



A Biblical Understanding of Church Membership

- 1) The biblical grounds for New Testament church membership
 - a. **Support for a body of believers who maintained a certain lifestyle**— Matt.18:15-17; 1 Cor.12:12-27; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor. 7:17;
 - i. Pauline epistles were written to local pockets of believers
 - ii. There is an assumption in Scripture that every Christian will be a part of a local church
 - b. **Support for officers in local church**-- Acts 14:23; Acts 15:22; 1 Tim. 3:1-15; Phil.1:1; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Pet.5:1-5
 - c. **Support for membership record-keeping in the early church**—
 - i. God Himself keeps a list of all believers-- Phil.4:3; Rev.21:27
 - ii. The early church maintained a list of baptized believers—Acts 2:41; Acts 4:4
 - iii. Paul refers to “the majority” vote-- 2 Cor.2:6-7
 - iv. The early church maintained a list of widows—1 Tim.5:9
 - v. How do we know who is inside and outside the church? 1 Cor.5:12-13
 1. Church attendance is no indication of genuine salvation
 2. Implication of this text is that there are committed, born-again people who are inside
 - vi. How can a pastor shepherd a disorganized flock? Matt.16:19; Matt.28:19; Matt.18:17-18; 1 Pet.5:1-2
 - vii. How can a shepherd discipline or excommunicate someone who was never a member in the first place? 1 Cor.5
 - viii. Who gets to vote? Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim.3:1-15
 1. If there is not organization for church membership, how can we be sure that only committed and genuine born-again Christians are voting in church officers?
 2. What is to prohibit someone from inviting their friends in to bolster the vote?
- 2) What is a church member and how do they live?
 - a. According to Scripture, what is a church member?
 - i. **A new creation**--2 Cor.5:17
 - ii. **A life hidden with Christ in God**-- Col.3:1-4
 - iii. **A person who has died and identified**--Gal.2:20
 - iv. **A person who produces good fruit**--Matt.7:15-20; Gal.5:16-24
 - v. **A person who goes**--Matt.28:19-20; Lk.9:23
 - vi. **A person who has been buried in baptism and risen to new life**-Rom.6; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 8:12-16; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 16:19; 1 Cor.12:13
 - vii. **A citizen, a saint, and a member of the house of God**--Eph.2:19-22; 1 Tim.3:14-16
 - viii. **A chosen race, holy nation, sojourner, exile**--1 Pet.2:9-12
 - ix. **A member of the body of Christ**--1 Cor.12:12-27

- b. According to Scripture, how does a church member live?
 - i. **Denies self, takes up cross DAILY, and follows Christ--Lk.9:23**
 - ii. **Bears fruit of the Spirit--Gal.5:22-24**
 - iii. **Devoted to corporate worship in large and small gatherings--Acts 2:42-47**
 - iv. **Devoted to unity and the willingness to offer possessions for the good of the church and the advancement of the Kingdom--Acts 4:32-37; Jn.13:35**
 - v. **Draws nearer to God; stirs up others toward love and good deeds; do not neglect meeting with the body of Christ--Heb.10:19-25**
 - vi. **Places him/herself under the servant leadership of overseers--1 Tim.3:1-15; 1 Pet.5:1-5; 2 Tim.2:2; 2 Tim.4:1-5**
 - vii. **Puts on the things of Christ and dwells in His word--Col.3:12-17**
 - viii. **Supports the ministry with finances and respect the overseers--Rom.15:22-29; 1 Tim.5:17-18**
 - ix. **Partakes in the biblical ordinance of the Lord's Supper unless providentially hindered--1 Cor.11:17-34**
 - x. **Gives at least 10% of treasures back to God--Gen.14:18-20; Gen.28:20-22; Le.27:30; Mal.3:10; Matt.23:23; 1 Cor.9:14; 1 Cor.16:2; 2 Cor.8:1-7; Rom.15:22-29; 1 Tim.5:17-18**

- 3) Church membership should be full of integrity and purity
 - a. **In doctrine--Jude 1:3; 1 Tim.6:20; 2 Tim.1:14; Rom.16:17; 2 Cor.11:2-3**
 - b. **In conduct-- Hos.4:12; Zeph.3:9; Jer.32:36-41; Matt.13:24-30; 36-43; Jn.13:35; Eph.5:5; Phil.1:10; 1 Tim.5:22; Titus 1:15; James 1:27; Rev. 19:8**

- 4) Church membership is about ministry toward fellow brothers and sisters in Christ
 - a. **Love one another; be unified--Jn.13:34-35**
 - b. **Encourage and stir one another up--Heb.10:24-25**
 - c. **Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep--Rom.12:15**
 - d. **Bear one another's burdens; do good--Gal.6:1-5; 9-10**
 - e. **Remember the widows!--James 1:27; 1 Tim.5:3**

- 5) Church membership is about ministry toward the lost and dying world
 - a. **The church is on offense, not defense-- Matt.16:18**
 - b. **Remember the orphans!-- Ps.146:9; Zech.7:10; James 1:27; Jn.14:18**
 - c. **Spread His glory from Vienna to Vienna-- Hab.2:14; Hag.2:7; Matt.5:16; Matt.28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Rev.7**

- 6) Fellowship Baptist Church takes membership seriously because Jesus takes membership seriously
 - a. **John 10:1-18**