



Policy Regarding the Attendance or Membership of Individuals under Registered Sex Offender (RSO) Status

Friend,

Thank you for being willing to have this uncomfortable, but necessary, conversation. If you are reading this policy, it is likely because you or someone close to you has been convicted of or is being investigated about registered sex offender (RSO) status. As a church, we want to be a safe place for everyone to learn about Christ and the gospel.

The pages that follow explain policies we have in place to balance three priorities we have:

1. Safety of children
2. Peace of mind for parents
3. Opportunities to worship and fellowship for everyone, including those under RSO status

This document is meant to answer frequently asked questions. It is written primarily to the individual under RSO status, although occasionally it will change audiences to address concerns that are frequently raised by (a) spouse-family-friends of the individual under RSO status or (b) parents in the church who want clarity regarding this policy.

We recognize that wrestling with the consequences of past actions can be emotionally difficult. We want to reiterate throughout this process that you are offered full forgiveness because of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We do not want you to live with a sense of shame. However, forgiveness does not mean the removal all the implications of past sin. That is what this document discusses.

If you need time to process this document and its implications, we want to grant that, but ask that you refrain from attending services or events until you can agree to adhere to these guidelines and the church has had an opportunity to make the necessary arrangements. During the intervening time we are happy to try to facilitate worship services in your home where you can engage with the weekend services via a video format with the support of fellow believers.

Summary of Approach: There are three basic things we would ask of you in order to fulfill our holistic pastoral care responsibilities to you and our congregation as a whole.

First, we ask that you **sign a release of information with each person in your rehabilitative care or legal accountability team** to speak with us about your progress. We value their insight on how to best care for you. We want them to have the freedom to contact us if any yellow flag concerns emerge in your cooperation with their care.

FAQ: *How do I do this?* In the attendance agreement included in this document we have included language that would give us (church elders) permission to speak with these individuals (various professionals). In order for the other professionals to have permission to speak with us, they need to create a release of information for you to sign. We do not need a copy of their release of information. We do need to know when this step has been completed before we contact them. We ask that you also provide these professionals with a copy of this document.

Second, we ask that you **refrain from any presence or involvement in The Summit Church's children or student ministries**. This restriction includes (if applicable) checking your children in for children/student ministry events. This restriction will persist even if RSO status is removed. You can attend services where children are present, such as worship services, provided that one of your shepherding individuals is present.

Included in this expectation is that you **not attend any service or event where someone you harmed or their family is present**. If this stipulation means that someone must change campuses, we would require that this be you rather than the person you harmed or their family. When we have church-wide events with multiple services times the elder over your care would work with the other individual/family to ensure this expectation could be honored.

Third, we ask that you **agree to have a shepherding presence with you whenever you are at a Summit facility or event**.



FAQ: *Who are these shepherding individuals? How are they selected? What do they do?* A Summit elder will be placed over your care and ensure that this policy is followed. That elder will work with you to select the team of individuals who can serve as your shepherding presence at Summit events and services. These individuals cannot be a family member (i.e., spouse, sibling, parent, etc.), but we do want them to be people that you know, trust, and like (i.e., a small group member, friend, serving team peer, etc.).

We ask that one these individuals be with you whenever you are at a Summit service or event. This person would greet you when you arrived at a Summit service or event, at a discrete location, and have you check-in via an app on their phone. After services you would check out in the same manner. Between these times, this shepherding individual would be with you, meaning within sight lines and casual talking distance, at all times.

In function, these individuals should be viewed as a supportive friend. We want to identify people you would be “doing life with” at Summit anyway and make that more intentional. Socially, there would be nothing to draw attention to this shepherding arrangement.

FAQ: *Why is this needed? How is this loving?* This is a form of protection for you and provides peace of mind to the families in our church. For you, this ensures that if any accusation were to emerge that we would have someone with you who could give testimony to where you were and what you were doing. For other Summit families, it gives parents peace of mind that we are responsibly shepherding individuals under RSO status.

We are asking both sides to make sacrifices. We are asking you to accept a limitation on your freedom. We are asking families to sacrifice peace of mind that would be present if we did not allow anyone under RSO status to attend.

We believe affording this protection to everyone, even with the sacrifices it entails, is best way to fulfill our responsibility to shepherd and care for everyone in our congregation.

FAQ: *Who would know about this arrangement and agreement?* Those who would know about this arrangement are: the pastors of the Summit Church, the lay elders at your campus, campus security teams, and the point person(s) over children and student ministries at your campus.

FAQ: *What if I decide I don't want to adhere to these expectations?* We hope that this would not be the case, but we know some people do not believe that churches, in the name of grace, should impose restrictions like these. We would encourage you, in light of Philippians 2:1-5, to consider the concerns of others more significant than your own. We believe that the concerns of families merit these expectations and a demeanor of “loving your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-40) would lead you to agree. Until you can agree to adhere to these expectations we would ask that you refrain from attending The Summit Church.

Because this is a formal agreement with a check-in-check-out process, we are asking that you sign the attendance agreement below indicating that you understand the process and implications. The content of this agreement is affirmed each time you electronically check in at a Summit service or event.



