

**1 Corinthians 12:27-31:** Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

**Intro:** If you are not a formal member of a faithful, Bible-believing church, you shouldn't take the Lord's Supper. Why is church membership so important? Why should you be or become a church member? (**Dever Book**)

### **1. Become A Church Member Because It's Where God's People Are Under God's Rule In God's Place**

**Graeme Goldsworthy:** A consistent pattern in the Bible: God's people, under God's rule, in God's place.

- **Garden of Eden:** Adam and Eve; Walking with God; Eden – there's an in and an out
- **Noah:** Noah and his family; Trusts and obeys God and is saved; a kind of new creation – there's an in and out
- **Abraham:** Abraham & family; Trust & walk before God & be blameless; promised him a land – in & out, circum
- **Moses:** Moses and the Hebrews; Law; Promised Land – in and out, blessing and curses, food laws, clean/unclean
- **David:** Kings and Israel; Law; Promised Land – in and out
- **Prophets:** Israel; Law; Promised Land – in and out
- **Jesus:** Those who trust & obey Jesus; Church, New heavens & earth (Kingdom of God) – in and out; sheep/goats
- **Paul:** Those who trust & obey Jesus; Jesus' teachings; Church, New heavens & earth – in and out
- **John:** Those who trust & obey Jesus; Jesus' teachings; Church, New heavens & earth – in and out, book of life

**Jonathan Leeman:** God's love is constrained by God's holiness, like water is constrained by the pipe through which it flows. Of course, that means that God's holiness ultimately serves the purposes of his love, as the pipe does water. God's Love Divides: It's this holy affection or holy love that divides the universe in two. And there's a bright and clear boundary line in between the two sides, one as clear as the boundary between the inside of the garden of Eden and the outside, the inside of Noah's Ark and the outside, the inside of a house covered by a smear of blood on the night of the Passover and the outside, the inside of the Israelite camp in the wilderness and the outside, the inside of the Promised Land and the outside. It's a boundary as clear as the Jordan River. On one side of the line is the holy; on the other side is the unholy. On one side are to be those who bear a God-centered love; on the other side are those who love idols. On one side are those who listen to God's Word and God's law; on the other side are those who listen to other voices (see Gen. 3:17). When Paul refers to God's chosen people as "holy and beloved" (Col. 3:12), he's not talking about two unrelated things. The local church that chooses to emphasize God's love but not God's holiness is a church that doesn't actually understand what God's love is, because God's love is wholly fixed upon God and his glorious character in all its aspects. Such a church has probably substituted an idol in place of God's love. As such, the church that hesitates to draw sharp membership borders or to practice church discipline because these things don't seem loving needs to know that it's been duped into a man-centered caricature of love. It's been co-opted by the culture. It may well be worshiping an idol.

**Mike McKinley:** The people of God are not called the people of God for their own sake. They exist as the people of God to please & glorify God. In other words, the distinction between them & the world is not simply ontological (though it is not less than that), it is also ethical and teleological. Christ calls the church to be salt & light in a dark & decaying world. He tells Christians not to conform to the evil desires they had when they were not God's people, but to be holy as God is holy. And he has saved the church so that it might display the eternal glory & wisdom of God to the universe. As such, a clear line of membership helps to make these ethical & teleological goals a reality in the life of the church. It marks out these people as a display of his mercy & kindness to the surrounding world – all to his glory. Throughout Scripture, we see a pattern of God making his people visibly distinct from the world. When the local church practices meaningful church membership, it simply participates in what God has been doing all along. One day, the Lamb's book of life will be the only membership roll, & the reading of that roll will be dreadful & awesome. Until that day, churches, by keeping lists, show love for those on the inside & those on the outside. However imperfect these earthly lists might be, they prepare everyone for the final reading of the list that bears no mistakes.

## **2. Become A Church Member Because Christians In The Early Church Joined The Church**

**Acts 5:11-13:** And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things. <sup>12</sup> Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. <sup>13</sup> None of the rest dared **join** them, but the people held them in high esteem.

