

MISSION HILLS EMPLOYEE CONDUCT COVENANT

Recognizing that church staff are subject to heightened scrutiny by both believers and non-believers alike, Mission Hills Church has a compelling interest in the qualification and conduct of its employees. While many of the specific biblical qualifications and expectations of conduct for church leadership are most directly addressed only to elders and pastors (e.g. Titus 1:5-9), the principle that all church employees are to be held to a high standard is naturally inferred.

As an employee of Mission Hills Church, you are a representative of the ministry in both your work life and your private life, whether conducted in-person or via social media. Consequently, you must recognize that how others see your adherence to biblical standards of spirituality, ethics and behavior – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – impacts their view not only of you but also of the church and Christ who is its head. Titus 2:7-8 says, “In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching, show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.”

One of the foundational conditions of employment at Mission Hills Church is that you are agreeing to conduct your life in such a way that you demonstrate a personal relationship with Christ and a commitment to biblical standards and principles which guide the ministry’s work. The Mission Hills Church Statement of Faith provides much of the guidance regarding belief and practice for our employees. This Conduct Covenant provides additional details of what is expected of our employees. Employee behavior which violates these expectations of conduct will necessitate corrective action which *may* include termination of employment. Every employee, in every position, is required to abide by biblical standards, including the conduct set forth in this policy.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Our goal is not a roster of employees who have agreed to give their professional time to Mission Hills but a tribe whose hearts are invested in the unique work God is doing here. This sense of solidarity is fostered, in part, by regular participation in weekend worship at Mission Hills. In general, employees are expected to be present in a weekend worship experience at Mission Hills at least two times a month. In special exceptions, agreed upon by MH executive leadership and the employee, this expectation may be adjusted.

SEX OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE

Mission Hills believes that God has placed boundaries on intimate sexual activity for our good and His glory. These boundaries protect the sacredness of sexual intimacy by confining it to the context of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of intimate sexual activity (including pre-marital sex, adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) outside of this context is sinful. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.) Perversions of sexual intimacy within the context of marriage (such as the use of pornography, et.al.) are also sinful. If such activity is suspected, leadership will request a meeting with the employee to discern the truth and, if sinful sexual activity has occurred, consequences *may* include, but not be limited to counseling, job reassignment, paid leave of absence or separation from church employment, depending on circumstances.

DIVORCE

Marriage between one man and one woman has been instituted and ordained by God (Genesis 2:18, Ephesians 5:31). As a covenantal relationship which visibly expresses the relationship between God and His people, it is a sacred union between a man and a woman that is not intended to be sundered while the two spouses are both alive. However, because of the fallenness of human nature and the resultant hardness of heart, the Scriptures permit divorce on two grounds:

1. Sexual Immorality: *And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality¹, and marries another, commits adultery (Matthew 19:9).*
2. Desertion: *But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. (1 Corinthians 7:15)².*

When divorce is sought on one of these two grounds and whenever possible, the spouse who has committed sexual immorality or desertion shall come under the discipline of the elders for the purpose of achieving repentance and reconciliation. Should reasonable efforts to achieve restoration fail, the “offending” spouse who is an employee of Mission Hills *may* have consequences including but not limited to counseling, job reassignment, paid leave of absence or separation from church employment, depending on circumstances. The “innocent” spouse who is an employee of Mission Hills *may* also be counseled, reassigned, asked to take a paid leave of absence or separated from church employment, depending on circumstances. If an employee is considering or facing separation or divorce, he/she must notify his/her supervisor who will inform the Executive Team.

¹ The word “immorality” includes homosexuality or other forms of deviant sexual behavior, as well as adultery and fornication.

² While Paul, addressing a particular cultural circumstance in Corinth, refers here to desertion only by an unbelieving spouse, the apparent Old Testament precedent for this instruction (Exo 21:1-11) may suggest that this can be widened to include desertion by a professing Christian spouse as well; that is, if a professing Christian deserts his/her spouse completely, the abandoned spouse may be free to remarry after an appropriate time has passed.

REMARRIAGE

The high value that God places on marriage necessarily means that remarriage after a divorce is something that must be entered into only with great care and counsel. If a divorced employee is considering remarriage, he/she should request that the elders review their situation to consider if remarriage is consistent with biblical instruction and principles. Failure to do so *may* have consequences including but not limited to counseling, job reassignment, paid leave of absence or separation from church employment, depending on circumstances.

COHABITATION WITH ROMANTIC PARTNER

Living together with a romantic partner before/apart from marriage is considered unacceptable for employees of Mission Hills Church as both believers and non-believers who are aware of the arrangement will naturally assume that sexual intimacy is also involved, thus calling into public question the employee's adherence to biblical teaching. Cohabitation with a romantic partner by a Mission Hills employee *may* have consequences including but not limited to counseling, job reassignment, paid leave of absence or separation from church employment, depending on circumstances.

NON-ROMANTIC COHABITATION

Non-romantic cohabitation refers to a male and female living in the same dwelling without being involved in a romantic relationship. The leadership of Mission Hills understands that as single adults in the Denver Metro area, affordability of housing can be an issue and is open to the possibility of male and female housemates as long as there are multiple roommates and Executive Team is aware of and approves the living situation. Therefore, if considering such a living situation, the employee must notify his/her supervisor who will, in turn, notify the Executive Team. If such living situations are not divulged, employment separation *may* be necessary. If a romantic relationship develops between the employee and one of his/her housemates subsequent to the living arrangement having been approved, the employee must inform Executive Team and make new housing arrangements.

ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Carefully moderated consumption of alcohol is not considered a breach of the employee conduct, but it is required that all employees of Mission Hills abstain from drunkenness. Use of any illegal substances (e.g. cocaine) or illegal use of controlled substances (e.g. opiates) *may* have consequences including but not limited to counseling, job reassignment, paid leave of absence or separation from church employment, depending on circumstances. Use of substances deemed legal in some U.S. states but not others (e.g. marijuana) *may* also have consequences including but not limited to counseling, job reassignment, paid leave of absence or separation from church employment, depending on circumstances.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In the course of ministry, employees may become aware of sensitive information pertaining to individuals. It is expected that such information will be kept confidential except in cases where it is necessary to share the information with appropriate persons in order to protect the life or health of the individual in question or those directly and substantially affected by the individual in question. Unwarranted breaking of confidentiality *may* have consequences including but not limited to counseling, job reassignment, paid leave of absence or separation from church employment, depending on circumstances.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The principles of biblical conduct outlined in this document will also apply to social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and personal blogs. Employees are encouraged to engage in respectful dialogue, and expected to prioritize Christian unity (1Co 8), recognizing that social media platforms dramatically increase our influence both with those we are aware of and with those who find our posts unexpectedly. Employees are especially encouraged to consider how a non-believer may perceive the tone, source, and content of online material. Failure to act in accordance with the expectations stated in this document (or with other natural expectations which may not have been specifically articulated) on social media platforms *may* have consequences including but not limited to counseling, job reassignment, paid leave of absence or separation from church employment, depending on circumstances.