

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH, STOCKPORT
COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP # 3

We recognise our responsibilities (2)

To love,
honour
and submit to one another,

- 1 humbly preferring one another's interests to our own,
- 2 freely forgiving one another in the Lord,
- 3 bearing one another's burdens in all things,
- 4 encouraging one another to good works
- 5 and seeking constantly the well-being of one another.

3 motives

1. The example of Christ

Phil.2:1-11

1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

2. The love of Christ

Col.3:12-15

as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

3. The law of Christ

Gal.6:1-2

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

3 reminders

1. Love must be practical

Rom.12:14-16

10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practise hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Am I aware of any of my brothers and sisters in the church who are in need? What have I got that I can share with them?

How many of my brothers and sisters have I invited into my home in the past three months? To whom will I show hospitality in the next two weeks?

Which of my brothers and sisters are rejoicing? What can I do to show that I'm rejoicing with them? Which are mourning? How can I show that I'm mourning with them?

2. Love must be persevering

Heb.10:24-25

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

As a church member I promised that I would be at the meetings of the church whenever possible. Have I kept that promise? If not, how can I make sure I will be more consistent in future?

Is the way I'm living and behaving an encouragement or a discouragement to my fellow believers? Am I aware of any of them who needs particular encouragement? If so, what can I do to give it?

3. Love must be positive

Eph.4:1-6, 25-32

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Are there any of my brothers and sisters whom I find it hard to bear with? Have I been impatient with them at all? Does my attitude towards them need to change?

What positive good can I do to any of my brothers and sisters this week?

Are there any of my brothers or sisters towards whom I have negative feelings? If so, why? If I think they've treated me badly, why haven't I forgiven them, as God forgave me? Am I going to forgive them now?