

COMMUNITY LIFE COVENANT

Expectations and Responsibilities for Community Life at Bethel University

Bethel University is a Christian community committed to academic pursuit and spiritual growth under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We are a people gathered for the development of our members and for the mission of Christ's kingdom in the world, to represent Him individually and collectively. While Bethel students are not obligated to espouse the Christian faith, as members of this community, all voluntarily agree to live in accordance with the values, expectations, and goals of the Kingdom of God as expressed in Scripture.

Central to our place in the Kingdom of God is the shaping of our character to resemble Jesus Christ in holiness and purity of mind and heart. The Bible describes character qualities that should and should not be present in believers and among communities of believers. We attempt to evaluate our decisions, behaviors and priorities by Scriptural measures rather than cultural standards, by our submission to the Lordship of Christ, and by love for our neighbor. As members of this community, we covenant to engage actively in the pursuit of personal holiness by obedience to Scriptural teaching.

- We agree that this pursuit will include corporate worship, fellowship, and biblical instruction in chapel, participation in spiritual emphasis services and involvement in a local church.
- We agree to express our love for God and others through service, including Bethel community service days, service within the academic curriculum, and individual initiative.
- We agree to follow the Biblical precepts regarding sexual purity. We will avoid immoral conduct including premarital sex, adultery, homosexual behavior, and the viewing or distribution of pornography.

Community life requires agreement on what behaviors will and will not be acceptable. While Scripture is very clear about many behaviors that affect our character, much is left to interpretation. The Christian life conveys great liberty of conscience, but within community it also conveys the need for deference to one another. In our life together, we follow the clear Biblical principle of sacrificing personal freedoms for the good of the community. Accordingly, when differences arise, we covenant together to choose the course that requires self-sacrifice and self-discipline.

- Because we believe our minds and bodies should be used in ways that honor God, we agree to abstain from tobacco in any form, alcohol and gatherings where alcohol is present, illegal drugs, or narcotics not authorized by a physician.
- Because we value each member of our community as reflecting the Creator, we agree to avoid abusive words and actions including profanity, hazing, threats of violence, or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, or physical trait.
- Because structures of authority are necessary for every community, we agree to respect and honor those in authority over us, even when we might disagree with their decisions. We agree to abide by the policies and procedures set forth in the *Student Handbook*, *Residence Hall Guidelines*, and the university catalogue, respecting these guides as part of our covenanted life together.

In the Bethel community, staff, faculty, and other students work together to maintain standards of righteous community life consistent with Scripture. For the good of the community as a whole, we voluntarily submit ourselves to the accountability of others in the community as part of our covenanted life together. If we find ourselves unable to honor this covenant, withdrawal may be in order. We also recognize that appropriate action will be taken to teach, discipline, or even dismiss those who disregard this covenanted agreement.

With earnest hope for a community that honors and represents our Lord Jesus, we seek God's plan for life together: "As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. . . . And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God." (Colossians 3: 12-17)

Upon signing this Community Covenant, we hold ourselves to its precepts while registered as a student at the university.

In agreement with this covenant, I commit to the Bethel University community.

(Please print name)

(Student I.D. number)

(Signature)

(Date)