

# **HOUSE OF HOPE**

## **A Residential Program for Life With God in Recovery**

### **A. PROGRAM PURPOSE**

We purpose to give living witness to our choice for life with God in recovery in a community living situation. We choose to follow Jesus Christ and the values and principles His life taught by word and example. In the giving of our lives together in loving service of God and one another, we seek to faithfully practice what He has shown to be the lifestyle of a person most fully alive.

### **B. COMMITMENTS OF EACH PROGRAM PARTICIPANT**

In the context of living that out in the House of Hope we make the following specific commitments:

1. I choose to give myself wholeheartedly to serving God as my life's focus in ministry, in service, and in encouraging and supporting others to become followers of Jesus Christ as well.
2. I choose to be a person who models hope to those who don't have hope.
3. I choose to be a person who works to establish loving relationships with God and my neighbor.
4. I choose to be a responsible steward of the gifts and talents God has given me and to grow and stretch to become more and more effective as a servant of Jesus Christ in my home, my workplace, and my community.

### **C. COMMITMENTS EXPRESSED AS PRIORITIES FOR LIFE TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY**

**I. PRIORITY OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH GOD:** We choose to live intentionally building relationship with Jesus Christ and learning how to practice a lifestyle of discipleship. We will make time first in my day to get to know God through prayer, through Bible reading and study, through listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and intentionally putting something new into practice every day that God brings to my attention.

**II. PRIORITY OF LIFE IN RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY LIVING:** We choose to live in community as caring persons -- caring for the lives of those around us; caring for the environment in our space and the common areas of the community; making ongoing efforts to create an atmosphere of love and acceptance and sharing in the relationships around us, including offering forgiveness and reconciliation when needed. We I choose to care for visitors by going out of our way to provide hospitality to those who come to this home. We choose to have our personal life shaped by life in community.

**III. PRIORITY OF SIMPLICITY:** We choose to live simply -- having only those things I need for a simple life. We choose to let go of those habits and possessions and relationships that we've used to search for comfort and happiness but which ultimately clutter our hearts and lives and take our focus from seeking the same first in relationship with Jesus Christ. We choose to give care at all times to what we do own, what we prepare, what we find around us. We choose to use in a healthy balance those things that are given to us whether food or money, technology, or other possessions. We choose to give away all habits and possessions that bring harm to us -- body, soul, or spirit.

**IV. PRIORITY OF STEWARDSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** We choose to make full use of the talents and gifts God has given us in service of God and of people around us. We work a full day every day, with a goal towards self-supporting full-time paid employment and in the short term also give ourselves voluntarily in service of others in community work -- giving priority, while we live in the house to those activities where as a community we have chosen to offer hospitality and support.

#### IV. PRIORITIES EXPRESSED IN DAILY PRACTICES

**I. PRIORITY OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH GOD:** We choose to live intentionally building relationship with Jesus Christ and learning how to practice a lifestyle of discipleship. We will make time first in my day to get to know God through prayer, through Bible reading and study, through listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and intentionally putting something new into practice every day that God brings to my attention.

- **SPIRITUAL GROWTH DISCIPLINES:** Bible reading, personal prayer, journaling, the online meditation, dinner devotions, are the foundations of our daily living. Residents practice these disciplines a minimum of 5 of 7 days weekly. The focus is not just DOING certain practices but on having quality “relationship time with God” every day in order to grow in my experience of God and find ways to more and more consistently surrender my life to Him in faithful service of His will.
- **GROUPS FOR DISCIPLESHIP AND FELLOWSHIP:** Each week residents participate in a variety of church services, 12-step meetings, Bible study programs, prayer meetings, or church fellowship groups to learn and practice loving God and our neighbour as God intends in practical ways.
- **PRACTICING DISCIPLESHIP:** Residents make intentional efforts to share the experience, strength, and hope of their new life with others. They welcome prayer and Godly counsel for situations in their own experience and find ways to make the same available to others. They participate in training and service activities that help them develop their life of discipleship.

**II. PRIORITY OF LIFE IN RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY LIVING:** We choose to live in community as caring persons -- caring for the lives of those around us; caring for the environment in our space and the common areas of the community; making ongoing efforts to create an atmosphere of love and acceptance and sharing in the relationships around us, including offering forgiveness and reconciliation when needed. We choose to care for visitors by going out of our way to provide hospitality to those who come to this home. We choose to have our personal life shaped by life in community.

