



MEMBERSHIP FAQs

Is Membership Biblical?

Yes, membership is biblical, except you won't find an explicit command in the Bible to "join a church!" However, the Bible gives good indication that there was a way the early church knew who was a part of the church, and who wasn't.

For example:

- Acts 6: The church knew who were the widows who were not receiving their daily distribution. The Apostles assembled the "full number of disciples" indicating it was clear who would be at this meeting. Further, the disciples were instructed to pick seven men "from among you" indicates there was a clear pool of people to choose from.
- 1 Timothy 5: Paul gives instruction to the church to enroll widows for honor and care.
- 1 Corinthians 5: Paul instructs the church to remove the sinful man from the church- to be put outside it needs to be clear who belongs to the church.
- 1 John 2: the "antichrists" who left the church were "not of us." For John to make this statement it must have been clear who the "us" were.

Further, God's method has been to put his covenant people into covenant community. In the Old Testament, God made his covenant people into the nation of Israel. Israel was set apart and distinct from the other nations. In the New Testament, God puts his covenant people into the covenant community known as the church.

Is Membership Necessary?

Because we see membership as biblical, it follows that membership is necessary. Here are some ways it is necessary and helpful:

- Membership is necessary and helpful because it makes it clear that a person is in a covenant relationship with God (the person is a Christian), and that the person is in a covenant relationship with other believers in a particular local church. This is helpful in a couple of ways: first, membership prevents people from thinking they are Christians because they show up to a Sunday meeting, or said a prayer when they were a child. Membership doesn't make one a Christian, it helps clarify what is a Christian. Second, membership helps one give evidence to his/her Christianity by committing to love, serve, and grow in a particular local church. This makes it clear who can be counted on, and it prevents a consumerist approach to life with a church.
- Membership is necessary and helpful because it makes it clear for whom the pastoral leadership (elders) are responsible. Hebrews 13:17 says leaders are to give an account to God for those they watch over. Membership makes it clear who those people are.
- Membership is necessary and helpful because it is how we grow as Christians. How do you grow in a church? By loving its members. By loving and serving and forgiving one another. By doing the nearly 50 "one anothers" found in Scripture. This doesn't mean we don't love those outside the church, but the 'one anothers' are given to the church for the church. You can't do the 'one anothers' apart from the church.

What if I don't want to become a member?

First, ask yourself why? Did you have a bad experience in another church? Are you keeping the “back door” open just in case? Is your heart prideful and independent?

Second, search the Scriptures and submit yourself to God's Word. We encourage you to speak with an elder about your hesitations. Maybe there is something that can be cleared up.

Can non-members attend Sunday gatherings?

Yes.

Does joining a church make me a Christian?

No, however, it makes sense that only Christians are members.