

JOINING CEDAR PARK

*Membership at Cedar Park Church exists as a way to express commitment to each other as a community of faith. In membership, we commit to share our lives so that we might **follow Jesus better together**, as we seek to glorify God, love each other, and join God in restoring peace to the world.*

4 Reasons

Here are 4 different reasons to encourage you to commit to following Jesus together at Cedar Park:

A Biblical Reason

One of the main metaphors the New Testament used to describe the church is that of one *body* made up of many *members*. When a person joins his/her life to Christ he/she joins His body – the church. Becoming a member in a local church is a way of declaring and practically living out the spiritual reality that a person has become a member of Christ's church.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free... – Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church, 12:12-13 (NRSV)

A Cultural Reason

Commitment is an antidote to our society's values. In our contemporary climate few want to be committed to anything and this attitude has created a transient church culture. Membership cuts across the grain of consumerist approach to spirituality, and it helps us recognize that the church doesn't just exist to meet our own needs.

A Practical Reason

Membership defines who can be counted on. Every team must have a roster; every school an enrollment; every business a payroll. Membership identifies our church family and helps us cooperate together in realizing God's vision for our world.

A Personal Reason

The New Testament places a high priority on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. It is difficult to be accountable when you are not committed to a specific church family. Membership allows further space for mutual encouragement and discipleship.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. – Paul's letter to the Ephesian church, 4:15-16 (TNIV)

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

As human beings made in the image of God, we are created to represent His character to the world. We reflect God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as we live in peaceful relationships with God, self, others, and creation. Through the empowerment of God, and the support and accountability of Cedar Park church, I covenant to **move in the following directions**:

from **SEPARATION** → **RECONCILIATION** *in my relationship with* **GOD**

- I will seek to **trust** God with all my heart and to **worship** Him alone; acknowledging Him as the *source, center, and Lord* of my life.
- I commit to being a life-long **learner** and **practitioner** of the way of Jesus as I seek to *study* his teachings and *follow* his lifestyle.
- I will seek to grow in **intimacy** with God through practicing spiritual disciplinesⁱ that help me become increasingly *aware of* and *respond to* God's love.ⁱⁱ

from **FRAGMENTATION** → **INTEGRATION** *in my relationship with* **MYSELF**

- I commit to allowing God and others to help me see, accept, and embrace my **identity** as a **broken yet beloved child of God** who has been, is being, and will be **made new** in Christ.ⁱⁱⁱ
- I will appropriately practice **vulnerability** as I seek to be known by other safe people by revealing my sins, brokenness, strengths, and dreams.^{iv}
- I will commit to ongoing self-examination in order to identify, and seek **freedom** from addictive and destructive patterns of thought and behaviour.^v

from **ALIENATION** → **CONNECTION** in my relationship with **OTHERS**

within Cedar Park

- I commit to regularly **gathering in groups** where I can know and be known by others. This may include gathering with the larger church body on Sundays for corporate worship, and participating in a small group, mentoring relationships, accountability groups, etc.
- I will make every effort to protect and nurture the **unity** of Cedar Park church by **praying** for the church,^{vi} acting in love toward others,^{vii} and by seeking to **resolve conflicts** by following the model of Matthew 18 as outlined in Appendix I.
- I commit to **sharing** with others the resources that God has generously shared with me. This includes consistent *financial giving* in accordance with my means,^{viii} *faithful service* in alignment with my gifts,^{ix} and *participation* in our church life together that is sacrificial.^x

outside Cedar Park

- I will grow in the command to **love my neighbour** in thoughtful and tangible ways by offering hospitality, and extending relationship to those who do not follow Jesus.^{xi}
- I commit to continue learning what it means to **seek justice**, encourage the oppressed, protect the vulnerable, and to be a voice for those who are voiceless in the world.^{xii}
- I will seek to **share** the good story and love of Jesus with others through both word and action.^{xiii}

from **EXPLOITATION** → **RESTORATION** in my relationship with **CREATION**

- I commit to be a caring **steward**^{xiv} of the world that God made, loves, died for, and will make new.^{xv}
- I will increasingly embrace my **responsibility**^{xvi} to participate with God in His work of restoring peace, order, and beauty in the world, through my vocation both inside and outside the home.^{xvii}

LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT TO MEMBERS

By God's grace **the leadership** of Cedar Park commits to the above and to the following:

