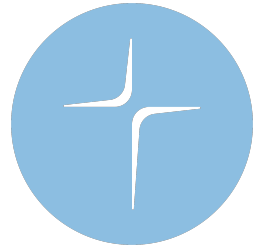


Membership Matters

Why Northstar Is a Covenant Membership Church



There's several reasons that we advocate church membership. We believe that church membership is **biblically-based**, **spiritually encouraging** and **socially necessary**. We also feel that church membership should be **mission-centered**. Therefore, we have created a form of church membership that embraces all four core values, which we call *covenant membership*.

We live in a culture that is highly individualistic and narcissistic. It's a culture that promotes the self and celebrates independence. Contrast that with the teachings of Jesus that clearly portray spiritual dependence upon God and interdependence with one another. When we ignore the teachings of the New Testament about how we're to organize and relate with one another, then we find resistance by unthinking Christians toward joining a local church.

Church Membership Is:

Biblically-based. There are many places in the New Testament that highlight a formal belonging of Christians to a recognized local gathering, but here are two passages that make it clear:

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." (Hebrews 13:17)

"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church." (Matthew 18:17)

In the first passage, it communicates genuine accountability to identified leaders. In the second passage, it communicates that Jesus intended believers to understand who comprised the local church.

Spiritually encouraging. In 1 Corinthians 12, we are given the analogy of the church as a body. We were not made to be independent but interdependent on one another. Therefore the church and its God-given leaders helps prepare Christians to serve in the way God has gifted them.

Socially necessary. Jesus did not create spiritual anarchy but spiritual order. He gave the church leaders (see Ephesians 4:11-13) to lead and guide each local fellowship. Only when organized effectively can the church encourage its members, systematically teach its members, raise them up to spiritual maturity and prepare them for mission.

Mission-centered. We do not advocate a church membership "roll" in which names are collected and membership becomes meaningless and bloated. Our membership is centered around our vision of "Be the Church." We were not saved to sit and soak up Bible knowledge

but to serve and obey the Lord in His commission to make disciples of all nations and raise people to spiritual maturity.

Covenant Membership

Covenant Membership is a commitment between our members and the Lord to serve each other, reach the lost, and glorify the Father *together*. We renew our membership annually in order to remind one another that we are on mission together.

Please review our [membership covenant](#) to get a better idea of the specific commitments we make to one another.

FAQs

- **What if I'll be moving/transitioning before the year is up?** You should join anyway, as a testimony to how God has used the church in your life.
- **What can a member do that a non-member can't?** Church members can serve in ways that attenders cannot. Leadership positions such as Leadership Board, Staff Team, small group leader and more are only available to members.
- **What about college students?** Should they join the church? [9marks](#) has an [excellent article](#), but in summary:
 - ✦ *Church membership should not be kept out of sentimental value.* Many students want to retain their membership in their "home church," yet upon graduation, few will return to their home church.
 - ✦ *Church membership is meant to be meaningful.* It's not a club membership in which you retain privileges. Your membership should belong to the church in which you regularly participate and receive spiritual encouragement and teaching.
 - ✦ *Where do you regularly gather?* A student should unite with the local church in which he/she worships most frequently.
 - ✦ *Who is best positioned to keep watch over your soul?* It's very difficult for a long-distance pastor or minister to encourage you spiritually.
 - ✦ *College students should not be thought of as a "special case."* Students should see themselves as disciples of Jesus and unite with other disciples in order to serve and be encouraged in their spiritual growth.
- **What about youth?** (Grades 6-12)
 - ✦ *We encourage youth to be active church members.* Many times a youth's parents will join Northstar before their child is youth-age. Upon entering sixth grade, we encourage our youth to participate in *Discovering Northstar*.
 - ✦ *We are sensitive to the reality that many of our youth have parents who aren't members at Northstar.* We would not want to cause family disunity by encouraging a youth whose parents aren't members to join the church. Therefore, we work with each youth and family on a situational basis to ensure that all involved understand what it means to join the church.
- **How do I join?** Simple. Sign up for our *Discovering Northstar* class. It doesn't obligate you, and it's a fun, informal gathering to answer questions and provide information for you about what our beliefs, organization, vision and values.