

## Why Church Membership?

Have you considered becoming a church member? If you are born-again and call this congregation your church, then I would like to invite you to consider membership? You might respond by saying, "I do not need to be a member to be saved or even be a part of the body of Christ." You are correct. But even in your own thinking you have identified a word picture that Paul himself used, which can also be a strong point for membership in a local congregation {Rom. 12:4-5}<sup>1</sup>.

Here is a thought to ponder, active church attendance without being members has similarities to couples living together without getting married. All the benefits of the relationship are there except for one...formal commitment. Membership says basically one thing to everyone involved, namely, "I am committed." Can a person be committed without membership? Absolutely! In fact, it is very easy to point out in most any given church where members demonstrate a lower level of commitment than some {*maybe even most*} who are not members but attend regularly. The same can be said about some couples who are married vs. some who are simply living together. It is not a matter of right or wrong here. It is rather a matter of proper identity as well as putting action to our faith {James 2:17}<sup>2</sup>.

Rick Warren points out four reasons on why church membership has significance. First, biblically, Jesus committed himself to the church by giving his life for her {Eph. 5:25}<sup>3</sup> membership shows our commitment to the church of Jesus Christ through the local congregation. Second, culturally church membership is an antidote to the ills of society. Face it, we live in a society that struggles with commitment. A commitment through church membership can definitely be character building. Third, practically membership says, "I can be counted on." The degree of success for any organization depends upon this point. Fourth, personally membership can produce spiritual growth by placing us in a relationship of accountability.

Now don't get me wrong, church membership in no way saves us. But, for the person who is personally committed to Jesus Christ, like receiving baptism or partaking the Lord's Supper, church membership can be a very positive "next step" in the living out of one's own faith in Jesus Christ.

If membership is one of the next steps for you to consider, there are a few things expected. The first and most important is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ demonstrated through public baptism. Second, a basic understanding of Christian doctrine with a basic understanding of membership. To help with these, I will be leading a 6 week membership. These classes will be open to anyone interested. At the conclusion of the classes, anyone interested in membership will be invited to take the next step toward membership by meeting with the deacons. If you have never received believers baptism, this will be offered following the membership classes. If you have any questions, please contact me either by e-mail, phone, communication card or in person.

Pastor Brad

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>4</sup> For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

<sup>3</sup> <sup>25</sup> ...just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,