- We commit to live according to the criteria assigned to leaders in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).^{xviii}
- We commit to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit in collaboration with the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).^{xix}
- We commit to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27).^{xx}
- We commit to resolve conflict in a constructive and loving way, and to exercise church discipline and correction when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1).^{xxi}
- We commit to care for you, to seek your growth and flourishing as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph. 4:11-13),^{xxii} praying for you regularly (James 5:14),^{xxiii} and sharing our lives with you (1 Thess. 2:8).^{xxiv}
- We will lead in the Jesus way – by example: with servant hearts (Mark 10:42-44),^{xxv} and with humility (Phil. 2:3-7).^{xxvi}

Signature of Pastor: _____

Date: _____ (mm/dd/yy)

COMMITMENT OF MEMBERS TO CEDAR PARK

By God's grace I commit to moving towards peace in these relationships.

Signature¹: _____

Full Name Printed: _____

Date: _____ (mm/dd/yy)

¹ By agreeing to the covenant, one expresses his or her intent to *continually* commit to participating in the life of the church. Since a signature is merely a cultural form of expressing commitment, initial commitment may also be expressed verbally.

APPENDIX I

Steps in peacemaking based on Matthew 18: 15-17²

1. Meet with the person³ who has offended you and try to resolve your conflict privately. Please do not try to resolve a conflict by email or letter – use the phone if it is not possible to meet in person.
2. When a conflict cannot be resolved between the people involved, seek assistance from church leaders: first seek help from your small group leader or if you do not have a small group leader, please seek help from a pastor.
3. If your conflict is with your small group leader or a pastor, seek help from the Associate Pastor or Lead Pastor. If the conflict cannot be resolved by seeking the help of the Lead Pastor, then the Lead Pastor will recommend an elder who you can speak to.

Steps in addressing concerns regarding Cedar Park ministries or staff members.

1. Meet with the staff member or ministry leader to express your concerns. Please do not express your concerns by email or letter – use the phone if it is not possible to meet in person.
2. If you are not satisfied with the response of the staff member or ministry leader, seek assistance from the pastor who supervises your area of concern.
3. If your concern is not resolved by meeting with the supervising pastor, seek help from Lead Pastor. If your concern is not resolved by seeking the help of the Lead Pastor, then the Lead Pastor will recommend an elder⁴ who you can speak to.

Please note that the elders will not process complaints or concerns about a person or a ministry until the steps as outlined above have been followed.

² **Matt. 18:15-17** “If a brother or sister sins, go and point out the fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

³ If the offence is sexual abuse or sexual harassment and you do not feel safe speaking to the person who has harmed you, please seek guidance from a pastor in addressing the issue.

NOTES

- ⁱ These spiritual practices are meant to enhance our relationship with God, a relationship that is based on God's grace and Christ's sacrifice and not on our good works.
- ⁱⁱ **Eph. 3:18-19** I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
- ⁱⁱⁱ **Rom. 8:15-16** The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.
- ^{iv} **James 5:16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.
- Gen. 2:25** The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.
- ^v **Rom. 8:1-2** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.
- ^{vi} **Col. 4:2** Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.
- ^{vii} **Eph. 4:2-3** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
- ^{viii} **In 2 Cor. 8-9** Paul encourages the Corinthian church to give with joy, in accordance with their means, freely (as opposed to under coercion), and to meet the needs of others.
- ^{ix} **1 Cor. 12:18-20** But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.
- ^x **John 15:12-13** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.
- ^{xi} **Matt. 22:39** Love your neighbor as yourself.
- ^{xii} **Is. 1:17** Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.
- ^{xiii} **Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
- ^{xiv} **Gen. 2:15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
- ^{xv} **John 3:16** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Col. 1:15-20 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Rev. 21:5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

xvi **Gen. 1:28** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

xvii **Col. 3:17** And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

xviii **1 Tim. 3:1-13** Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:5-9 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

1 Pet. 5:1-4 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

xix **Acts 20:28** Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

1 Pet. 5:1-5 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.”

- ^{xx} **Acts 20:27** For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.
- ^{xxi} See note 7 above for **Matthew 18** reference. **Gal. 6:1** Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.
- ^{xxii} **Eph. 4:11-13** So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
- ^{xxiii} **James 5:14** Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.
- ^{xxiv} **1 Th. 2:8** so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.
- ^{xxv} **Mark 10:42-44** Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.
- ^{xxvi} **Phil. 2:3-7** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus had: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.