- **RELATIONSHIP/FRIENDSHIP BUILDING:** Residents seek to build friendships with other residents as well as individuals beyond the house. They share fun and encouraging experiences together. They support each other. Rooms are for rest and reflection and common areas are for sharing life together. While there is no need to “live in each other’s pockets” there’s a living together residents seek rather than a habit of living in isolation in the same house. Residents make friends and find ways to do things together as friends. They go to movies or go on walks. They turn off the TV and talk. They encourage others, write notes of kindness and gratitude. When things go wrong, residents make the first move to make it right. Problems are addressed not avoided. Little things are overlooked in love. Records of wrongs are dealt with.
- **HELP WITHOUT BEING ASKED:** Residents demonstrate a willingness to help whenever needed, without being asked or pushed. For example: if someone comes with a carload of food and a resident is relaxing, they will leave they are doing and help. Residents are first to clean up after a meeting every week. Residents don’t leave the co-op until the cleaning is done. They don’t make outside appointments during food co-op time. They show up in the kitchen near 8am on Sunday (unless they have church responsibilities that day) and help until dinner is ready. They help because it reflects a lifestyle of loving service.
- **MEALS PREPARED AND SHARED WITH THOUGHT AND LOVE:** Meal menus are thought about and written down by the Sunday prior. We care about waste so as our day to cook approaches we look to adjust and incorporate left-overs into the meal as well. We vary our meal preparations. We plan for a nice veggie, protein, salad etc. We make a meal that looks and tastes like we care. We use simple ingredients creatively.. We attend community meals and re-schedule anything other than work shifts for another time. We stay at the table until everyone has finished eating. We help clean up.

- **HOSPITALITY:** Residents take the initiative to meet and greet others at meetings and meals. They engage folks in conversation or clean-up activities. They make it their habit to participate in activities such as the Sunday outreach meal. They look for ways to make people feel comfortable and served. When they have clean-up responsibility, they make themselves available in the kitchen; they engage others to work with them. They seek out those folks who seem alone and make efforts to listen to them and include them.

**III. PRIORITY OF SIMPLICITY:** We choose to live simply – having only those things I need for a simple life. We choose to let go of those habits and possessions and relationships that we’ve used to search for comfort and happiness but which ultimately clutter our hearts and lives and take our focus from seeking the same first in relationship with Jesus Christ. We choose to give care at all times to what we do own, what we prepare, what we find around us. We choose to use in a healthy balance those things that are given to us whether food or money, technology, or other possessions. We choose to give away all habits and possessions that bring harm to us -- body, soul, or spirit.

- **ROOMS, CHORES** – Rooms are cleaned and organized in a tidy way every day at the beginning of the day and maintained that way all day. Chore responsibilities are completed by not later than 9 am every day and looked in on later in the day as often as needed to keep the area tidy so others can enjoy themselves in that area. Individual rooms represent simplicity rather than hoarding.
- **HEALTHY LIFE PRACTICES:** In a reasonable manner, residents monitor healthy life practices such as what and how much we eat and exercise and come up with practical plans for balancing that for each of us.
- **SMOKE FREE HOUSE:** Residents choose to neither smoke on the property nor elsewhere while they reside in House of Hope. We make some adjustments for our guests in order to practice hospitality and take care of the neighbours.
- **DESTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS OR HABITS:** Residents live without harmful use of substances such as drugs or alcohol and any other relationships or habits that are identified as detrimental. (Note: As Christians we believe the pursuit of any form of a sexually active or common-law relationship with a person of the same or opposite sex to be outside Biblical teaching and therefore detrimental.)
- **MEDIA CONTENT:** Violent, occultic, or sexually explicit material is not brought into our lives through any media, such as print, TV, internet, telephones, mp3 players, or other tech tools. All media is sifted through the perspective of what helps us grow as caring and respectful persons who serve others and God out of love. We discern what is good fun and what is that edgy anger/lust/violence/in your face material that so fills our culture and we refuse the harmful. Things like daytime soap operas and many of the current “reality” shows either on TV or online fall outside this boundary.

**IV. PRIORITY OF STEWARDSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** We choose to make full use of the talents and gifts God has given us in service of God and of people around us. We work a full day every day, with a goal towards self-supporting full-time paid employment and in the short term also give ourselves voluntarily in service of others in community work – giving priority, while we live in the house to those activities where as a community we have chosen to offer hospitality and support.

- **GETTING UP:** Residents are up and dressed by 8 am at the latest and earlier if needed to get things done before going to work (In other words, in time to get oneself prepared, spend time with God in prayer and meditation, organize their room, and see that their chore is done before going to work).
- **CURFEWS:** We choose to live in a way that welcomes structure to help us live first for God and for the best use of time we’ve been given. So 11pm curfew on weeknights and 1am one night on a weekend is a simple time frame that helps us manage our time, with lights out in reasonable time after that – typically an hour. We end our day as we began it with prayer and reflection or journaling time with God rather than ending

the day with watching TV until the last instant or staying out until the bell tolls .... Flexibility when there's a good reason – of course.

- **WORK DAY SCHEDULE:** Residents work full time during a 5 day work week in either paid employment or schooling/training or volunteering. Work assignments at the house fill temporarily fill in gaps as residents work towards full time involvement in the community. Monday to Friday daytime work hours do not include internet gaming and/or TV watching (unless one of those days is designated an OFF day because the resident worked a weekend day or a night shift).
- **LOOK AROUND TO CLEAN AND CARE:** Residents take care of chore areas as many times as needed every day so chore area is kept clean and tidy. They look at a flower bed, a hedge, a lawn, the lawn furniture whatever and DO SOMETHING more than once a week. They pick up and put something away in the laundry room, tidy up something in the kitchen, empty the dishwasher, tidy the living room, wipe the railing going down the stairs, clean a window, close the front door when it is swinging open in the wind and the rain, etc. They look around to notice and then to do whatever needs doing.