

MEMBERSHIP AT CITY CENTRE CHURCH



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CHURCH

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Church Membership

Introduction



At City Centre Church, we believe serving is more than helping with programs—it is a way of following Jesus together. Volunteers shape the culture of our church, influence the people around them, and represent Christ in visible and meaningful ways. Because of this, we believe those who serve should be deeply connected to the life of the church through membership.

In the past, we have taken a more informal approach to volunteering and membership. As our church has grown and matured, we believe it is wise and biblical to bring greater clarity. This is especially important as we seek to care well for children, youth, seniors, and others who are vulnerable.

This document explains why we are moving in this direction, what we mean by membership, and how this helps both our volunteers and our church family flourish.

Expectations

All volunteers at City Centre Church who are 18 years of age or older are expected to be members of the church or actively working toward membership.

Membership is not meant to be a hurdle or a formality. It is a way of saying, “This is my church, and I am committed to growing, serving, and walking with these people.” Volunteers serve best when service flows from belonging.

Who needs to be a member?

While we hope all volunteers pursue membership, there are certain roles where membership is required because of the level of trust, responsibility, and spiritual influence involved.

Membership is required for anyone serving in ministries involving vulnerable people, including:

- Children’s ministry
- Youth ministry
- Seniors’ ministry
- Pastoral care or visitation

Membership is also required for public-facing or spiritually influential roles, such as:

- Worship team (musicians, vocalists, tech)
- Greeters and ushers
- Prayer ministry
- Communion and baptism teams
- Small group leaders and facilitators
- Teaching or discipleship roles

In addition, those serving in leadership, coordination, or mentoring roles are required to be members.

These roles represent the church publicly and spiritually. Membership provides alignment in belief, accountability in conduct, and pastoral oversight in care.

For other service areas—such as hospitality, facilities, administration, café, or set-up and tear-down—membership is still the expected and encouraged path, though temporary exceptions may be made.

Exceptions

We understand that people are in different seasons of life. The elders may grant temporary exceptions for those who are in a clearly transitional season (temporary work or school.)

Any exception is meant to be temporary and pastoral in nature. Our desire is never to pressure people, but to gently guide everyone toward healthy commitment and belonging.

Membership Is a Gift

Membership benefits both the individual believer and the church as a whole.

Members are placed under the intentional care of the elders. Scripture teaches that elders are called to shepherd a specific flock.

Membership allows leaders to pray for, guide, and care for people with clarity and responsibility.

Membership also provides loving accountability. Christians grow best when they are known and supported by others who care about their spiritual well-being.

Serving without membership can unintentionally separate service from discipleship.

Members affirm the core beliefs of the church. This shared foundation protects unity and provides confidence, especially for parents and families entrusting their children to our ministries.

Membership also moves someone from attendance to belonging. It makes the relationship mutual: the member commits to the church, and the church commits to the member.

For volunteers, membership includes the affirmation of faith and character by the elders. This is especially important for those serving children, youth, and seniors, where trust and integrity matter deeply.

Membership & Church Life

Membership is active, not passive.

Members serve others with care and responsibility, particularly in ministries involving vulnerable people. Children, youth, seniors, and those with special needs require volunteers who are spiritually mature, accountable, and willing to serve within clear boundaries. Members understand safeguarding expectations, submit to leadership, and welcome oversight as wisdom, not suspicion.

Members also help shape the spiritual tone of the church. They seek to model humility, faithfulness, repentance, and love. Their lives give credibility to the gospel they represent.

Beyond specific ministries, members support the church through faithful worship, generous giving, prayer, encouragement, and a commitment to unity. They trust church leadership, pursue peace, and help protect the church's witness in the community.

Members also care for one another: bearing burdens, praying for those in need, supporting families, and ensuring no one walks alone.

Common Questions

“I already attend, give, and serve. Why do I need membership?”

Membership doesn't replace what you are already doing; it strengthens it. Membership brings clarity and mutual commitment. It allows the church to care for you intentionally and ensures that service flows from a shared covenant, not just participation.

“What if I may be leaving in a few years?”

