

## ***We do now...enter into covenant...***

*For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

*1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

### ***Goal for Church Covenant Study***

To understand and fulfill our covenant relationship with God (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit) and each other.

### ***Objectives***

As a result of participating in this Covenant Discipleship Group learning experience, we will be able to state the reasons for entering into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

### ***Covenant Emphasis for this Session***

The underlined phrase serves as the basis for this session.

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, **we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.**

### ***We enter into covenant because...***

***We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel...<sup>1</sup>***

We believe this because our God is revealed in the Scriptures to be the **covenant making** and **covenant keeping** God. This is why the two sections of our Bible are designated as the Old Testament (covenant) and the New Testament (covenant). The Old Testament is the account of the covenant that God made with Israel, and the New Testament, the covenant that God made with the church.

The first covenant was initiated with Abraham and Sarah and fulfilled in the birth of their son Isaac and grandson Jacob and his offspring who became the people of Israel. This covenant was formalized and expanded when God delivered them from slavery in Egypt. In this covenant, God identified God's self in terms of what God had done for

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<sup>1</sup> New Hampshire Declaration of Faith, Article 13, 1833, adopted by the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. 1926

them, what God would do for them, and what God expected of them. The covenant specified the terms by which they were to relate to God and to each other. The rest of the Old Testament is the story of how God and Israel related to each other on the basis of this covenant. God was faithful to God's covenant commitments. Israel found it ever difficult to be faithful to their covenant commitments. (See Genesis 12:1-4; Exodus 19:3b-6 Jeremiah 30:22; 24:7, 31:33, 32:38; Ezekiel 36:28, 37:23, 27)

The second (new) covenant was initiated by God through the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with the Church. It is this covenant that we celebrate when we share the cup when we observe the ordinance of Communion by repeating Jesus Words at the Last Supper: "This cup is the New Covenant in my Blood. (See 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 also Mark 14:22-26; Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20)

***We enter into covenant because...***

***It is the way that our God relates to God's people and calls for God's people to relate to God and each other.***

Our God relates to God's people by covenant. God makes promises that God intends to keep and commitments that God intends to fulfill. Our God calls for us to relate to God by covenant. God wants us to make promises to God and each other that we intend to keep and commitments that we intend to fulfill.

***Because we believe this we declare in the opening paragraph of our church Covenant Statement that; "we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ."***

***We enter into covenant that...***

***We may maintain a regenerate church membership (committed, informed and dedicated Christians)***

Covenant is the means by which we evidence our submission to one another as members of the church. The act of covenanting makes explicit the vows (promises, commitments, responsibilities) implied in baptism. Our covenant articulates these vows:

- The bond of our union with one another.
- Our privileges and duties in this church.
- The manner we are to abide by decisions made by the church.
- The gracious tasks we humbly assume.
- The ministries we are to strengthen each other.
- Our agreement when we move from this community.

In the lessons that follow this one, we will explore these vows in greater detail. Our hope is that we will see that the act of covenanting provides a basis for our ***unity*** as a church family, a guide for ***discipleship tasks***, and a standard for ***discipline***.