

## Podcast: Confessing The Faith

### Episode 22: Membership Required?

Participants: Joe Anady, Mike Thezier

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#### Q1: What does Emmaus' membership process look like?

#### Q2: What is the rationale behind the process?

#### Q3: Where in the scriptures do you see a warrant for establishing a membership process such as this?

We are members of Christ's body by faith. Baptism symbolizes the beginning of this. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the continuation of this. But these are ordinances of the church.

Christians are to join themselves to local churches

- The Apostles planted churches
- "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." (Hebrews 10:25, ESV)

Those local churches consist of officers (pastors/elders and deacons) and members

- "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." (Hebrews 13:17, ESV)

The scriptures specify the job of pastors

- Read 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus

The New Testament is a church book

Some kind of membership process is necessary and biblical

- "As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions." (Romans 14:1, ESV)
- The context/situation will have an impact on the details of the process
- We are flexible, by the way

#### Q4: Why are some churches and Christians so opposed to formal membership?

Individuals

- When they hear "membership" they think of a club which requires dues
- Emphasize our spiritual and individual union to Christ to the neglect of the corporate nature of the faith
- Some have been "burned" in the past and are hesitant
- Some are quarrelsome (Rom. 14:1) and therefore have no desire to come under any kind of authority
- Some want to attend church without having to be the church

Churches

- Insist upon an explicit command in scripture concerning church membership when it is in fact implied
  - LBC 1.6 - "there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed."
- It's hard work
- It's slow going
- It involves personal and relational ministry (instead of programs)
- A membership process inevitably involves the establishment of standards, doctrinal or ethical. Some churches fear creating barriers of any kind.

The truth is that all churches have some kind of membership process. They have some way of identifying who is with them. The question is, *is the process a good and biblical one that will help to promote health in the body and establish a sound church?*

#### Q5: Must a Christian Be A Member of a Local Church?

To be saved? No.

But it is right and proper.

#### Q6: What would be your advice to someone looking to join a church?

Find a true church.

If possible, find a healthy church.

#### Q7: Recommended resources?

Study the doctrine of the church (Milne?)

"9 Marks of a Healthy Church"

“Jesus Loves the Church and so Should You” - Earl Blackburn