitutionary death, and physical resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life (John 3:16-18; Rom.3:23-26; Eph. 2:8-10).

I believe Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be as revealed in the Scriptures (Matt.1:20, 26:64; John 1:1-4,14; 4:25-26; 6:29; 8:58; 11:25-27;14:6-7;15:5; Col.1:15-20; Heb.1:1-3).

I continually repent of my sins, having been made a new creation in Christ (1 John 1:9; 2 Cor. 5:17).

In obedience to Scripture, I have been baptized as a public identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus in demonstration of my commitment as His disciple (Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21).

## STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

I agree with the Vertical Church Confession of Faith expressed in this membership packet. I understand that Vertical Church has certain theological convictions to which it is strongly committed and I will not be divisive over the doctrinal distinctives listed Herein, but rather strive diligently to preserve unity and peace on all secondary issues.

## COMMITMENT OF VERTICAL CHURCH TO ITS MEMBERS: WE COVENANT....

- to appoint elders according to the criteria assigned to them in the scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- to prayerfully seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
- to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple in Christ, in part by equipping you for service and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (Eph. 4:11-13; James 5:14).
- to provide teaching and counsel from Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).
- to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 1:3-7).
- to lovingly exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12).



**MY COMMITMENT TO VERTICAL CHURCH AS A MEMBERS: I COVENANT....**

- to submit to the authority of God as revealed in his Scriptures, which are the final arbiter given to mankind for all matters of faith and practice (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- to pursue my relationship with Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Eph. 5:1-21; 1 Thess. 5:12-22).
- to follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church by being baptized after my conversion and regularly remembering the person and work of Christ through communion (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Rom.6:3-6; 1 Cor. 11:24-27; Acts 2:42)
- to regularly participate in the life of Vertical Church by attending services, engaging in gospel-centered community, and lovingly serving those within and outside the church (Acts 2:42-47; Titus 3:14; Heb.10:23-25).
- to steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure, cheerfully and voluntarily (Matt 25:14-30; Rom.12:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
- to submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church, follow biblical procedures for church discipline, and diligently strive for unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:17, 1 Peter 5:5).
- to walk in holiness, by God’s grace, as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I could live a new life (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3)

**MY COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION OF VERTICAL CHURCH**

Vertical Church Mission Statement: Vertical Church exists to make disciples as we gather, equip, and send.

I have read the mission statement of Vertical Church and commit to live out this mission as a faithful follower of Jesus and a covenant member of this local body.

I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of Vertical and is an acknowledgement of my submission to the elders of the church. I accept the responsibility to meet with the leadership of Vertical Church if at any time I am no longer able to commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Vertical Church.

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE(S) \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

