

Why a Covenant?

Christian ministry is a high calling. It is a position based upon the Holy Spirit's gifting and local church's affirmation and calling to a position of delegated authority of the church to serve, encourage, teach and empower God's people.

This is a servant-leadership role.

Jesus told his disciples that they were not to be like the rulers of their day who lorded over others, but rather they were to be servants of others.

Most Christian leaders do serve honourably.

However, some have abused their positions of authority resulting in great harm. As a result, assumptions about the good character of people who make themselves available for leadership positions are no longer to be the sole basis for the carrying out of Christian ministry.

People who attend our churches need to be confident that they will be cared for, nurtured and encouraged as they grow, and, at the same time, protected from physical, mental or emotional harm. We want everyone who comes to our churches or in some manner interacts with our church communities, to acknowledge them as safe places "in an unsafe world".

The Leader's Conduct Covenants provides a clear set of behavioural 'DOs and DON'Ts', to define what is acceptable and what is unacceptable conduct for leaders and ministers in Christian ministry.

More Information

THIS LEADER'S CONDUCT COVENANT IS PART OF A SAFE CHURCH DOCUMENT SUITE:

- Church Safe Policy
- Creating Safe Spaces Manual
- Responding to Kids @ Risk Procedure

REMEMBER, YOU ARE NOT ON YOUR OWN IN THESE MATTERS:

Call Tim Williams at the BUNSW 02 9868 9200

REPORTING SUSPECTED RISK OF HARM (ABUSE)

NSW: Child Protection Help Line 13 21 11

ACT: Care and Protection Services 1300 556 728

Counselling Help National:

Kids Help Line – 1800 55 1800

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Child Abuse Prevention Service (24 hr) – 02 9716 8000

Family Crisis Centre (24 hr) – 02 9622 0522

This Document is intended to compliment the SAFE CHURCH document suite (see above)

Safe Church Leader's Conduct Covenant © NSW & ACT Baptist Churches 2012

NSW & ACT
BAPTIST
CHURCHES

 **Safe Church Training Agreement**
TOWARDS SAFER CHURCHES

Baptist Union of NSW & ACT member of
the NCCA – Safe Church Training Agreement.



Keeping the Balance

**Leader's Conduct
Covenant**

2012



Keeping the Balance

The Covenant

a. We minister out of a relationship with God

We will maintain a healthy relationship with God by:

- joining regularly in the life and ministry of the Church.
- studying the Scriptures in private and in groups.
- praying regularly in private and in fellowship with and for the people and ministry of the Church.
- giving of our time and finances to the work of the Church, as an expression of your gratitude to God.

b. We serve others in the context of healthy relationships.

We will engage in healthy friendships with those to whom we minister by:

- loving and caring for our families; paying attention to the effect of ministry on them.
- treating others with respect; teach and exercise authority respectfully.
- upholding confidential information; do not disclose to anyone (including spouse), any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information. (There is an exception where there is a legal obligation or a duty of care issue.)
- being a team player; cooperating with other ministry leaders, there will be areas that overlap and someone else may have the advice that you need.
- using words that build up; do not ridicule or embarrass people.
- avoiding professionally counselling people with whom we have personal relationships.
- making alternative arrangements for pastoral ministry for any person if you begin to develop a romantic relationship with them.

c. As Christian Leaders we will:

- be accountable to our team, watch out for each other and protect each other's integrity, e.g. when ministering to children have a buddy system in place (never alone with one child).
- obey the law, other than any law that is contrary to the Scriptures.
- not take property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright) and knowingly making false, misleading or deceptive statements.
- not engage in bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse or spiritual abuse of any person, including your family.
- not act violently or intentionally provoke violence when engaged in civil disobedience.
- be responsible in our use of addictive substances and services (e.g. prescriptions/ alcohol).
- not use any prohibited substance.
- act with sexual purity. Sexuality is a gift from God. We will express our sexuality in healthy and God directed ways.
- act with financial integrity.
- have in place systems for accountability and transparency in financial matters.
- not engage in tax evasion.
- not seek personal advantage or financial gain from your position, other than in wages, recognised allowances and deductions.
- disclose to the church leadership if we are or have been investigated for any criminal offences.

When the Covenant is damaged

What happens when leaders do not follow this covenant?

i. Occasional/minor violations

Everyone sins and is forgiven (1 John 1:8-9). It stands to reason then, that everyone will breach the covenant. When this happens in an area that is not a breach of civil or criminal law, simply cease the conduct. If this is difficult, the person should see their team leader about receiving help (e.g. counselling). In some cases it may be necessary to step a person aside from their duties whilst this takes place. Deal with such matters confidentially.

ii. Unknown violations

Not all leaders will understand 'unacceptable' behaviours. Even after explaining the covenant some may be unaware they are exhibiting unacceptable behaviours. Leaders need to be open to correction and humble enough to modify behaviours so as not to discredit the gospel. As above, stepping a person aside their duties may be necessary.

iii. Constant violations

There are breaches that are not a breach of civil or criminal law. Where a leader has been made aware of their behaviour and yet refuses to change:

- a. the Ministry Coordinator meets the person and for behaviour review meetings. Communicate required behaviour changes. (Up to 3 meetings)
- b. if the behaviour continues, a small group of church leaders are to arrange a meeting to address the behaviour. Stepping aside is appropriate at this point.
- c. if the behaviour/s continues beyond this meeting, then respectfully, and upholding confidentially, the person will be stood down for a set period. They will be offered help in changing their behaviour via counselling if they are willing.

NB: Written notes of all meetings to be carefully taken and a copy given to all parties.

After having used the above process, you may still need support, please call the Baptist Union for assistance.

iv. Breaches of the law or allegations of abuse.

Allegations of abuse or serious misconduct are to be referred to BUNSW, 02 9868 9200