**Mike McKinley:** What does the word translated “join” in the English Standard Version mean? The Greek word is *kollaô*, the semantic range of which includes “to bind closely,” “to join together,” and “unite.” This same word occurs in 1 Corinthians 6:17 to refer to the union that occurs between a believer and Christ. At the very least, the use of the word “join” in Acts 5:13 refers to more than casually showing up, as you or I might speak of “joining the dinner party for dessert.” It indicates some sort of formal connection . . . .

## **3. Become A Church Member Because Christians In The Early Church Kept Lists**

**1 Timothy 5:9-11:** Let a widow be **enrolled** if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, <sup>10</sup> and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. <sup>11</sup> But refuse to **enroll** younger widows . . . .

**Mike McKinley:** The verb translated “enroll” (*katalageô*) can be either specific (“to put on a list”) or general (“to consider as part of a certain group”). The former meaning would make the point more marked in that the church was clearly keeping an accessible list of widowed members. Yet even the latter meaning would mean that the church was distinguishing between people in a way consistent with the practice of church membership. Why mention the widow’s list? It’s difficult to imagine the church keeping a list of widows but not keeping a list of members. If it didn’t keep the latter list, what group of widows would even be considered for inclusion on the former list? Any widow in the entire city of Ephesus? The widow who showed up three times four years ago? Of course not. The church would have some specified pool that it was drawing from.

**2 Corinthians 2:6-8:** . . . this punishment **by the majority** is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive & comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.

## **4. Become A Church Member To Display The Gospel** **THE GOSPEL!**

**Philippians 1:27:** Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ

**Ephesians 2:14-16:** For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

**John 13:35:** By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

## **5. Become A Church Member Because Christians In The Book Of Acts Were Added To The Church**

**Acts 2:41:** So those who received his word were baptized, & there were added that day about three thousand souls.

**Acts 2:47:** And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## **6. Become A Church Member To Love One Another**

1) Be at peace with each other (Mark 9:50)

2) Love one another (John 13:34)

- 3) Be devoted to one another in brotherly love (Romans 12:10)
- 4) Outdo one another in showing honor (Romans 12:10)
- 5) Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)
- 6) Stop passing judgment on one another (Romans 14:13)
- 7) Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you (Romans 15:7)
- 8) Instruct one another (Romans 15:14)
- 9) Greet one another (Romans 16:16)
- 10) Serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13)
- 11) Carry one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- 12) Be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)
- 13) Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- 14) Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- 15) Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19)
- 16) Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21)
- 17) In humility consider others better than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)
- 18) Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
- 19) Encourage one another (I Thessalonians 4:18)
- 20) Spur one another on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)
- 21) Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16)
- 22) Pray for one another (James 5:16)

### **7. Become A Church Member To Seek The Peace Of And Unity With The Church**

**John 17:20-23:** I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

### **8. Become A Church Member To Care For One Another Physically And Spiritually**

**Physically: Acts 6:1-4:** Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. <sup>2</sup> & the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples & said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the

word of God to serve tables. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit & of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. <sup>4</sup> But we will devote ourselves to prayer & to the ministry of the word."

**Spiritually:** We are to help one another be conformed to the image of Christ.

### **9. Become A Church Member To Watch Over One Another And Hold One Another Accountable**

**Galatians 6:1:** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

### **10. Become A Church Member To Edify And Build Up One Another**

**1 Corinthians 14:1-5:** Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. <sup>2</sup> For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. <sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. <sup>4</sup> The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. <sup>5</sup> Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

### **11. Become A Church Member To Bear With One Another**

**Ephesians 4:1-3:** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

### **12. Become A Church Member To Pray For One Another**

**James 5:16:** Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. **(Church Membership Directory)**

### **13. Become A Church Member To Keep Away From Those Who Would Destroy The Church**

**Romans 16:17:** I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

### **14. Become A Church Member To Reject Evaluating People By Worldly Standards**

**James 2:1-9:** My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called? If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

