



## WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

There is one universal (catholic) church.

*Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 4:4-6*

There is one leader of the church – the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Colossians 1:17-18a; Ephesians 5:23*

The Universal Church finds expression in the form of organized local bodies. We call this the Local Church.

*Acts 16:5, Romans 16:5, Romans 16:16,*

1 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:2

## WHAT DO LOCAL CHURCHES DO?

## 1) Preach the Word of God – The Gospel

*Acts 2:14-41, 3:11-26, 4:8-12, Romans 10:17,*

*Philippians 1:15-18, 2 Timothy 4:1-2*

## 2) Properly Administer the Sacraments

Baptism: *Matthew 28:18-20*

## The Lord's Supper: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

### 3) Practice Church Discipline

1 Corinthians 5:1-12

#### 4) Identify and Appoint Leaders

*Acts 6:1-7, Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Timothy 5:3-17,*

Hebrews 13:17

## 5) Equip Believers for the Work of Ministry

*Ephesians 4:11-16*

## 6) Care for the Poor

*Galatians 2:10, 1 John 3:16-19*

NOTES:

[illegible]



## WHAT IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

Even though scripture does not contain an explicit command for believers to join a local church, it is certainly implied throughout the New Testament that believers are part of (or members of) a local church body. We can see this through:

- (1) the example of the early church
- (2) the existence of church government,
- (3) the exercise of church discipline, and
- (4) teachings for strengthening the church.

### 1) The Example of the Early Church

Inclusion into a local church was always connected with conversion - Acts 2:41

Letters of commendation. - Acts 18:27; Romans 16:1; 2  
Corinthians 3:1-2; Colossians 4:10

## 2) The Role of Church Leaders

Local churches followed the Apostles. - Acts 16:4-5

Church offices - *Ephesians 4:11*

Organized programs and systems - *1 Timothy 5:3-16*

Obeying church leaders - *Hebrews 13:17*

### 3) The Exercise of Church Discipline

If church leaders can *exclude* someone from the local church, there must also be a way to *include* them in it.

1 Corinthians 5:1-12

#### 4) Teachings for Strengthening the Church

Believers are to strengthen other believers.

*John 13:35; Romans 12:3-8; Galatians 6:10,*

Hebrews 10:25; 1 John 4:12

The way that we express inclusion in the local church today is **Church Membership**. Through this, members make a conscious decision to be included in a local church, and church leaders regulate that inclusion.

*Church Membership is a commitment between a Christian and a local church expressing connection to Christian community and bearing fruit in mutual edification.*

NOTES:

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## THE BENEFITS OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

## 1) Belonging To A Church Family

Biblical Community is a Covenant Commitment to one another.  
*Acts 2:42-47*

## 2) Elder Protection

We are under the care of elders and pastors and they are held accountable for how they lead us.

*Hebrews 13:17*

### 3) Church Discipline

This is a benefit to us so we may never stray from the faith.  
*1 Corinthians 5:1-12; Hebrews 10:24-25; Hebrews 13:17; Ephesians 4:11-16*

#### 4) Serving in Ministry Positions

At Stones Crossing Church, we retain certain leadership and ministry roles by reserving them for members.

- Elders
- Ministry Leaders
- D-Group Leaders / Class Teachers
- Student and Children Small Group Leaders

NOTES:

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**THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CHURCH MEMBER**

**BELONG** – We belong to God and to one another.

**I will be an active participant in my church** by attending worship faithfully, praying for its health and growth, and caring for the bride of Christ through faithful service and love.

*Hebrews 10:24-25, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, Galatians 2:10, Galatians 6:10*

**I will safeguard the unity of my church** by acting in love toward by brothers and sisters in Christ, refusing to gossip or slander, refraining from any word or deed that may be a stumbling block to others, and submitting to church leadership.

*Romans 12:9-13, Romans 12:16, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Galatians 6:10, Ephesians 4:29, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 3:8*

**If I must leave Stones Crossing Church for any reason,** I will notify the appropriate elder, pastor or staff member, and seek another church where I can carry out my responsibilities as a Christian and member of the universal church.

**BECOME** - We are formed in the image of Christ.

**I will actively pursue spiritual growth** by consistently and faithfully studying God's word and praying, and submitting myself to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

*Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22*

**I will submit to the authority of scripture** as the final authority on all matters.

*Psalms 119, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21*

**I will strive to live a holy lifestyle** submitting to scripture in every area of life by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit in response to the mercy the Father has shown us through Jesus Christ.

*Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3*

**I will faithfully steward the gifts and resources God has entrusted to me** according to the commands of scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit. This includes the use of my time, talents, spiritual gifts, and financial resources.

*Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2, 13; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11*

**BEYOND** – We serve others and spread the gospel.

**I will serve in the ministry of my church** by giving myself to a program or ministry where I can use my spiritual gifts and abilities, and willingly give my time and energy when needs arise.

*Romans 12:9-13, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:1-16*

**I will pray for unbelievers** and seek out opportunities to tell the gospel message to my unsaved family members and friends.

*Matthew 9:37-38, Luke 19:10, Romans 10:1, 1 Timothy 2:1-6, 2 Peter 3:9*

**I will support my church's strategy to fulfill the Great Commission** by praying for our local and global mission teams and/or supporting our local and global missions either financially or through participation.

*Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 15:22-33*

### THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Membership into Stones Crossing Church is gained by meeting all of the following requirements:

- Be a Christian (Profession of faith in Jesus Christ)
- Believer's Baptism
- Membership Class
- Elder Interview
- Membership Covenant

#### Follow-Up Questions:

- 1) How does this understanding of the church and what local churches do compare to your previous church experiences?
- 2) Do you agree that Church Discipline can be considered a benefit to church members? Why?
- 3) Do you have any questions or concerns about the requirements for Church Membership? (If so, please email these to Chris McLaughlin at [chris@stonescrossing.com](mailto:chris@stonescrossing.com).)