

The “how” and “why” of CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Recommended reading: “Church Membership,” by Jonathan Landry Cruse

Discuss, while waiting to begin: Why do YOU belong to a church?

Why become a church “Member”? (according to Ephesians)

God’s plan for the church:

Eph. 1:10, God’s plan: everything under Christ

Eph. 2:14, God’s prototype: a united body...

Eph. 3:10, ... to display God’s wisdom... through the CHURCH

God’s plan in action:

Love - Eph. 4:1-2

Romans 15:1 “We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

Romans 12:13, 15-16 “Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality . . . Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another.”

Galatians 6:10, 1 Peter 2:17

Leaders – Eph. 4:11

Hebrews 13:17 “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.”

Encourage – Eph. 4:12

1 Thessalonians 5:11 “Encourage one another & build one another up.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 “Consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

Guard – Eph. 5:11

Hebrews 12:15-16 “See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy. . .”

1 Corinthians 5:1-5, Matthew 18:15-20

Putting it all together: Biblical church membership involves relationships that are...

committed – the one another’s are demanding!

a defined group of people

genuine

Proverbs 27:6, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.”

Discuss: How would you respond to the following questions and statements?

1. Isn't it possible to be a Christian, but to have a casual relationship with a local church?
2. I've been badly hurt by a church.
3. From where in the Bible do you even get formal church membership in the Bible?
4. *"The visible church... is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."* WCF 25.2

Conclusion: be a committed church Member...

1. For non-Christians
2. For the Body
3. For your own safety
4. For your church leaders
5. For God

Immanuel's membership covenant

A person must:

- i. Be aged 16 years or over, & attending Immanuel regularly for at least 6 months;
- ii. Ordinarily, not be a Member of another church;
- iii. Have been baptised (whether in infancy or at a later time);
- iv. Demonstrate a credible profession of faith in Christ;
- v. Publicly affirm to the church their profession of faith and acceptance of membership, whether verbally or in writing. This means saying "yes" to these simple affirmations that form our Membership Covenant:

I am trusting the gospel of grace for my salvation

- I know that I am a sinner in God's sight. Without Jesus and his death upon the cross I would face His holy judgement. My only hope is God's sovereign mercy.
- I believe that Jesus Christ is both Lord and Saviour. I trust Him alone for my salvation, as He is presented to me in God's Word the Bible.

With the Holy Spirit's help I am seeking to grow in godliness

- I want to be devoted to personal Bible reading and prayer.
- I want to share Christ with unbelievers such as I am able.
- I want to live a holy life in line with the ethical teaching of the Bible in those different relationships to which God has called me.

I am committed to the people and work of Immanuel Church Brentwood

- With the Lord's help I want to love the members of Immanuel as members of my own family. (God wants us to encourage each other, resolve tensions biblically, and respect those who lead the church).
- I will be committed to meeting regularly with and praying for my church.
- Such as I am able I will give regularly to support the work of Immanuel.
- I want to use the gifts God has given me to help the church family and to aid our outreach to the unconverted. I understand and support the mission of Immanuel, and will seek to be involved in an area of service.