



**SOUTHLAKE**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

## Membership Agreement

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The Southlake Baptist Church Membership Agreement 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 agreement is to serve as a teaching document with two functions:

- To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for Southlake Baptist Church.
- To clarify the biblical obligations and expectations for both the pastors of Southlake Baptist Church and the individual members to the Southlake Baptist Church body.

Each of these functions is in accordance with the document's overall vision to provide accessible explanation of the Scriptures in hopes that Southlake Baptist Church would grow in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ. The Southlake Baptist Church Membership Agreement is comprised of a section on the Church, a statement of basic belief, a statement of agreement, the obligations of Southlake Baptist Church pastors to the Southlake Baptist Church body, and the obligations of the members to the Southlake Baptist Church body.

### **WHAT IS THE CHURCH?**

The Church exists for the display of the glory of God because all things exist for His glory (Revelation 4:11). 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 is the means by which God is fulfilling His purposes in the world (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). The church 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 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.

The Church is the gathering of the redeemed, the household of God (Ephesians 2:19), the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2, 9), and the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of many members within the same body. Just as a human body relies upon mutual dependance 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 are different according to the grace that is given to us (Romans 12:3-8). Contrary to the beliefs of our culture, we need each other.

Membership at Southlake Baptist 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 love for God and love for others, both those within the family and those that 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 (Ephesians 4:1).

#### **STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEF**

Southlake Baptist Church affirms the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*. For a full copy of the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, visit [www.sbc.net](http://www.sbc.net).

#### **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.

#### **God the Father**

God as 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. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; 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 6:9ff.; 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.

### **God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27;17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50;14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26;5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5;Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

### **God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His

presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16;4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26;16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

## **Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

## **Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense, salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction

of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30;6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

### **The 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. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, 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.

## **The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

## **SOUTHLAKE BAPTIST IS AN ELDER-LED CHURCH**

There are various forms of church government in use today, with three models being the most common:

- The pastor-led model where the church is led by one person, usually a senior pastor.
- The congregational-led model, where the congregation, in regular business meetings, votes and decides on issues affecting the church.
- The elder-led model, where the church is led by a plurality of qualified leaders, to provide oversight and direction for the church.

Southlake Baptist Church adheres to the elder-led model for a number of reasons:

- 1) We believe it most closely follows the New Testament pattern for church leadership. Scripture throughout the Epistles contains instructions about this form of leadership.
- 2) Additionally, a plurality of elders helps protect against heresy or false teaching.

3) Also, since different elders have different gifts, a wide range of ideas and wise counsel are brought into each discussion.

The responsibilities of elders are spelled out all through scripture, including the often-used metaphor of a shepherd. The Apostle Paul exhorted the elders to “be shepherds of the church of God” (Acts 20:28), and Peter said, “be shepherds of God’s flock which is under your care” (I Peter 5:2). A study of the role of shepherds in the Bible (see Ezekiel 34 and Psalms 23) reveals a lengthy list of responsibilities which can be summed up as leading the flock, providing oversight and direction, caring for and feeding them, guarding them from going astray, protecting from savage wolves (false teachers), seeking the lost, and helping the weak.

Other responsibilities include that of directing the affairs of the church (I Tim. 5:17), determining church policy (Acts 15:22), preaching and teaching (I Tim. 5:17), praying for the sick (James 5:14), and given to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:3).

At Southlake Baptist Church, the elders, along with our pastoral staff, determine direction and vision, but the day-to-day responsibility for the actual leadership toward that direction is given to the pastoral staff, under the authority of the elders.

At Southlake Baptist Church, all elders are equal. Some elders may appear more prominent than others, but that is a function of giftedness rather than position.

The responsibility of being an elder is a very serious matter. It is God’s work that we are doing (Titus 1:7), not ours, and we will have to give an account to God for the way we lead (Hebrews 13:17).

## **BIBLICAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE SOUTHLAKE BAPTIST CHURCH PASTORS TO THE SOUTHLAKE BAPTIST CHURCH BODY**

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

### **The pastors agree...**



- To appoint pastors and elders (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 her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following the 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 the 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, the good of the one disciplined and the health of the church as a whole (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- To set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of the church membership stated below (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).

## **BIBLICAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE MEMBERS TO THE SOUTHLAKE BAPTIST CHURCH BODY**

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" (Romans 8). The requirements of this membership agreement 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.

**I agree...**

- To submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-20).
- 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 follow the command and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church:
  - By being baptized after my conversion.
  - By regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through the Lord's Supper.
- To regularly participate in the life of Southlake Baptist Church by attending weekly services, engaging in biblical community and serving those within and outside of this church (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).
- To 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).
- By God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk 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 works through the Spirit. Below are a few examples of actions addressed in 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, 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 walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Southlake Baptist 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).

- I will take seriously the responsibility of Christian freedom, especially actions or situations that could present a stumbling block to another (1 Corinthians 8:1-13).

- I will submit to the discipline of God through the 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).

- I will do the following when I sin:

- confess my sin to God and to fellow believers when I have wronged them.
- repent and seek help to put my sin to death (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).

- I will submit to the pastors and elders of the church and will be diligent to strive for unity and peace within the church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

**STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT**

I understand the importance of submission to church policy and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace in the body of which I desire to be a member. I understand the importance of my adherence to Southlake Baptist Church’s “Statement of Basic Belief” and this membership agreement.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_