

TRIPLE TREE MINISTRIES CHURCH MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES

Section 1. Requirements for Triple Tree Ministries membership covenant

As a member of Triple Tree Ministries, I accept the Bible as the Word of God in which is revealed the way of salvation and the guide for faith and conduct. I witness to a personal experience of God's saving grace in my heart and express desire and purpose to live a holy life, apart from sin and separated unto Christ. I covenant as a member of Triple Tree Ministries to be loyal to this congregation, to consent to instruction in Bible doctrine, to support and sustain the services of the congregation by my regular attendance and prayers, to contribute to the program of the church as the Lord prospers me, and to foster a spirit of Christian fellowship and oneness within the church.

- A. Persons considered for membership shall testify to a personal experience of God's saving grace in their hearts and to confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and shall give evidence of the new life in Christ.
- B. They shall be open to the teaching of the Scripture, to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and to the counsel of the church in questions of life and practice.
- C. Applicants shall be baptized as a witness of faith and discipleship. We affirm our practice of believer's baptism in which the candidate kneels and is immersed three (3) times forward in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in humble submission to Christ and the church. Re-baptism is not required for those who have been baptized by another mode of believer's baptism subsequent to their rebirth.
- D. Applicants shall express a desire to enter into a relationship of Christian love, fellowship, and brotherhood with the members of the congregation and to cooperate with the polity of Triple Tree Ministries.
- E. Applicants shall affirm their acceptance of the foregoing through the following membership covenant:

Section 2. Reception of members

- A. The growth of the church should be the concern of each congregation and pastor.
- B. Pastors shall conduct membership classes for candidates.
- C. Candidates for church membership shall be approved by the church board. Their names shall be publicized in advance of the reception service. (Should any member of the congregation know a good reason why a candidate should not be received into church membership, the reason should be presented to the pastor or a member of the church board during the intervening period.)
- D. At or before the reception service, candidates shall give public testimony of faith in Jesus Christ, shall pledge their allegiance to God's Word, and their loyalty to the church.
- E. A member from another denomination who has a personal knowledge of God's saving grace and agrees to the covenant of church membership may be accepted into the church upon presentation of a letter from the church with which he or she has been affiliated.

Section 4. Dual membership

- A. A person in good standing in another Christian fellowship may be granted membership in Triple Tree Ministries without relinquishing former membership standing, provided he or she is in agreement with our *Manual of Doctrine and Government of Triple Tree Ministries* on the basis of the regular approach to church membership and is prepared to share proportionately in stewardship responsibilities.

Section 5. Withdrawal of membership

A member of the church may withdraw from membership by submitting a letter of withdrawal to the congregational secretary. In cases where the person is under congregational discipline at the time of request, withdrawal from membership will be strongly discouraged. If insisted upon, the fact of being under discipline will be noted in the congregational records with such a withdrawal.

ARTICLE XVIII CHRISTIAN LIFE AND PRACTICE

Section 1. The Christian and personal life

- A. Believers are called to use their resources (time, ability, finances) as faithful stewards of the Lord Jesus Christ, to resist materialism in its various expressions, and to give generously, sacrificially, and proportionately.
- B. Stewardship of life includes care for creation and the management of earth's resources for the glory of God and the good of all people.
- C. God created men and women with the capacity for sexual intimacy, which is to be expressed only within the bonds of marriage. The practices of premarital sex, extramarital sex, adultery, lesbianism, or homosexuality have no place in the life in Christ.
- D. God is honored when a Christian gives attention to the proper care and development of his or her body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The body is dishonored, and the witness of the Christian is hindered by intemperance in the use of that which is good. Any form of substance abuse (i.e., drugs, including alcohol and tobacco) is an inappropriate expression of the life in Christ.
- E. A disciplined Christian life is exemplified in things such as a gentle and quiet spirit, personal devotions, humility, and modesty.

Section 2. The Christian and home life

- A. Marriage is ordained by God as a lifelong union between husband and wife. The church bears responsibility to assist in building Christ-like relationships within the marriage. The church is called to minister to persons involved in adultery, divorce, and remarriage. When marriage vows are broken, the essential processes of repentance, forgiveness, discipline, reconciliation and restoration, inasmuch as possible, will need to be a part of personal and congregational life.
- B. Christians seek to develop a home life marked by love, understanding, and nurture. All forms of domestic violence and abuse are inconsistent with Christian living. Each member of the family should practice mutual submission as taught in Ephesians 5:21–6:4.
- C. Loving discipline of children and a cooperative spirit in the economic, social, and spiritual planning of the home are of vital importance.

Section 3. The Christian and the Church

- A. Believers should promote Christian community and fellowship in openness and concern for one another and in sharing one another's burdens. Consideration should be given for those having differing opinions. Schismatic activities should be avoided, but when conflicts do arise, Christians should seek reconciliation as outlined in Matthew 18:15–22. It is inappropriate for Christians to involve a fellow believer in litigation (I Cor.6:1).
- B. Christians accept the responsibility to cooperate with and promote the ministry of their congregations and should faithfully attend church services, actively serve by using their talents and abilities, and systematically give tithes and offerings for the ministry of the church program, both local and church-wide. Involvement in organizations that divide their loyalty to, or are in conflict with, Jesus Christ and the church should be avoided, including, but not limited to, membership in any such lodge or secret order (*Masons*).
- C. Certain historic practices in the life of our church are based on illustrations of Scriptural principles. While the mode of expression in these illustrations may not apply worldwide, the principles are valid in the life of the church. Two examples are:
 - 1. I Corinthians 11:1–16 enunciates the principles of divine/human relationships within the redeemed community. This calls for mutual respect between those who believe the prayer covering is a continuing mode of expressing this principle and those who exemplify the principle in other ways.
 - 2. The holy kiss is a symbol of the biblical principles commended by the Apostles Peter and Paul. We encourage Christians to seek ways to express this love and fellowship.

Section 4. The Christian and society

- A. Believers shall witness to their faith in Christ by word and deed. Materialism, unwholesome entertainment, and careless business practices are not consistent with the Christian witness. Occupational activities should harmonize with Scripture teaching. The practice of taking one day in seven for corporate worship and renewal is affirmed.
- B. Christians should build a positive peace witness that permeates their daily lives, and should testify against violence and war, consistently showing love and concern for all. Since the body of Christ is international, love of nation is secondary to fellowship in the body of Christ and mission to people everywhere.
- C. The Bible teaches the equality of all humanity and that Christ loves all equally. God is displeased with all forms of prejudice.
- D. The New Testament teaches the privilege and responsibility of sharing with the needs of mankind. Self-centered affluence is contrary to God's will. Christians will regularly reexamine their lifestyles in light of world poverty and New Testament principles such as those in II Corinthians 8:8–15.