

Lighthouse Bible Church

March 10th, 2013 Morning Service

Ephesians 4: 11 – 16 *Scripture Reading 1st Corinthians 12: 12 - 27*

Receiving New Members

Stand – Read – Pray

We have the privilege, once again, to recognize and receive new members into Lighthouse Bible Church. But before we do that I would like to take a few minutes to look at some things related to church membership and then call those up who are going to be recognized as our newest members.

In that passage in Ephesians 4 it says in **Verse 11** that God placed certain people in the church for His purposes, for the Equipping of the Saints, for the Work of Ministry, for the Edifying or building up of the body in Christ **Verse 12** says.

And the reason He did that **Verse 13** says, till we all come to the **Unity** of the **Faith**, till we all come to the **knowledge** of the Son of God, till we all come to be **mature** in our faith, till we all **attain** the **measure** of the **stature** of the **fullness** of Christ.

So that we would no longer be tossed or tricked or deceived by every wind of doctrine that man has to offer **Verse 14** says. So that we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ, **Verse 15** says. So that the whole body, the whole church body, **joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love Verse 16** says.

That is a wonderful church and that is the church that **Acts 20: 28** says **Christ purchased with His own blood.** That is the kind of church that Paul goes on to say in **Acts 20: 29 – 30** that **savage wolves want to come in to and destroy and not spare the flock.** That is the kind of church where **from inside the church men will rise up and try to draw people away.**

One way to have a biblical church like that and one way to protect a church like that is through the process of membership by men and women committed to serving the Lord and serving one another.

When it comes to membership, we want you to be as informed as possible about what this church believes and teaches about what a church should be, from a biblical perspective, and then, with that information, to help you to decide if Lighthouse Bible Church is the place where God would have you to join and to serve.

Several people have already made such a commitment and there are several more ready to do that today and several waiting for baptism to commit themselves in the future as well.

In order to do what we can to protect and preserve the church and to inform you of what we teach and believe, we have drafted our **By-laws** and **Doctrinal** Statement from biblical doctrines and examples to help you make an informed decision to see if you are in agreement with what we believe and teach here.

We want this church, Lighthouse Bible Church, to be a significant and vital part of your life and spiritual life and not only for now but for generations to come. We want this church to be the place where you are born again, where you are baptized and grow in your faith, where you serve, where you get married, where you dedicate your children, where you worship as a family.

One way of doing that is by calling you into membership with a body of Bible believing people and then calling you to commit yourselves wholeheartedly to that church. That is why we included the one page **commitment form**, to the application process.

The Bible always paints the picture of a church as something close knit and together. He likens the church to a **Household**, to a **Family**, to a **Flock of Sheep**, to a **Temple**, or to a **Body**

As a matter of fact **Ephesians 2: 19** says **you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. Galatians 6:10** calls us a **household of faith**. We are a household, a family and a household family that has a common bond, a common head and that is Christ Jesus.

1st Corinthians 12: 12, 27 says **for as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ ... now you are the body of Christ and members individually.**

You see, there is an inner dependence on one another. We are not a crowd of people watching something, we are united together by a common bond, a common head, who is Jesus Christ that connects us all together because this is the only institution that He shed His blood for and is constantly in the midst of as **Acts 20: 28** and **Revelation 1: 11 – 13, 16,20** tells us.

The early church new its members and people were eager to join after being saved. **Acts 2: 41** says **then those who gladly received his word were baptized and that day about 3000 souls were added to them.**

By the way, baptism is a command and example throughout scripture. When someone received Christ, then they were baptized and then they joined the church.

That is why we want to follow the biblical pattern for joining a church. So those that have joined and are joining today have professed faith in Christ and have been baptized by immersion.

Acts 5: 13 – 14: ...yet none of the rest dared JOIN them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.

That word JOIN is *kalleo* and it means to be glued to something.

Joining is not a passive, casual, superficial, informal I'll be a part of something by showing up relationship. It is a gluing, uniting yourself firmly to others kind of relationship.

The N.T. believers belonged to a church when they came to Christ and in **Acts 2: 42** they **sat under the teaching of the** word together, they **prayed** together, they **fellowshipped** together, and they **broke bread** together.

And according to **Ephesians 4: 13** they did so **till they all came to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**

And they did that, according to **Verse 16, according to the effective working by which every part does its share.** And as they all worked together they **caused growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

And when someone belongs to a church, belongs to a family, belongs to a household, they want to be a vital part of that. **Hebrews 10: 24 – 25** says **let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**

People that are joined and glued to the church are those that consider others, stir up others to love and good works, exhort others because they are committed to one another.

One writer said “if a person says they do not want to become a member of a church (that Christ shed His blood and died for and is in the midst of) my response is ‘why not’. A Christian who will gladly commit to a gym membership, a video club membership, a social network or internet membership or a grocery store or gas station membership, but refuses to join a church has issues to be concerned about.

What we have been and will continue to be asking of you in **Joining** this church, is that when you make that decision to join, that you will be totally committed to it and to its head, Jesus Christ, as a member of His church.

When you think about those who have joined, by membership, in a church then the existence of church government makes sense. You have the specific biblical duties of the Elders, Pastors and Deacons over the people which presupposes a clearly defined group of church members under their care.

As leaders in the church we are called to **Shepherd** you, **labor diligently** for you, to **have charge** over you, to **feed** you, to **care** for you, and as **Hebrews 13: 17** says, **watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account.**

It would be hard for me to watch over the soul of someone whom I don't even know is a part of this church, that just comes and goes. How could I watch out for their spiritual well-being and how could I be responsible to them in fulfilling my duties as a Shepherd unless they are a part of the flock?

