

...so in Christ we who are many
form one body and each
member belongs to all the
others.

Romans 12:5

The idea of a follower of Christ living independently of other believers is foreign to Scripture.

It is God's will for each of His children to be a faithful and serving part of a specific gathering of believers under the pastoral oversight of elders.

Hebrews 10:23-25

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

This is the undeniable pattern and expectation in the New Testament.

It is the way Christ builds His Church.

Romans 12:4-5

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so **in Christ** we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

**All who have been united with Christ are called to
unite with others who are in Christ.**

What is true spiritually about our union with Christ must be demonstrated functionally in committed relationships of...

interdependence

mutual ministry

accountability

- **Interdependence** – One another life - (Romans 12:10, 16; 14:19; 15:5,7,14)
- **Mutual ministry** - Serving one another faithfully (Galatians 5:13; I Peter 4:10-11)
- **Accountability** – teaching to obey all things commanded by Christ (Matthew 28:19-20)

It is God's will that every believer be a meaningfully related, faithful, serving, and accountable part of a visible body of believers under the pastoral oversight of elders

(Ephesians 4:1-16; Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:23-25; I Peter 4:10-11; 5:1-4; I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17).

Scripture does not entertain a sharp distinction between God and His people.

What you do to them, for them, or against them — you do to, for or against Christ Himself.

(Luke 10:2; Acts 2:47; 9:4; I Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 5:25,29; Hebrews 6:10; Matthew 16:18, 25:40).

The deficiency in many churches is the casual procedure of adding new members without any challenge to commitment.

Integrity in the membership process is the place to begin in restoring a high view of the Church –

- not for the purpose of building an assembly of the spiritual elite, but to have a Church that is faithful to God's plan for it.

- “The refusal to grapple with the issue of entrance into the Christian church is not toleration; it is betrayal of the gospel which we preach...a surrender to Christ is a surrender to His people—total involvement in the life of the church.”
- “The church’s determination to make membership genuine — even difficult — rather than nominal, is shocking and even resented by Christians of a softer inclination.”

(Chuck Colson, *The Body*)

“Christian community cannot exist without commitment to Jesus as Lord and to each other as sister and brother. And this must be more than a general mental commitment. It must be specific and explicit, involving our time, energy, and resources”

(Howard Snyder, *“Liberating the Church”*)

**A
case
for
Membership**



5 considerations

- 1. Identifiable numbers and lists of people were recorded (Acts 2:41; I Timothy 5:9).**
- 2. The role of elders in spiritual oversight implies accountable membership (I Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:7,17).**
- 3. Church discipline implies identifiable membership (I Corinthians 5:7-13; II Corinthians 2:1-8). Exclusion from a church presupposes inclusion. A local Church cannot excluded someone if he was never included.**

4. Emphasis on interrelationships of interdependence within a local church. See the “one another” verses in the New Testament

(Romans 12:10, 16; 14:19; 15:5,7,14; I Cor. 12:25; Galatians 5:13; 6:2; Ephesians 4:1-2, 32; 5:18-21; Colossians 3:9; 12-13,16; I Thessalonians 3:12; 4:18; Hebrews 3:13; 10:23-25; Ja. 4:11; 5:9, 16; I Peter 4:9).

5. The book of Revelation chapters two and three indicate that the Lord Jesus keeps careful record of the membership and activities of local churches.

Ephesians 4:11-16

- Faithful involvement in the community life of believers is designed by God for the protection, instruction, and encouragement of each individual believer.
- God has chosen to use our fellow believers to help us be more like His Son

**“It is grace, nothing but
grace, that we are allowed to
live in community with other
Christians.”**

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)