Attendance Agreement

I agree to the following conditions:

1. I will be assigned a Summit Church shepherding elder who will oversee my pastoral care and ensure that this agreement is being followed.
2. I will fully cooperate with all expectations from my legal trial – meeting with parole officer, case manager, certified sex offender treatment therapist, or other expectations stipulated in my case.
3. I have fully communicated what these legal expectations are to my shepherding elder, provided the name and phone number of professionals overseeing my care, and signed a release of information for them to speak with my shepherding elder.
4. I will get approval from my parole officer (or functional equivalent) to attend Summit Church. A copy of a signed authorization has been provided to my shepherding elder.
5. I agree to have a link to my RSO profile emailed to all Summit Church pastors, campus elders, campus security teams, and children / students ministry campus leads.
6. I will not attend any Summit Church services or activities without my shepherding elder or approved individual. My shepherding elder must approve other individuals to serve in this capacity. If my shepherding elder or an approved individual is not available, I will not attend any Summit Church services or activities.
7. Upon my arrival at a Summit Church service, I will sign in at the designated location (as agreed upon with shepherding elder).
8. I will not serve in any role in a Summit Church ministry without prior approval from my shepherding elder.
9. I acknowledge and agree that all children and student areas are off limits at all times, even if my own children are attending Summit Church and are present and participating in The Summit Church's children or student's ministry or activities. I will not supervise any children's activities nor enter a designated children's area. I will not serve in the Summit Church children's or youth's ministries.
10. I will not attend a Summit Church small group or visit the home of a Summit Church family where children are present, without the parent knowing my history and giving permission for my entry into their home.
11. I will promptly leave any area on Summit Church property where children are present with the exception of a populated church foyer, auditorium, or area where five or more adults are present.
12. I will not have any physical contact with a child at The Summit Church, including, without limitation, sitting next to a child other than my own, holding a child on my lap, or being hugged or kissed by a child at The Summit Church. If a child other than my own approaches me to talk, I will politely acknowledge him or her and promptly leave the area.
13. I will stay within casual conversation distance with my shepherding elder or approved person whenever I am at a Summit event or service. This includes going to restroom. My shepherding elder or approved individual will be in the restroom area. For individual restroom facilities my shepherding elder will wait in the foyer outside the restroom.
14. I understand that my shepherding elder will (a) fully cooperate with any legal inquiry and (b) provide our sign-in-sign-out records should they be requested.

I understand the above conditions. I submit to these conditions and wish to attend Summit Church. I submit to my shepherding elder at Summit Church. I accept that if I break any of the above conditions, I will no longer be allowed to be present at any Summit Church location or activity.

Printed Name of Offender: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Signature of Offender: _____ Date: _____

Church Location Attending: _____

Printed Name of Summit Shepherding elder: _____

Signature of Summit Shepherding elder: _____ Date: _____



File Information

Name of Registered Offender: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Work Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Name of Shepherding elder: _____

List of Approved Shepherding Individuals:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Checklist of Document to Include:

- **Signed Attendance Agreement**
- **Contact information for Parole Officer (or functional equivalent):**
 - Name: _____
 - Phone Number: _____
 - E-mail: _____
 - Document indicating the awareness of and permission for this individual attending The Summit Church
- **Signed a Release of Information to Speak with Their Sex Offender Therapist**
 - Name: _____
 - Phone Number: _____
 - E-mail: _____



Pastoral Interview

The questions below are meant to provide guidance to campus-based pastoral staff who have the initial conversation with individuals under RSO status. It is meant to help pastoral staff know key questions to ask and what to listen for during this interview. This list of questions does not need to be followed sequentially although there is some order to this layout.

It is important to have read their listing on the RSO website prior to this interview.

Questions to Ask:

1. Are you willing to discuss what resulted in you being under RSO status?
 - If yes, express appreciation for their willingness to have talk about a difficult subject.
 - If no, affirm their willingness to know their limits, but make clear that we ask that they not attend any Summit events or services until they are affirm and submit to this policy, which includes this interview.
 - The goal of this question is to demonstrate that we recognize this is hard for them.
2. What was the nature of the offenses that led to your RSO status? (Recommended [blog article](#))
 - When did the offenses begin?
 - How long before you were caught?
 - How did things come to light?
 - What was the legal conclusion?
 - Listen for anger towards the victim(s) or those who supported the victim during the legal process.
3. What have your current legal consequences been?
 - Charges (both those convicted and those dismissed)
 - Probation status (when does it conclude)
 - Other restrictions (e.g., restraining orders)
4. Are you currently engaged in counseling? What type of peer support or accountability do you have?
 - If yes to counseling, who are you seeing and what is their training?
 - You are listening for how proactively they are engaged in recovery.
5. What impact has your actions and legal consequence had on close relationships?
 - Marriage / Children, Parents, Friends, Work
6. Do you know of any of your victims, family of victims, or friends of victims who attend our church?
 - We want to be sure that we ensuring the care and protect against re-traumatization of any current church members who have been harmed by this person's actions.
7. Have you been attending another church since your actions came to light?
 - If yes, why are you transitioning from that church and can we have permission to speak with them?
 - If not, what sparks your interest in attending Summit at this time?
8. Are you willing to agree to the parameters of this attendance agreement?
 - Do not rush them to answer yes or no. But hear their initial impression and reasoning.

Things to Observe:

- Do they become emotionally overwhelmed as they tell their story?
 - Assessment: Is this person going to be able to withstand the process of joining a small group which will entail the members of the group knowing his/her RSO status?
- Can they talk about their actions without minimizing, blame-shifting, or making excuses?
 - Perspective: If their victim or a victim's family/friends heard their presentation of events, would they feel there was proper ownership of his/her actions?
 - Objective Measuring Point: Reading the RSO listing and news articles related to this person's offense can give an initial baseline about the completeness of disclosure to questions
- When they speak of their offenses what is their tone and disposition?
 - Possibilities: stoic, anger, shame, defensive, remorse
- Does this person display the level of repentance and emotional maturity / healing to effectively participate in weekend services and/or a small group?