In **Hebrews 13: 17** it also says **obey those who have the rule over you and submit to them** which implies those believers know who their leaders are and who they are to submit to. The believer who attends church and does not join, has no leader or they don't have to submit to their leadership, they can come and go as they wish.

One Pastor wrote: "when I show up at the judgment seat of Christ and have to give an account for my life, words, motives, and deeds whether good or worthless, I will also, as a Pastor, be asked to give an account for keeping watch over every person in my church.

The elders and I tell our church that we want them to sign up for membership because we want to know who considers us to be their Elders and who doesn't. and we want those who do not consider us to be their Pastors to know that we in turn do not think of them as our sheep. Anyone is welcome to visit our church and attend as long as they want, but if they want us to be accountable for their souls, then they need to tell us that; and the way we want that to happen is through the membership process" *Challis.com*

When you look at **Acts 2: 41** it says **they were added to the church**. Which church were they added to? Well, we already know they were added to the universal church of God at the time of their salvation so that is not what he is talking about. It is the LOCAL church they were added to. How were they added; as a member of that church.

When you look at some of the metaphors for the local church you begin to see that it is not a random gathering of people who can come and go as they want but they are a part of something which only membership can afford. They are part of a FLOCK, TEMPLE, HUMAN BODY, HOUSEHOLD

By the way, membership does one very important thing; it helps us take precautions against and it protects all of us against those who would come in a try to destroy this church or divide this church or in some way harm this church.

What kind of precautions do you take against your house being broken into, or your bank records being taken or your identity being stolen etc. Then why wouldn't we take certain precautions against what would bring harm to this church?

1st Timothy 4: 1 – 2 ... depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies ...

2nd Corinthians 11: 13 – 15: for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into (what) an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if HIS ministers (other demons) transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.

Acts 20: 28 – 30: therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, no sparing the flock. Also from AMONG yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves...

2nd Timothy 4: 2 - 4: preach the word ... for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth ...

2nd Peter 2: 1 – 3: says there will be false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among YOU, who will SECRETLY bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them ... and listen to this and MANY will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth has been blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words.

2nd Timothy 2: 17 - 18 says their message will spread like cancer and they will overthrow the faith of some.

Well, having said all of that, several here this morning have been born again, have been baptized and have expressed a desire to join in membership with this church and are willing to commit themselves to it and its head, Jesus Christ.

They understand that they are being called to come under the authority of the word of God, and that they agree with our By-laws and doctrinal statement and that they are committing themselves to the people and leadership of this church as stated in the scriptures and By-Laws and our commitment form.

We would like them to come forward at this time and be recognized as our newest members of Lighthouse Bible Church.

Have them all come up and Dale will read commitment and then Mike will give them a membership certificate and then pray for them all collectively.

Lighthouse Bible Church
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Receiving New Members
Ephesians 4: 11 - 16

Introduction:

Overview of Ephesians 4: 11 - 16

The Church Purchased
Acts 20: 28 – 30

The Church Attacked
Acts 20: 29 – 30

Our Church By-Laws and Doctrinal Statement

The Church Described
Ephesians 2: 19, Galatians 6: 10
1st Corinthians 12: 12, 27, Revelation 1: 11-13, 16,20

Joining the Local Church
Acts 2: 41 – 42, Acts 5: 13 – 14, Ephesians 4: 13, 16
Hebrews 10: 24 – 25

The Church Leaders Shepherd the Members
Hebrews 13: 17

The Church Leaders Protect the Members
1st Timothy 4: 1 – 2, 2nd Corinthians 11: 13 – 15
Acts 20: 28 – 30, 2nd Timothy 4: 2 – 4, 2: 17 – 18
2nd Peter 2: 1 – 3

Receiving of New Members

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Acts 20: 28 – 30, 2nd Timothy 4: 2 – 4, 2: 17 – 18
2nd Peter 2: 1 – 3

Receiving of New Members

My Commitment as I join Lighthouse Bible Church

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and baptized by immersion and being in agreement with the Bylaws and Doctrinal statement of *Lighthouse Bible Church*, I now desire to unite with *Lighthouse Bible Church* as an active member. In doing so, I commit myself to God, to the leadership of this church and to the other members to do the following:

- a) I will protect the unity of this church by acting in love toward other members. John 13: 34 – 35, Ephesians 4: 1 – 4.
- b) I will share the responsibility of this church by praying for the leaders, people and ministries and for the spiritual and physical growth of this church. 1st Timothy 2: 1, 8, 1st Thessalonians 1: 2
- c) I will submit myself to the leadership of this church. Hebrews 13: 17
- d) I will refuse to listen to or participate in any gossip. Ephesians 4: 29
- e) I will be actively involved in the sharing of my faith and inviting the unsaved and un-churched to attend. Mark 16: 15, Matthew 28: 18 – 20.
- f) I will actively serve in ministry at this church by using my spiritual gift as I have been equipped and trained by the leaders. Ephesians 4: 11, 16, 1st Peter 4: 10
- g) I will endeavor to cultivate a servant's heart towards all. Philippians 2: 3 – 4, 7.
- h) I will commit to my faithful, regular attendance at this church. Hebrews 10: 25
- i) I will commit to living a separated, holy and righteous life to the glory of God and for others to follow and emulate. 1st Peter 1: 14 – 16, 1st Corinthians 11: 1
- j) I will commit to the financial support of this church and its ministries through my regular giving. 1st Corinthians 16: 2