

First Baptist Church
Church Membership Study & Discussion

Introduction: Why this study now?

We've noticed a "gap" in how we communicate and connect those people to church membership.

Our desire is to continue to do what God would have us do here at the First Baptist Church: glorify God, connect the Word to our life, grow in the grace & knowledge of Lord and Savior, serve the Lord and one another, and go, sharing the Gospel and making disciples.

We truly want this to be study focused on the Scriptures and a discussion that is biblically based. We will consistently go to the scriptures to fuel our discussion and then have some good, God honoring discussion.

SESSION 1: Why is the Church important to us?

Opening Discussion: When you hear the word church, what do you think of?

When you hear the word membership what comes to mind?

Why is the church important to us?

1. He founded the **church**, Matthew 16:18 in connection with Acts 2:40-47.

Christ announced the arrival of the New Testament church in Matthew 16 and the church is born, growing, serving, and established in Acts.

2. He **purchased it** with his blood, Acts 20:28

Every believer is bought with a price, the precious blood of Christ & the church was purchased by his blood. His life for mine.

3. The Spirit of Christ **indwells** the individual believer, therefore is in the assembly of believers, Romans 8:9; 11, 16; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:18, 22.

The believer is indwelt with the Holy Spirit of God at the point of salvation, therefore when individual believers gather the Spirit of Christ is present.

4. The Church is identified as the **Body of Christ**, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 1:23; 4:12; 5:23-32; Colossians 1:18, 24; 4:4.

The human body is used as an analogy of the Body of Christ. The body functions well when all the parts function as God designed.

5. The church is **intimately linked** to and identified with Christ, Ephesians 2:20; 3:1-10; 4:15; 5:22-33; Colossians 1:17-18, 24; 2:10.

The commitment of Christ and the Church is pictured to us in the commitment of husband and wife. Christ is the head and savior of the body. Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. Christ purifies the church with His Word. He presents her holy and without blemish.

6. God is **glorified** in the church, Ephesians 3:21.

For all generations the church is to glorify God. When we get distracted about our purpose as a church go back to this high call – glorify God in the church.

7. His love is **demonstrated** through individuals in the church, John 14:15, 23; Ephesians 4:11-16.

“The church is the Gospel made visible.” – Mark Dever

The church is defined in both a universal and local sense.

1. **The universal sense** indicates that the Church is made up of all believers who have been born of the Spirit of God and baptized into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Peter 1:3, 22-25).

2. **The local sense** indicates a group of believers, who come from a general locality, frequently gathering for worship, fellowship, preaching, teaching, observing the ordinances, participating in various ministries, and maintaining their autonomous state, (Acts 2:42).

The Scriptures consistently provide us with outward displays of inward spiritual transformation.

How do you know when a body is healthy?

How do we know when a husband & wife love?

How do we know when a Christian has the Spirit of Christ in them?

How do we know when a church loves Jesus?

Definition of a Local Church from our statement of Faith: A gathering of believer's in Jesus Christ who are like minded in biblical convictions and covenant together as a local assembly, who gather together for the reading, preaching, & teaching of the Word of God (the Holy Bible), for prayer, for true biblical fellowship, for equipping and promoting of sound biblical doctrine, evangelism, and providing an opportunity for believers to partake in the Lord's Supper and baptism. All these aspects are encompassed in and focused upon Glorifying the One True God of the Bible.

What questions do you have from Session 1?

Choose one or two points from our session today and study them further this week.

SESSION 2: Why is church membership important?

Who makes up the church?

How should the church function?

Why is church membership important? It was an important part of the early church & because the church is more than simply a gathering of believers in Jesus Christ the Lord.

A church is a gathering. A church is not just people—It's people who assemble together on a regular basis. A church is never less than that. But a church is also more than this. In other words, there's a major difference between a church and a random gathering of Christians hanging out or even gathering for Bible instruction as at a conference.

The Bible shows us that a church is a group of Christians who not only meet together regularly but who are bound together by a common commitment to each other - an agreement to be the body of Christ together.