

Membership

Several Observations:

1. Some take membership for granted

- it's my church home – I don't care if I vote or not

2. Some ignore the whole idea

- why bother – see no difference between active attendee's and members. What's the big deal

3. Some are actively opposed to signing up

-“If I come and worship as often as the members...if I fellowship with these believers as much as anyone else, if I profit from the teaching and other ministries of the church, and if I actively demonstrate love for my brothers and sisters in Christ here, why should I formally join the church?” Don Whitney

Membership

In Scripture:

- the 'church' - universal and local

- gk. 'ekklesia', is Greek for "assembly" or congregation."

It appears 114 times in our New Testament

1) Universal – Matt. 16:18 - ...on this rock.....

- Eph. 1:22-23 -appointed him to be head.....

2) Local – Matt.18:15-17 - ...tell it to the church....

- 1 Cor. 1:2 - ...to the church of God in Corinth...

* Scripture speaks of a local church and it's importance *

Membership

Membership Matters:

1. Witness to Our World

- making clear our priorities and aligning ourselves
- collectively we are a witness
- gifts working in conjunction to bear witness

2. For others In the Family

- taking the family name – become part of the family history
- serving and being served – key in Jesus life

Membership

*“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” **Matthew 23:37-40***

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” **John 13:34-35***

*“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” **1 John 3:16***

*“If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” **1 John 4:20***

Membership

3. Biblical Evidence for Belonging

- Instruction for gathering together
- Instruction for leaders – elders, pastors, etc
- Instructions on discipline, challenge, purity etc.
- Acts 2:41 – numbers believers added that day
- Acts 2:47 – continued to record those joining
- Acts 9:4 – Jesus equates Saul's persecution of his church as a personal persecution

scripture clear that belonging to the local church the example

Membership

“If the church is a building, then we must be bricks in it; if the church is a body, then we are its members; if the church is the household of faith, it presumes we are part of that household. Sheep are in a flock and branches are on a vine. Biblically, if one is a Christian, he must be a member of a church. Leaving aside the concrete particulars for a moment--whether membership lists are kept on white cards or on computer disks--we must not forsake our regular assembling (Hebrews 10:25). This membership is not simply the record of a statement we once made or of affection toward a familiar place. It must be a reflection of a living commitment or it is worthless, and worse than worthless, it is dangerous. Uninvolved members confuse both real members and non-Christians about what it means to be a Christian. And active members do the voluntarily inactive members no service when they allow them to remain members of the church, for membership is the church’s corporate endorsement of a person’s salvation .” Mark Dever