

# Membership Does Matter in Christ's Church

## Why is Membership Important?

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### 1. Membership Accurately Pictures the Unity of the Body of Christ.

The body of Christ is made up of many members inextricably bound together through the redemptive work of Christ. And just as they make up the universal body of Christ, God has given to each individual spiritual gifts with which they can — and must — obediently employ in the upbuilding of the believers. This takes place in a localized assembly of gathered believers.

### 2. Membership Willingly Identifies with Others in the Body of Christ.

A believer in Christ should desire to identify with other believers through a covenant of discipline and witness. To identify with Christ and refuse to identify with Christ's people is contradictory and must be confronted as sinful. A mark of true salvation is that a child of God loves those who are born of God. This includes an eager willingness to associate with those who are also saved by Christ and brought into the family of God.

### 3. Membership Eagerly Submits to the Leadership of the Body of Christ.

When a Christian eagerly and humbly enters into church membership, he obediently follows Scripture in submitting to the pastors and elders. Every Christian is commanded by Scripture to know their leaders, to respect them, and to obey them. This is impossible to do when one has not committed to a local flock.

### 4. Membership Humbly Accepts the Accountability of the Body of Christ.

To be a member is to invite scrutiny, accountability, and shepherding care. A Christian longs for this. A believer accepts the accountability of other caring Christians who desire to come alongside to help stimulate growth, guard from sin, and bear each other's burdens.

### 5. Membership Helpfully Allows the Shepherds to Know Who is 'Among Their Flock'.

God commands all pastors to shepherd the flock of God *among them*. For the pastors and elders to know just who their flock is *among them* almost certainly requires some sort of membership structure. Especially with the plethora of churches in the present day and the consumeristic mentality that many have, it is extremely important to join oneself in membership to a local church so the leadership knows who the sheep are for whom they will give an account one day before the Lord.

### 6. Membership Clearly Demonstrates that One is Not Outside but Inside Christ's Church.

In Scripture, and particularly in the context of church discipline, church membership is to show who is "inside" and who is "outside" the church. Those who are inside the church must be disciplined by the church when they fall into persistent, unrepentant sin. Those outside, however, God judges. The way to determine who is "in" and who is "out" must be through an active, up-to-date membership in a local flock.

### 7. Membership Faithfully Follows the New Testament Pattern of Adding Saints to a Church's Number (or 'the List').

When people repented of sin, believed in Christ, and subsequently were baptized, the book of Acts says that many were "added to their number." There was a list in the early church that widows who met certain requirements were to be placed upon so they could receive adequate care. These examples demonstrate that the early church had a pattern of adding saints to their number or putting folks on a certain "list." Church membership certainly fits this as individuals who profess faith in Christ, who have then been baptized, and who are walking in holiness join themselves together in a local church where they can together grow in Christlikeness and evangelize with boldness.