

COVENANT MEMBERSHIP

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP

Covenant membership means we have officially identified with one another, have agreed to be accountable to one another, and have committed ourselves to serve and love one another under the shepherding oversight of our appointed leaders in the name of Christ.

1. The imagery and language of covenant relationships:
 - a. Family: “Bone of bone”, “flesh of flesh”.
Genesis 2:23; 2 Samuel 5:1; 19:13
 - b. Union: “One flesh”, “one man”.
Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Judges 20:11
 - c. Belonging:
 - i. A people: “I will be your God; and you will be My **people**.”
Genesis 17:7-8 (v 14); Exodus 6:7; Jeremiah 7:23
 - ii. A nation: Exodus 19:5-6
 - d. Commitment: “Forsaking” and “cleaving”.
Genesis 2:24; Deuteronomy 31:16; Daniel 11:30
 - e. Marriage and family; Body; Temple or house.
2. Our current relationship with God is covenantal.
 - a. Explicit References: Jeremiah 31:31-34 vs. Hebrews 8:8-13 and 9:15
(cf. Luke 22:20; 2 Cor. 3:6)
 - b. Language and images:
 - i. Family: John 1:12; Romans 8:15-17
 - ii. Union: Romans 6:3-5; Ephesians 1
 - iii. Belonging: Romans 9:23-25; 14:7-8; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
 - iv. Commitment: Philippians 1:27; 1 Peter 3:15
 - v. People, race, nation, body, temple, house, marriage.
3. Our current relationship **with each other** is covenantal.
 - a. Family: “Children of God”, “brother/sister” (too numerous)
 - b. Union: Romans 12 (v5); 1 Corinthians 12; Philippians 2:2, etc.
 - c. Belonging: Galatians 3:29; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Hebrews 8:10
 - d. Commitment: John 13:34; Romans 12:10; Galatians 6:10
 - e. People, race, nation, body, temple, house, marriage.

[Don't forget the signs of our covenant union: baptism and communion.]

4. Key differences between contracts and covenants:

- Contracts generally involve the exchange of goods or services and are negotiated.
 - *Covenants involve the exchange of the individuals themselves and are initiated.*
- Contracts bind legally (the law holds the parties together).
 - *Covenants bind relationally (love and devotion hold the parties together).*
- Contracts include obligations that when broken free the other party from the agreement.
 - *Covenants include obligations that when broken do not sever the relationship but lay out what is needed for reconciliation (which may include restitution).*
- Compliance with the terms of a contract is guaranteed by threat of penalty (damages).
 - *Compliance with the terms of a covenant is guaranteed by personal integrity.*
[The covenant is kept, not because there will be a penalty, but because of sincerity.]
- Contracts are established upon legalities.
[“I will enter this contract with you because I know the law will uphold it.”]
 - *Covenants are established upon loyalty (faithfulness).*
[“I will enter this covenant with you because I am loyal to you, and I am counting on your loyalty/faithfulness to me.”]