### **15. Become A Church Member To Labor Together For The Spread Of The Gospel**

**Matthew 28:18-20:** All authority in heaven & on earth has been given to me. Go therefore & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

### **16. Become A Church Member To Be Godly Examples To One Another**

**Hebrews 13:7:** Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

**1 Corinthians 11:1:** Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

**17. Become A Church Member To Submit To Church Leaders**

**Heb. 13:17:** Obey your leaders & 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 & not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

**18. Become A Church Member So Church Leaders Will Know Who They Are Accountable For**

**Heb. 13:17:** Obey your leaders & 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 & not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

**19. Become A Church Member Because God Forbids You To Say To Other Christians: "I Don't Need You"**

**1 Corinthians 12:21:** The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

**20. Become A Church Member Because Christ's Body Consists Of Individual Members**

**1 Corinthians 12:12, 27:** For just as the body is one & has many members, & all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ . . . <sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ & individually members of it.

**21. Become A Church Member Because Temples Are Made Up Of Individual Stones**

**Ephesians 2:19-22:** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 3:16:** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

**22. Become A Church Member Because Flocks Contain Individual Sheep**

**John 10:16:** And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

**23. Become A Church Member Because Families Are Made Up Of Individual Family Members**

**John 1:12-13:** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**1 Timothy 5:1-2:** Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father. Treat younger men like brothers, <sup>2</sup> older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.

**24. Become A Church Member To Obey Jesus' Command For Church Discipline**

**Matthew 18:15-17:** If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

**1 Corinthians 5:1-13:** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality **among you**, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. <sup>2</sup> And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this **be removed from among you**. <sup>3</sup> For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. <sup>4</sup> **When you are assembled** in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, <sup>5</sup> you are to **deliver this man to Satan** for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. <sup>6</sup> Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup> Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been



sacrificed.<sup>8</sup> Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.<sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people -<sup>10</sup> not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.<sup>11</sup> But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler - not even to eat with such a one.<sup>12</sup> For what have I to do with judging **outsiders**? Is it not **those inside the church** whom you are to judge?<sup>13</sup> God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

## **25. Become A Church Member For Assurance Of Salvation**

- **John 14:15:** If you love me, you will keep my commandments.
- **1 Cor. 6:9:** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived . . .
- **1 Corinthians 15:33:** Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."
- **James 1:16:** Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.
- **2 Corinthians 13:5:** Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith.

## **26. Become A Church Member To Help Expose False Gospels And False Churches**

**Acts 17:10-11:** The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.<sup>11</sup> Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

When you join a church as a member, you are affirming its statement of faith, and you continue to seek the purity of the teaching and practice of the church. In so doing you expose false gospels and false churches around you.

## **27. Become A Church Member Because You're Commanded To Meet Regularly Together**

**Hebrews 10:24-25:** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 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. (Meaning of word: "church" – gathering of people; local congregations)

## **28. Become A Church Member To Love Jesus**

- **Matthew 25:37-40:** Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?'<sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?'<sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'<sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, **you did it to me.**'
- **Acts 9:4:** And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, **why are you persecuting me?**"
- **Ephesians 5:25-27:** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church & gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy & without blemish.
- **Matthew 16:18:** I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

## **29. Become A Church Member To Glorify God**

**Ephesians 3:8-11:** To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,<sup>9</sup> and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things,<sup>10</sup> **so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known** to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.<sup>11</sup> This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord . . .

Jesus Came To Save His Bride  
The Church He Loves And For Her Died  
Then Rose So She'd Be Purified  
He Calls Us One So Don't Divide  
Join In Membership Abide

Love And Serve And Die To Pride  
And Sacrifice For Jesus' Bride  
For When You Love Her Side By Side  
You're Loving Christ He's Testified  
And God Is Praised And Magnified!