

INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

I. The Meaning of Church Membership

Church membership is the commitment of the believer to be identified and dynamically involved with a local body of Christians who have placed themselves under the authority of Jesus Christ.

II. The Nature of Church Membership

Church membership is a divinely established, legally binding relationship between God and His people whereby they agree to function in harmony with other believers under His designated structure of authority in accordance with the revealed guidelines of Scripture resulting in long-term consequences over time. This relationship is called a covenant.

III. The Goal of Church Membership

It is God's expressed desire that each member of His Church becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ. Discipleship is that process whereby a Christian progressively learns to bring every area of their life under the lordship of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; I Corinthians 10:3; Matthew 10:24-29).

IV. The Philosophy of Church Membership

The Church has been established to be a spiritual community, which models the kingdom of God on earth. As such, it is the role of the Church and its members to provide a divine alternative of God's activity in the world without at the same time becoming a part of the world (John 17:14-19).

V. The Vision of Church Membership

Since it is the role of the Church to be God's alternative in society, then it is the vision of this church to develop a comprehensive program of outreach, not only in the church, but also in the community. This outreach should extend into every social sphere whether it be education, economics, politics etc., so that the sovereignty and supremacy of Christ is demonstrated through the impact of each member of His body, the Church (Ephesians 2:19-23; Colossians 1:14-19).

VI. The Accountability of Church Membership

When a person becomes a member of the local Church he is responsible for pursuing Godliness through the application of the Scripture in their daily lives. It is the responsibility of the Church to assist the believer in achieving this goal as well as holding the member accountable through the process of church discipline

when they refuse to submit themselves to biblical authority (Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:1-8; II Thessalonians 3:14-15).

The willingness to be accountable is reflected in the two symbols Christ left for the members of His Church to observe.

- a. Baptism – This symbol is where a believer publicly identifies with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in so doing pledges to live under his authority in the context of the local Church (Romans 6:1-11).
- b. Communion – This symbol is the ongoing renewal of the Christian's commitment to Jesus Christ. It reflects one's continuous pledge of faithfulness through confession of sin and renewed dependency on God's grace (I Corinthians 11:20-34).

VII. The Experiences of Church Membership

- a. Worship – (Acts 2:42): In worship, our goal will be to get those who enter into our fellowship to make the exaltation of God in their lives and the submitting to His authority the supreme purpose of their lives. This is to be demonstrated by their faithful participation in the corporate Sunday gathering of the Church and regular participation in communion.
- b. Education – (Acts 2:42,): Each member is to attend at least one Bible Class. This promotes learning among God's people and an obedient response to His word.
- c. Outreach – (Acts 2:41, 47): Each member is to be serving in one ministry area of the church so as to further the ministry of Mt. Zion both internally to our membership for the building of this local body, and externally to the world for the salvation of souls and the bettering of society.
- d. Fellowship – (Acts 2:42-47): To provide a system of accountability and intimate fellowship at our ever-growing Church. Each member is assigned a prayer partner to provide a context for mutual support and encouragement.

VIII. The Expectations of Church Membership

A member of Mt. Zion can expect to receive the following:

- a. The faithful teaching and preaching of God's word so that they can grow.
- b. A program designed to minister to the unique needs of all members of the family (children, youth, adults).

- c. A leader who will maintain regular contact with you so that the Church is kept abreast of your needs, prayer requests and praises.
- d. A dynamic context of fellowship and the building of quality Christian relationships.

IX. The Responsibilities of Church Membership

All members of Mt. Zion are to fulfill three areas of responsibilities:

- a. **GROW** - This is the responsibility to regularly and obediently expose oneself to the Word of God so that the Spirit of God can produce the process of spiritual maturity in one's life (I Peter 2:2).
- b. **SERVE** - This is the responsibility to use your abilities and time to serve the broader body of Christians in the Church. This is accomplished through the selection and faithful participation in one area of church ministry (I Corinthians 12:12-27).
- c. **GIVE** - This is the responsibility to share your resources with the Lord and His Church for the furthering of the ministry of the Church. This is accomplished through the giving of a minimum of 10% from the total of one's earnings to the Church (I Corinthians 16:1-2).