

WESLEY'S COVENANT SERVICE

PLEASE KEEP FOR FUTURE USE

(Adapted from The United Methodist Church Book of Worship, #288)

Invitation

Pastor: Commit yourselves to Christ as God's servants. Give yourselves to Christ and Christ alone, so that you may belong to God, and God alone. Christian discipleship requires us to accept a life of many services. Some are more easy and accepted by the world, others are more difficult, and may bring rejection. Some fit our passions and interests, others are contrary to both. In some services to God, we may please Christ and please ourselves. But in other services, we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. It is necessary for us to consider, then, what it means to be a servant of Christ. So, let us come to Christ now, and pray:

All: Let me be your servant, under your command. I will no longer be my own. I will give up myself to your will in all things.

Pastor: Be satisfied that Christ shall give you your place and work.

All: Lord, make me what you will. I put myself fully into your hands: Put me to doing, put me to suffering, let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and with a willing heart give it all to your pleasure and disposal.

Pastor: Christ will be the Savior of none but God's servants. Christ is the source of all salvation for those who commit their lives to Christ's way of salvation. Christ will have no servants except by consent; Christ will not accept anything except full consent to all that he requires. Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing. Confirm this by a holy covenant, your unconditional commitment to Christ. To make this covenant real in your life, listen to these words of guidance for our discipleship in Christ:

First, set aside some time, more than once, to spend alone with our Lord; search out God's special assistance and gracious acceptance of you, with your whole heart; consider carefully all of the details of this covenant; search honestly and deeply in your hearts whether you have already freely given your life to Christ. Consider what your sins are, even if you have. Consider the laws of Christ, how holy, disciplined,

and spiritual they are. After you have considered them carefully and sincerely consider if you are willing to choose them all for your way of life. Be sure you are clear in these matters; see that you do not lie to God.

Second, take time to allow your mind and heart to be in a spirit of holy awe and reverence.

Third, claim God's covenant. Rely upon God's promise to give us all of the grace and strength you need in Christ, and rely only on this promise, so that you can keep your promise. Do not trust your own strength and power.

Fourth, commit yourself to faithful living. You have given to the Lord your hearts, you have opened your minds to the Lord, and you have dedicated yourself to God. With God's power, never go back.

And last, through these commitments to Christian discipleship, be prepared to renew your covenant with the Lord. Bow your heads and open your hearts to the Lord, as we pray:

Covenant Prayer

All: O righteous God, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, see me as I bow before you. Forgive my unfaithfulness in not having done your will, for you have promised mercy to me if I turn to you with my whole heart.

Pastor: God requires that you shall put away all your idols, your allegiance to false gods.

All: I here, from the bottom of my heart, I renounce all idols, covenanting with you that no known sin shall be allowed in my life. Against your will, I have turned my love toward the world. In your power, I will watch all temptations that will lead me away from you. For my own righteousness is stained by my sins, unable to stand before you.

Pastor: Through Christ, God has offered to be your God again if you will let him.

All: Before all heaven and earth, I here acknowledge you as my Lord and God. I take you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my

portion, and vow to give up myself, body and soul, as your servant, to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

Pastor: God has given the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way and means of coming to God.

All: I do here accept Christ as the only new and living Way, and sincerely join myself in a covenant with him. O blessed Jesus, I come to you, hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy even to wash the feet of your servants. I do here, with all my power, accept you as my Lord and Head. I renounce my own worthlessness, and vow that you are the Lord, my righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom, and take you for my only guide. I renounce my own will, and take your will as my law.

Pastor: Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.

All: I do here covenant with you, O Christ, to take my lot with you as it may fall. Through your grace, I promise that neither life nor death shall part me from you.

Pastor: God has given holy laws as the rule of your life.

All: I do here willingly put my neck under your yoke, to carry your burden. All your laws are holy, just, and good. I, therefore, take them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising that I will strive to order my whole life according to your direction, and not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.

Pastor: The Almighty God searches and knows your heart.

All: O God, you know that I make this covenant with you today without deception or reservation. If there is any falseness in my commitment, guide me and help me to set it aright.

And now, glory be to you, O God the Father, whom I from this day forward shall look upon as my God and Father. Glory be to you, O God the Son, who have loved me and washed me from my sins in

your own blood, and now you are my Savior and Redeemer. Glory be to you, O God the Holy Spirit, who by your almighty power have turned my heart from sin to God. O mighty God, the Lord Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have now become my Covenant Friend. And I, through your infinite grace, have become your covenant servant. So be it. And let the covenant I have made on earth be ratified in heaven. Amen.

We are advised to make this covenant not only in our hearts, but in word; not only in word, but in writing. Refer to the study and reflection guide on the following page if you need to consider your commitment more deeply. When you feel that you are ready to make a covenantal commitment to God in Christ through the words of this service for the coming year, please sign your name below.

Keep this service as a sign of your commitment, and refer to it when you need reminding. Remember it in times of doubt and temptation. Reach out to others to help you remember your commitments. Pray the bold words as often as you need to, by yourself or with others, in order to keep your commitment as fresh and alive as you need it. May the Lord help you in all of this!

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

WESLEY'S COVENANT SERVICE
STUDY AND REFLECTION GUIDE

WHAT DOES IS MEAN TO BE GOD'S SERVANT?

Refer to and reflect on some of the following scriptures. Search for more, as needed. Find others to study with. Join or form a discipleship group to find Christ's image in your heart.

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| Genesis 15:1-6 | 1 Samuel 3:1-10 | Ruth 1:15-17 | Amos 7:14-15 |
| Matthew 5-6 | Mark 1:16-20 | Luke 1:37-38 | Luke 22:39-43 |
| John 12:1-8 | Acts 4:32-37 | Ephesians 6:10-20 | Matthew 25:31-40 |

**HOW CAN I COMMIT TO CHRIST WITHOUT
RESERVATIONS IN MY HEART?**

Faith helps us to grow in God's grace through a trust in God that grows over time. Do not be discouraged by your shortcomings and failures, or by what others do. Our covenant with God is our commitment to keep coming back to God, no matter what happens, until we can trust in God's love no matter what, so that we can serve God as our joy, no matter what. We will always have challenges, and God will always be there for us in the middle of our challenges.

Our covenant commitment to Christ is just the beginning of this process. We grow *together* in God's grace, No matter where you are in your faith journey, it is never too late or too early to reach out to God, and to others seeking God, to let Christ grow in your heart. Like any relationship, it takes time, and commitment, to find the full value of faith.

- Don't be afraid to start.
- Don't be afraid to keep going.
- Don't be afraid to start again if you feel that you have failed God, yourself, or others.
- Don't be afraid to reach out to God and to others. God is always waiting for us!
- Don't be afraid to be afraid; even Jesus needed comfort from God for his fears.
- Don't be afraid to do what it takes to keep your commitment to faith fresh, strong, and growing. It is the most valuable thing that you will ever have in your life.
- Don't be afraid to try new ways to stay in love with God, and to serve God.

We will all do this, together, with God's help, through God's grace.