



# RIVERSIDE

church

Statement of Faith

# Qualifications FOR MEMBERSHIP

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At Riverside Church the primary qualification for membership is a personal saving faith in Jesus Christ. While none of us can fully examine one another to know the deepest thoughts of the mind and soul, still there is evidence in word and deed to the necessary faith. To that end members must commit to and sign the church's Covenant of faith. This signed statement is a pledge to uphold the beliefs, objectives and practices of this church while you are among us.

## **MEMBERSHIP COVENANT**

Having received Christ as my Lord and Saviour and being in agreement with Riverside's statements, strategies, beliefs and practices, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Riverside Church family. In doing so I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

### **1. I will protect the unity of my church;**

*by acting in love toward other members*  
*by refusing to gossip*  
*by following the leaders*

"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification" (Romans 14:19, NIV).

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22 NIV).

"Do not let 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" (Ephesians 4:29, NIV).

"Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account" (Hebrews 13:17, NIV).

### **2. I will share the responsibility of my church;**

*by praying for its growth*  
*by inviting the unchurched to attend*  
*by warmly welcome those who visit*

“To the church...we always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers” (I Thess. 1:1, NIV)

“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full’” (Luke 14:23, NIV)

“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God” (Romans 15:7, NIV)

### **3. I will serve the ministry of my church;**

*by discovering my gifts and talents*  
*by being equipped to serve by my pastors*  
*by developing a servant’s heart*

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others”  
(1 Peter 4:10).

“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” (Ephesians 4:11-12).

“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” (Philippians 2:3-4). “Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: who ...(took on) the very nature of a servant’ (Philippians 2; 5 & 7).

### **4. I will support the testimony of my church**

*by attending faithfully*  
*by living a godly life*  
*by giving regularly*

“Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another” (Hebrews 10:25).

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Philippians 1;27).

“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made” (1 Corinthians 16:2).

“A tenth of [all your] produce .....is the Lord’s, and is holy” (Leviticus 27:30).

Signed .....

# Our BELIEFS

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WE BELIEVE that the bible is the inspired word of God, and that it is our only authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

WE BELIEVE that God (that is, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit – one God) is the creator of the universe, that He sustains all life, and that He is supremely wise, loving, powerful and holy.

WE BELIEVE that all of us (that is, the whole of humanity) have been separated from God by sin, and have thus become subject to God's wrath and condemnation.

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, that (through the incarnation) He became truly and perfectly human, died for our sins, was buried, was raised bodily by God from the dead, and is alive today and forever.

WE BELIEVE that we can experience forgiveness of sins and enjoy a right relationship with God through repenting of our sins, believing in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and obeying Him as Lord.

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit lives within all who truly believe in Jesus, and that, this dwelling in them, He confirms that God is their Father, enlightens them in their understanding of the bible, enables them to become gradually more like Him, and endows them with gifts for Christian service.

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ will return personally and victoriously, that Christians who have died will experience bodily resurrection, that Christians who are alive at the time of Christ's return will be bodily transformed, and that all who have believed in Him will experience eternal life.

# Our **OBJECTIVES**

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As a church and as individual members, our objectives are that in all things we should enjoy God, and that we should glorify Him.

We try to achieve these objectives in the following ways;

In our worship – by worshipping and serving God reverently, joyfully, sincerely and with humility.

In our fellowship – by meeting regularly for worship, prayer, bible study, companionship and service.

In our spiritual growth – by getting to know God better, helping each other grow increasingly more like Jesus, and thus becoming more mature Christians.

In our evangelism – by being Christ's witnesses and making disciples for Him.

In serving our community – by seeking to promote justice at all levels of society, and by finding ways of expressing love and care for our neighbours and fellow-citizens.

In missionary activities – by responding to the physical and spiritual needs of people who are unreached by the Gospel.

# Our PRACTICES

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Outstanding among our activities at Riverside, we recognise and observe two distinct practices – **Baptism & Communion**. We acknowledge these as ‘Divine Ordinances’- that is, as practices which have been established specifically by our Lord for His own honour and for the benefit and enrichment of all who follow Him,

## **BAPTISM**

We believe that the Bible speaks about baptism in a number of different ways:

It is an act of obedience – Jesus Himself submitted to being baptised (Matthew 3:13-16); and before his ascension He left a direct command for His followers to “Go and make disciples, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19. Read also, Acts 10:48 and 22:16). We demonstrate our love for the Lord Jesus by ‘obeying his commands’ (John 14:15).

It is a sign, a signal, a dramatized picture – Baptism is the way in which those who believe in Jesus are asked to announce to the world...that they have repented of their sins and that they have believed in and now belong to Him (Acts 2:38); that their sins have been forgiven (Acts 2:38, the symbol clearly speaks of ‘washing’ or ‘cleansing’); that they have been ‘united’ in Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:2-4); that they, with all believers, have been given His Holy Spirit (1Cornithians 12:13); and that they have committed themselves to behave in a new way and to service Jesus Christ as their Lord (Romans 6:4-14).

It is to come after our profession of faith in the Lord Jesus – That baptism is a responsible act engaged in by those who have ‘believed’, is made clear in Acts 2:41, 8:36, 10: 46-48; 16:33 and elsewhere.

It is to be by ‘immersion’ – This is plain from Matthew 3:16, Acts 8:38-39, etc, and it seems certain that it became the consistent practice of all Christians thereafter. It is especially obvious that ‘immersion’ most clearly symbolises the identification of a believer with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (The Greek word for ‘baptise’ means ‘to dip’).

At Riverside, new Christians, are likely to be invited to participate in ‘Alpha’, ‘Christianity Explored’ or some other discipleship course before being baptised. This should help them progress in their understanding of baptism and the Christian life.

# Our PRACTICES

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## COMMUNION

'Communion', the second of our distinctive practices is otherwise referred to in the Bible as 'The Lord's Supper', or 'The Breaking of the Bread'. It was introduced by our Lord on the eve of His crucifixion, when He celebrated the Passover (a Jewish festival) with His disciples (Luke 22:14-20).

There are very few details given of how Communion was conducted, but it is apparent that it is at times a relatively *simple* service. What we do know is that the Lord was there at its inauguration (and whenever 'two or three meet together in His name' – Matthew 18:20); we also know that a *loaf of bread* was broken, a *cup of wine* was shared, *thanksgivings* were offered, and almost certainly the *Scriptures* were read and *hymns* were sung.

In addition, the Bible indicates that at Communion, a number of things happen:

- i) His people remember the Lord (Luke 22:19)
- ii) They signal that they are 'one' with each other and with the Lord (1 Corinthians: 10:17)
- iii) They 'proclaim' the Lord's death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26)
- iv) They try to separate themselves from all that is evil or unworthy of Him (1 Corinthians 11:27)

We see Communion as an expression of our loving response to Jesus for who He is and what He has done for us, and of our love for all his children; we see it as open to all who truly love Him, and as being a vital contribution to our spiritual life as individuals and as a church.