

Brotherhood COVENANT

A covenant is an agreement and commitment, a promise. For the Brotherhood process to be effective, all men need to be either fully in or fully out. Not in between. This is a rigorous process, and it is best for everyone to agree that he is all in before you begin. It's not signing your life away or making a long-term commitment to be part of the group beyond these 10 to 16 weeks, but it is stepping forward and making a promise that you will make the effort to fully participate in the process.

The men in this Brotherhood group include (maximum of 6 men):

Our Brotherhood gatherings will occur at _ am/pm at the following location:

We have agreed to meet on the following dates:

Confidentiality is an essential element to the development of any close relationship. You will be asked to investigate parts of your life and story as a man and to bring these reflections authentically to the others in your Brotherhood. You will not be coerced to share but challenged to go to new places in your own life and story, as well as in your relationships with other men. You agree to honor yourself and the other men by holding what is shared in this group in confidence. Confidence, or con-fide, means to have "faith with" others.

By signing below, I covenant with these men to complete the individual questions for each chapter, attend all gatherings, hold confidence, uphold the rules of engagement, and participate with as much authenticity as I can muster.

I have spoken with my wife or significant other, and she both understands the importance of this in my life and supports me as I pursue God's fullness for me in brotherhood with other men.

Signed:

Rules Of Engagement

In order for this Brotherhood to work, we need to establish some basic Rules of Engagement. These are essential agreements that will help us stay on course and create an atmosphere that is safe, inviting, and encouraging. (Go to restorationproject.net/brotherhood to download this document for everyone to sign.)

NO FIXING | The intention of this type of group is to provide an environment where we do not seek to “fix” each other. A man needs the freedom to say what is on his mind and heart without the fear that others will want to placate, advise, or offer insight into what he should do. Everyone needs to agree to listen and not fix. Advice kills story. The only time advice is to be offered is if it is specifically invited.

TIME IS CRUCIAL | Time is one of men’s most valuable assets. It is vitally important to respect one another’s time. This means showing up on time and ending on time. If you would like to have additional time, go ahead...as long as it is agreed upon by all.

STAY PRESENT | You are in this to learn from and connect with one another. Therefore, you must all agree to engage one another from a place of curiosity rather than assumption. Additionally, it is important to stay engaged with the one talking rather than allow yourself to daydream or anticipate what you will say next. The ache men often feel is to know that others are truly “with” them when they are talking, not drifting away or jockeying for the next comment. Listen. Stay.

SUSPEND JUDGMENT | As this group gets going, you will likely encounter a variety of thoughts, lifestyles, opinions, theologies, and preferences that are vastly different from your own. This is not a place to correct or corral other men. It is, however, a place for you to consider other perspectives, other stories, and other ways of being. If you disagree with someone else’s thoughts or choices, this is not the place to voice your concerns. This is a brotherhood, not a thought-police conference.

RIGHTS AND WRONGS | In order for an atmosphere of safety to be established, every man has the right to “pass” at any point. If he chooses to do so, the group should not push him. The only thing the group may ask is, “why?” It is wrong to force someone to talk about something that is too raw or vulnerable if he does not feel ready. It is better to stay in the group than to feel alienated and leave because of boundary violations.

SHOW UP | You will likely have to fight the urge to abandon the whole thing. Something may come up inside of you that does not want to take the risk to share. Shadows of fight or flight. Or maybe you will find yourself suddenly too tired to focus and engage. Or maybe you feel like what you shared was too much or too little and the other guys think you are an idiot. The most vital part of building relationships with other guys is consistently showing up and acknowledging those thoughts to them. In fact, one of the most transformational ways to deepen relationship with other men is to talk about how it feels to be in relationship with them. Share about your fears, your hopes, your anxieties, your shame. It will open the door to something far deeper than your silence ever could.