

**WHAT IS
CHURCH
MEMBERSHIP
ABOUT?**

What Is The Church?

The New Testament Greek word for church (*ekklesia*) literally means “the called out ones.” The church is not a building, but the company of believers called out of the world into the salvation and service of Jesus Christ.

- ♦ **The Universal Church** is the spiritual company of all believers who compose the Body of Christ (Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 12:23; Ephesians 2:22; 3:21; 5:23). Membership to the Universal Church is automatic at the point of an individual’s salvation (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).
- ♦ **The Local Church** is the visible body of believers gathered in one geographic location (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:2; Revelation 2-3). Membership to the local church is determined by the church.

Why Should We Join A Local Church?

- ♦ **The Principle Of Orderliness** – God expects “all things [to] be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). Confusion would exist if decisions made for the local congregation were made by both the saved and unsaved, faithful and unfaithful, regular or transient? ***Church membership is a agreement to the statement of faith and principles of practice of the local church.***
- ♦ **The Principle Of Safeguarding The Truth** – Membership to a local church is based on mutual agreement to submit to the integrity, authority and inerrancy of God’s Word as our all-sufficient rule of life. (2 Timothy 2:2, 15-19; 3:16-17). The integrity of Scripture is at stake if we allow anyone who volunteers to teach God’s Word without first agreeing to Scripture’s authority. ***Church membership is a mutual commitment to the authority of God’s Word.***
- ♦ **The Principle Of Identification** – Acts 2:41 depicts how individuals “gladly received his word [and] were baptized.” Then they joined the church “and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” The process of local church membership is not clearly defined (outside of salvation and baptism), but the principle of identifying with other believers is clear. ***Local church membership is declaring your identification with a group of believers who believe the same things you do.***
- ♦ **The Principle Of Family Responsibility & Commitment** – Visitors are always welcome at FBC and are invited to visit as often as possible. But visitors are not necessarily obligated to take care of the needs within the church family. But as a family member, we have a responsibility to the rest of family/congregation – we must assist our family members in need (Acts 2:44-45), we must encourage one another (Hebrews 10:24-25). ***Church membership is taking on the responsibility of the church family.***

Answering Misconceptions About Membership

- ♦ **Isn’t local church membership a non-biblical concept?** Just because local church membership procedures are not specified in the Scripture doesn’t mean that it’s against Scriptural teaching. It is designed to confirm God’s intention for orderliness, guarding the truth, identifying with and participating in the Body of Christ. Though the procedure is not specified, there was an official church roster in 1 Timothy 5:9 that had spiritual requirements.
- ♦ **Why is there a process in becoming a member when it seems so automatic in the Scripture?** The Scriptures demonstrated that after a person is saved and baptized, they were added to the church (Acts 2:41). Our membership process is designed to confirm one’s salvation and baptism. The interview and testimony process before the church family is to affirm one’s salvation and commitment to the authority of God’s Word.

Answering Excuses About Church Membership

- ◆ **Why should I become a member if I'm already a faithful attender?** As in courtship, every church visitor sees if a particular church is the one the Lord wants him/her to commit to. The prospective member has every intention to make a commitment if there is compatibility. As in marriage, every believer should make a commitment to a local church as a member to participate in the family life as an integral part of Christ's body.
- ◆ **Does becoming a church member make me become more committed to the Lord and the church?** Church membership may not result in greater commitment to the Lord and the church, but commitment to the Lord should result in church membership. To identify with God's people, the foundational beliefs in Scripture and fulfilling family responsibility to the church is a result of being committed to Christ.

HOW CAN I BECOME A MEMBER OF FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH?

Prerequisites:

1. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior
2. Baptism as a public testimony of your faith in Christ

Procedure:

1. Familiarize yourself with the FBC Constitution then fill out the membership application available in the church foyer. We can send you one at your request.
2. After submitting the application, you will be interviewed by a pastor and/or board member to ascertain your understanding of your salvation and your intention to become a church member. This informal and non-threatening interview allows you to ask whatever questions you have concerning membership, salvation, and the church.
3. At a quarterly business meeting, you will encourage the FBC members by sharing your testimony of salvation and your intentions to join the church. After a vote, you will be congratulated as a member of FBC.

Participation:

- **Getting Involved:** Waste no time in serving the Lord by serving the saints. As a specific part of Christ's body, God has given you particular spiritual gifts to serve other parts of the body. Set your sites on a type of ministry and ask the pastors to train you to do it if you so desire.
- **The Term For Membership:** The term for membership is conditionally indefinite. If you move away, you could transfer your membership to another church. You may resign a membership as the Lord leads. Membership is also removed if you've been out of contact with the church for over a year or through excommunication. Some students possess dual membership with another church while a student in another location.

For More Information, Contact:

Fellowship Bible Church
2710 Ralston Avenue
Belmont, CA, 94002
(650) 591-1322