



January 6, 2008

- Forging together as his family _____
- Growing together as disciples _____
- Partnering together as his body _____
- Advancing the Kingdom _____

Connecting the Unconnected

Christ did not merely call us to _____. He called us to _____.

Family is the word the Bible uses to signify this relationship:

Galatians 6:10 - ...as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the _____ of believers.

Romans 16:3-16 – people mentioned by name

A great church has great people!

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 – Faith, hope and love at work

What do people consider when partnering with a church?

- Do I _____ here?
- Does anybody want to _____ me?
- How can I _____ here?
- Am I _____?

Why is Membership Important?

1. Membership means that you are committed to this body of believers.

What is important to understand is that it is within the context of this covenant community that many of the benefits of our relationship with Christ are realized.

Hebrews 10:19-25 - Brothers , since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

2. Membership makes you accountable to this body which serves to protect you.

In **1 Timothy 3:15**, Paul speaks to Timothy about the purpose in writing this individual letter, **“I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God.”** That word for household is significant as Paul compares the local church with that of the family unit. Within every family accountability is a must. Imagine the family where each individual member did as they please?

3. Membership gives greater opportunity to discover and use your gifts in ministry

When a person fails to join a church in membership, he is denying the use of his God-given gifts and abilities to a local church. Gifts that are neglected in essence are crippling to the body. In this respect, when a person joins a church he has gifts that the body needs. Not only does the church need him, but he lacks certain gifts that others in the body can use in ministering to him. In an equal sense, he needs the local church. Every believer God has gifted and it is the local church's duty to allow the individual member the opportunity to use those gifts. This is best accomplished within the context of church membership.

What Are Our Responsibilities to our Members?

- (1) To implement the corporate worship of God (John 4:23,24; Eph.5:19,20)
- (2) To promote personal and group spiritual growth (Gal.5:16-26; Eph.4:22-5:21)
- (3) To maintain biblical teaching and standards (1 Cor.5:1-13; 1Tim.1:3-11)
- (4) To instruct and train for fulfilling ministry and to give opportunity to serve (Rom.12:1-8; 1Cor.12:1-31)
- (5) To impart a vision for evangelism and missions (Mat.9:36-38; 28:18-20)
- (6) To assist in building good relationships in the church family (Eph.5:22; 6:4) To minister comfort to those in need (2 Cor.1:3-7)
- (7) It supports the weak, helps the needy and encourages the downhearted. (Acts 6:1-8; 1Tim.5:3-16)
- (8) To settle disagreements and administer discipline (Mat.18:15-20)
- (9) To equip our people to face life outside our fellowship (Mat. 10:16)

Forging into a Family

Families have the responsibilities to care for one another. Healthy families do it well. Unhealthy families do it poorly. We have the responsibility to care for one another. Great churches know and practice this. For any church to function as a healthy family and to be seen as relevant to people's lives, it is imperative that members care for one another.

Christians have a responsibility to:

- encourage or exhort one another (Hebrews 10:25)
- pray for one another (James 5:16)
- be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)
- teach one another (Colossians 3:16)
- edify or build up one another (Romans 14:19)
- admonish one another (Romans 15:14).

Let these verses speak to you:

Romans 12:16 - Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 13:8 - Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Romans 15:7 - Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:14 - I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

Galatians 5:13 - You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2 - Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:32 - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:21 - Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 - Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Hebrews 3:13 - But encourage one another daily...so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Hebrews 10:24 - And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10:25 - Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 Peter 4:9 - Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

If the believer is not fulfilling his obligation in these areas, then he or she is not living up to his full potential.

“Church isn't where you meet. Church isn't a building. Church is what you do. Church is who you are. Church is the human outworking of the person of Jesus Christ. Let's not go to Church, let's be the Church.”

Personal Evaluation

I am establishing healthy relationships within my church family.....1 2 3 4 5

I am more loving and grace giving to others than I was a year ago1 2 3 4 5

I have a good balance between my commitment to my church and my other commitments1 2 3 4 5

I am resolving conflict with others in a Biblical manner....1 2 3 4 5

I am supporting the leadership of my church family.... 1 2 3 4 5

Join me as we pray.

Father, you are a much greater, vaster, unimaginable God than we can imagine. We thank you that you have revealed yourself to us, your very heart to us in Jesus Christ and in your written word. But Lord, give us your Holy Spirit here this morning, to be the spectacles through which we see the vast panorama of how you are working in our life and in the life of this congregation, in the life of your world wide church and beyond that, on through every inch of the universe and beyond that into eternity.

Lord, give us the Kingdom vision to enable us to be faithful as a congregation and to really build up your kingdom, that you might be honored and glorified. And we ask it all in the strong, saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."