Membership is not about permanence, but faithfulness. Wherever God places us, we are called to commit to a local church. Even for a season, membership strengthens discipleship and blesses the body. Many churches also recognize membership transfers, making this a gift to your future church as well.

“Can I serve while I'm still exploring?”

Yes, depending on the role (those that do not require access to those in the vulnerable sector) and for a short period. We are glad to walk with you as you explore faith, doctrine, or commitment. Our desire is not to rush you, but to help you take the next faithful step when you are ready.

“Will I lose my volunteer role if I don't become a member?”

Our goal is not to remove people, but to care for them. During the transition period, volunteers may continue serving while moving toward membership. After that, serving may be paused until the next steps are taken.

Biblical Foundation of Membership

While the New Testament does not use the modern word membership, it clearly teaches the reality of committed belonging to a local church. Church membership is not about creating an institution, but about giving biblical structure to what Scripture already assumes: a defined people, under shepherds, living in covenant community for God's glory.

1. The New Testament Assumes a Defined Church

Throughout the New Testament, churches are described as clearly identifiable communities, not loose gatherings of spiritual consumers.

In Acts 2, those who believed the gospel were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). Luke records numbers because the church knew who belonged. People were not merely attending; they were counted among the body.

Paul speaks of people being inside and outside the church (1 Corinthians 5:12–13). This distinction only makes sense if there is a recognized group of believers who belong to the local church.

In 1 Timothy 5:9, widows are placed on an official list for care. This again assumes defined membership and responsibility. These examples show that belonging to the church was known, meaningful, and accountable.

Biblical Foundation of Membership

2. Membership Is Necessary for Biblical Leadership and Shepherding

Scripture teaches that elders are called to shepherd a specific flock, not everyone in general.

Acts 20:28 says, “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.”

Likewise, Hebrews 13:17 calls believers to submit to their leaders, because those leaders “keep watch over your souls.” This mutual relationship only works when it is clear who the leaders are responsible for and who has placed themselves under their care.

Without meaningful membership:

- Elders do not know whom they are accountable to shepherd.
- Believers do not know who their elders are.
- Biblical oversight becomes impossible.

Membership provides clarity so that leadership and care are exercised faithfully and responsibly.

3. Membership Makes Church Discipline and Restoration Possible

Jesus’ instructions in Matthew 18:15–17 assume a defined church community. If someone refuses to repent, Jesus says they are to be treated “as a Gentile and a tax collector,” that is, no longer regarded as part of the covenant community.

Paul applies this teaching in 1 Corinthians 5, where the church is instructed to remove an unrepentant person from among them. This action only has meaning if the church knows who belongs to it.

Church discipline is not about punishment; it is about love, repentance, and restoration. Meaningful discipline is one of the marks of a healthy church, and discipline requires meaningful membership.

Biblical Foundation of Membership

4. Membership Reflects the Body of Christ

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul describes the church as a body with many parts. Each part belongs to the body and has a role to play for the good of the whole.

Paul does not describe the church as a crowd or an audience, but as a connected body where:

- Each member is necessary
- Each member is accountable
- Each member serves for the good of others

This imagery assumes commitment, not casual association. Membership gives visible expression to this biblical reality.

5. Membership Guards the Gospel and Sound Doctrine

Throughout the New Testament, churches are repeatedly warned to guard the truth (Galatians 1:6–9; Jude 3; 1 Timothy 4:16). This guarding is entrusted not only to leaders, but to the whole church.

Membership allows a church to:

- Affirm who teaches and leads
- Protect against false teaching
- Maintain unity in the gospel

A church that does not know who belongs to it will struggle to protect what it believes.

6. Membership Displays the Gospel to the World

Jesus tells His disciples that the world will know they are His by their love for one another (John 13:34–35). This love is not abstract; it is lived out in committed relationships marked by patience, forgiveness, and faithfulness.

In a culture that values independence and low commitment, church membership displays the countercultural beauty of the gospel: a people bound together not by preference, but by Christ.

Membership says, “These are my people, and I will walk with them in love.”

Recommended Reading

- *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* – Mark Dever
- *Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus* – Jonathan Leeman
- *The Compelling Community* – Mark Dever & Jamie Dunlop

Are you ready for membership?

Visit citycentre.church/membership and apply now!