

Fellowship Bible Church

membership
ESSENTIALS

Biblical Foundations for Church Membership

Even though there is no “address” and the words, “church membership”, do not appear in the New Testament, it is a thoroughly Biblical concept.

Church Membership is Biblical because it fits the *pattern* of the New Testament, both generally and specifically.

General Pattern (Implicit)

- Jesus assumes the existence of the local church in His teachings (The Gospels)
- 13 (possibly 14) NT letters were written to local churches (each giving specific instructions to the various congregations)
 - 59 “one another” passages in the NT
 - Paul’s early ministry included “appointing elders in every city”

Specific Pattern (Explicit)

Acts 2:41: “...those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were *added* about three thousand souls...”

Acts 6:2: “...So the twelve summoned the *congregation* of the disciples...”

1 Corinthians 5:12-13: “...For what have I to do with judging *outsiders*? Do you not judge those who are *within* the church? But those who are *outside*, God judges. **REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.**”

Specific Pattern (Explicit)

1 Corinthians 12:1-31: “...For even as the body is one and yet has *many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body*, so also is Christ... For the body is not one member, but *many...*”

Ephesians 4:1-16: “...from whom the *whole body*, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies...causes the growth of the body for the building up on itself in love...”

1 Timothy 5:9: “...A widow is to be put *on the list* only if she is not less than sixty years old...But refuse to put younger widows *on the list* if...

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Regular Attendance vs. Joining

The Practical Benefits of Church Membership

Practical Benefits of Church Membership

Provides assurance of salvation

You can be confident that you are part of the “faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” Church membership is not necessary for salvation. However, it is necessary for sanctification, or our growth as a Christian. Church membership allows our profession of faith to be deemed credible, and our lifestyle/conduct to be in line with Scriptural expectations.

Practical Benefits of Church Membership

Allows you to build up the body of Christ

With 59 “one another” passages, it is impossible to accomplish this without a deep commitment to others. The existence of these “one another” passages reminds us that the Christian life is not to be lived alone. Our spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4) are intended to be used in service of others, not ourselves. Church membership allows us to prioritize others, pursue holiness, and follow in the example of Christ (see Philippians 2)

Practical Benefits of Church Membership

Allows you to be built up by the body of Christ

Selfishness is a pervasive sin problem for all of us. Church membership allows us to be cared for *by* others, just as much as it allows us to care for others.

Consider this: the expectation of the NT is that we concern ourselves with others, trusting that others will concern themselves with us!

Practical Benefits of Church Membership

Offers a pure testimony to unbelievers

Jesus calls His people to “make disciples of all the nations.” Evangelism and discipleship are corporate responsibilities, and offer the *best* testimony to unbelievers. The word, “love”, in the NT is often a verb, not a noun. The

unbelieving world will “know you are My disciples, by your love for one another.” This is not just a good feeling. It is a *deep commitment* from one person to another.

Practical Benefits of Church Membership

It brings glory to God

We serve a covenant-making, promise-keeping God, and He has called us to be a reflection of Himself (see 1 Peter 1). It is God-honoring for us to covenant (pledge/promise) with other like-minded believers, since it is a tangible reminder of God's covenant with us!