

Understanding Church Membership

What is the Church?

What is a local church?

Thirty-Seven Reasons to Commit to a Local Church

1. Because it reassures the brothers and sisters that you are committed to healthy biblical doctrine
2. Because it reassures the brothers and sisters that you will work together with them to ensure that healthy doctrine continues to be taught at this particular church (Gal. 1:6)
3. Because it reassures the brothers and sisters that you have a similar understanding of the essentials of Christian living
4. Because God describes the local church as a household or family (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17)
5. Because God describes the local church as a temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17)
6. Because God describes the local church as a flock with shepherds (1 Peter 5:3)
7. Because the pastors' job is to equip the saints for the ministry of building up the local church (Eph. 4:11-16)
8. Because God describes the church as a body with members that are necessary and dependent upon one another. They have to show up consistently and carry out their role (2 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:15-16)
9. Because 1 Cor. 12:21 says that the members of the body cannot say that they do not need one another. Each member is essential to each local church
10. Because all of the Bible's "one another" commands indicate that there was a specific group of people that the believers' knew they were supposed to "one another" (Gal. 6:2, etc.)
11. Because you need a family committed to caring for you, suffering with you, rejoicing with you, and sharing their spiritual gifts with you (1 Cor. 12:25-31)
12. Because every widow should have a committed church family (1 Timothy 5:3-16)
13. Because it fits with the biblical emphasis on loyal, covenant-keeping love (Hosea 2:19 & 6:6, for example)
14. Because it helps to prevent cliques in the church (1 Cor. 12:21)
15. Because it might make you less likely to give in to the tendency to neglect gathering with your brothers and sisters (Hebrews 10:25)
16. Because the Bible tells Christians to obey and submit to their leaders in the local church (Heb. 13:17)
17. Because pastors are called to give an account to the Lord about how they have watched over particular souls (Heb. 13:17) and to faithfully serve "those in their charge" (1 Peter 5:3)
18. Because membership eases the discipling burden on the elders (Eph. 4:1-16)
19. Because membership encourages the elders
20. Because membership creates a group of people who feel a specific responsibility to care for the pastors (1 Timothy 5:17; Galatians 6:6; 1 Corinthians 9:1-12)
21. Because membership enables a healthy form of church organization in which the pastors benefit from congregational involvement
22. Because membership holds pastors accountable in a healthy way (1 Timothy 5:22)
23. Because membership enables financial accountability and stewardship
24. Because deacons are vital for the church, and the "full number of the disciples" was summoned to choose deacons (Acts 6:1-6)
25. Because membership makes it much easier for the deacons to build service teams

26. Because two are better than one (Ecc. 4:9), and a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ecc. 4:12)
27. Because it gives you greater opportunities to use your spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4)
28. Because the Lord's Supper is taken together by a local church family as a family meal (1 Cor. 10:17)
29. Because it shows that you are not ashamed to identify with Christ and His people (Mark 8:38)
30. Because some people get saved during the membership process
31. Because the pattern from the first church in Jerusalem suggests that they kept track of who was part of the church (Acts 2:41, 47)
32. Because membership encourages departing sheep to reconnect quickly with another church family
33. Because membership makes it easier to see who might be getting left behind
34. Because your brothers and sisters need you to be committed to them – and you need them to be committed to you – in case of spiritual danger (Heb. 3:13)
35. Because 1 Corinthians 5:12 distinguishes between those inside and outside of the local church
36. Because Jesus taught (Matthew 18:15-20) that a persistently rebellious believer needs a church family who can be recruited to appeal to him and even – if absolutely necessary – make the decision to begin treating him like an unbeliever. This is related to the exhortation to “bring back a sinner from his wandering” (James 5:20) and that “if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness” (Gal. 6:1). It is also related to the warning against a “root of bitterness” (which is referring primarily to a person) that may “spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled” (Hebrews 12:15).
37. Because the Apostle Paul taught (1 Corinthians 5:1-13) that blatantly and persistently rebellious professing Christians should be “removed” by the “assembled” church family “with the power of our Lord Jesus.” The “evil” person who “bears the name of brother” is to be “cleansed” or “purged” from the membership of the local church. This includes not even “eating” with them in a way that would seem to give approval to their profession of Christianity. This is related to the “punishment by the majority” referred to in 2 Cor. 2:6, as well as the exhortations about “keeping away from a brother who is living in idleness” (2 Thes. 3:6), “having nothing to do with” those who “refuse to obey” the Scriptures (2 Thes. 3:14-15), and not receiving into your house those who bring false teaching (2 John 10-11).