

OUR STANDARDS

by John David Clark, Sr.

Occasionally someone will write, asking us for information on the standards of The Pioneer Tract Society. Some time ago, in a publication of ours called The Broadcaster, we published some fundamental truths of the gospel which we teach. Even though we no longer use The Pioneer Tract Society as an organization, the standards have not changed, and for the sake of those who want to know, here again are the fundamental standards by which members of this congregation are expected to live.

PASTOR JOHN'S HOUSE (Previously, The Pioneer Tract Society) Rules for Conduct

Pastor John's house is the meeting place of a group of believers whose purpose is to promote the fellowship of the saints, to the end that we may be a people prepared to meet our Lord Jesus in peace and with joy when he returns from heaven for his own. Pastor John's house is not a denomination; nor is it sectarian in any respect. It is simply a place for saints to gather and work for the edifying of the saints and the promulgation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Saints at Pastor John's house are expected to live so as to bring honor to God and His Son, Jesus.

The following Rules for Conduct are the minimum required standard for members of the congregation that meets at Pastor John's house.

1. Members are to be examples of moral purity, faith, and love in Christ.

"Let fornication – indeed, all uncleanness – or covetousness not be mentioned among you, as befits saints" (Eph. 5:3). "Therefore, beloved, seeing that you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2Pet. 3:14).

2. Members are to dress according to holiness.

"According to holiness" means according to what is appropriate to the occasion, in modesty and cleanliness. In short, saints are to use common sense and be decent. They are not to use their bodies or their clothing to allure or to arouse the lusts of others. For women, the Bible is clear that they should adorn themselves, "with modesty and prudence" (1Tim. 2:9).

3. Members are to refrain from gluttony and other excesses.

Jesus warned us that this sin would actually cause some saints to loose their souls. "Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be dulled by dissipation, and drunkenness, and cares of life, and that day come upon you unexpectedly" (Lk. 21:34).

4. No member of this work may use tobacco in any of its various forms. Neither are they to abuse drugs.

In all things, we are to pursue the exhortation of Paul, who wrote, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"

(2Cor. 7:1). Because our bodies are the temple of God, we are to glorify God in our bodies as well as in our spirits (1Cor. 6:19-20), knowing that “if anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him” (1Cor. 3:17).

5. Concerning worldly entanglements, members are not to have any.

Paul the Apostle explained, “No one who goes to war entangles himself in the affairs of this life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (2Tim. 2:4). Whether worldly entertainment, social affairs, or political events, the work of the saints should always have the priority. While we encourage our members to be aware of situations around them, the task given to us by God requires that our lives be as free as possible from commitments which interfere with accomplishing our purpose.

6. Members are to be good citizens of the country into which they are born, obedient to every law, and doing nothing which would endanger or demean the powers which God has placed over us.

As Peter said, “Be subject, therefore, to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake . . . for such is the will of God” (1Pet. 2:13-15). The saints’ relationship to the rulers of our country is simply this, from Paul: “First of all, therefore, I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made . . . for all who are in authority” (1Tim. 2:1-2). Whether concerning laws, rulers, or the customs of an earthly nation, the people of God should conduct themselves as ambassadors for Christ, with good will toward all men.

7. Every member is required to render tithes and offerings.

Any child of God who does not render to God their tithes and offerings is a thief, according to God himself: “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In the tithe and the offering.”

God has never repealed the tithe and offering system for the support of his earthly ministers. On the contrary, Christ established it, being “made an eternal high priest ‘after the order of Melchizedek’” (Heb. 6:20), who himself received tithes from Abraham (Gen. 14:17-20).

8. All debts owed by members must be paid, or a sincere effort be made to pay them.

We are exhorted to “owe no one anything, except to love one another” (Rom. 13:8). Members may borrow money, but they must make timely payments on the debt. It is a reproach to Christ for saints to fail to meet their financial commitments, for he has promised to deliver us from the curse of debt if we will walk uprightly (Dt. 28:12-13).

9. Any member who marries outside the faith of Christ will be immediately expelled.

The commandment that children of God marry “only in the Lord” is so clear and consistent throughout the Bible that marrying outside the faith is tantamount to denial of the faith.

10. Also, any member who desires to marry a believer who is not a member here should leave this society and be fully joined to the believer he or she marries.

This society shall not be party to any division between God's people on any level. Husbands and wives are, in God's sight, one flesh. They should, therefore, have the same love and commitment for this society.

11. **Every member of the body of Christ everywhere is to be treated with the dignity which is due a child of God.**
12. **We ask that any believer wishing to become a member of this work for Christ worship with us and live according to these standards for at least six (6) months before asking for membership.**

The pressures which attend our particular work for the body of Christ are such that any saint who desires to be a member of the Pioneer Tract Society needs to be associated with us for some time so that he may make that commitment with full knowledge of the costs, as well as the benefits of doing so. Also, because children may not be able to judge such weighty matters rightly, we ask that anyone requesting membership be of a mature age.

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These standards are basic to holiness and are not intended to be exhaustive. None of these rules will seem distasteful to the soul who is walking in the Spirit. We have only given, in brief and general terms, a description of the kind of life required of those who participate in the holy work entrusted to us. In matters not covered in this list of standards, we must humbly approach the Scriptures in the fear of God, and with the help of the Spirit, which alone is able to guide us into all truth.

Now, we will ask Paul to complete this general description of the kind of life required of all who hope to enter into eternal life with Christ:

“Now, the works of the flesh are obvious, which are: adultery, immorality, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, emulations, angry outbursts, rivalries, disputes, factions, envyings, murders, bouts of drunkenness, revelings, and things like these (concerning which things, I forewarn you, as I also warned you previously, that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, faith, meekness, self-control. Against such there is no law. . . . Now I say, walk in the Spirit and you will not carry out fleshly desire.”