



# A Conduct Covenant in Session Meetings\*

We are called and ordained as ruling and teaching elders to come together to discern God's will for our church. We need to recognize that sometimes we bring the baggage of how the world likes to operate with us; there are times, in the spirit of competition, that winning our debate becomes more important than discerning God's will. With this conduct covenant, we acknowledge this and commit to listening and debating in a Christ-like manner so that God's will is done.

### **Our Covenant with God**

We promise to pray, both when we are alone and when we are together, for our eyes and ears to be open to God's leading so that the spirit of discernment may inform and enliven our thoughts and discussions.

We will strive to acknowledge the biases and prejudices we bring to our meetings and seek God's help to understand ideas and perspectives different from our own.

### **Our Covenant with our Church Family**

We promise to lead and to demonstrate our leadership by example.

We promise to support and respect our minister, church staff and members of our congregation.

We promise to strive to discern God's will for our community and, in so doing, discover what is best for the whole church, not simply support the interests of a small group or a few individuals.

### **Our Covenant with Each Other**

We understand our work and time together as an opportunity to offer important gifts to our church.

We promise to be transparent and acknowledge our own opinions, perspectives and desires, but we also acknowledge there will be time when we will need to put these aside in order to discern God's will for our church.

We promise to listen actively to each other since God's will for our church may reside in ideas very different from our own.

We promise to participate in all discussions with honesty and transparency, sharing our opinions and ideas respectfully.

We promise to wrestle with issues, not with each other; we will not bully or lobby to gain support for our opinions either in or outside of our meetings.

We promise to read, understand and follow the rules of debate as laid out by our Book of Forms.

We promise to support the final decision, whether it reflects our view or not.

\*Based on Gilbert R. Rendle. *Behavioral Covenants in Congregations*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1999.

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