

Communication Covenant

“A behavioral covenant is a written document developed by leaders, agreed to and owned by its creators and practiced on a daily basis as a spiritual discipline. The Covenant answers the question, “How will we behave when we don’t understand each other and when we don’t agree?”

– Gil Rendle, Behavioral Covenants in Congregations

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to live together, treat one another, and respond to conflict in ways that are remarkably different from the ways the world does the same. In all dealings with one another, our goal is to glorify God, allowing Scripture to guide our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. To this end, at Riverside Covenant Church, we commit to a life together in which...

- We maintain a posture of openness and humility before the Lord and toward one another, always seeking to build each other up and not tear down. To this end:
 - We seek to communicate clearly, completely, and directly, listening charitably and sharing candidly, without assumption or gossip.
 - We are self-reflective and confess our sin to those we wrong.
 - We make positive investments in one another’s lives.
 - We will practice the principles for conflict resolution described in Matthew 18 and will direct others to do so, instead of triangulating conflict.

- We honor and support the office of Pastor, Ministry Staff, and lay leaders. In our decision-making processes, we seek to discover what is best for our church as a whole, not what may be best for any one individual or small group in the church.

- We accept disagreement, conflict, and evaluation as normal and natural parts of life in community. We understand conflict as an opportunity to grow in Christ and in healthy authentic relationships with one another. As a Christian Community we do not fear or ignore conflict; instead, we actively and graciously pursue mutual understanding, genuine peace and authentic reconciliation. With the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, using the principles laid out in Matthew 18, we work through conflict toward resolution by utilizing the following progression:

- First, by going directly to the person with whom there is a disagreement or conflict and privately addressing the issue.
- If the conflict remains unresolved, then, having a mutually agreed upon third party mediate with those in conflict
- If the conflict remains unresolved, then finally meeting with church leaders to arbitrate the issue

With God's grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of discipleship, realizing that conflict can be an opportunity to grow in unity. We will pray that our life together, the way in which we treat one another and handle conflict, will bring praise to our Lord and lead others to experience God's infinite love.