

Sermon Title:

“Why Membership Matters”

Sermon Text:

Selected Scripture

Introduction:

- *In the New Testament there are at least 3 reasons given for why church membership matters:*

I. It Matters Because The Bible Teaches It (*Romans 12:3-5; I Corinthians 12:12-26*)

- *In both of these passages Paul is talking about the importance, the uniqueness, and the function of the Church, which he refers to figuratively as **The Body of Christ**.*

“Everyone who has experienced God’s glorious, redemptive work of Grace is not only united to Christ, and to the other members of His Universal body, but they are now also qualified to become members of a local expression of that Universal body which is otherwise known as, a local church.”

- *Although the word “membership” itself is not used found in the New Testament, the **principle** of membership is.*
- *The essence of the New Testament’s teaching is that if you’re part of the **Universal Body** of Christ, then you should want to make that association known through membership in a **local church**.*

- *The Biblical Basis for church membership can be seen in at least **4** ways:*

1) The Example Of The Early Church (*Acts 2:41-42, 47; 5:14; 16:5*)

*The idea that a person would experience salvation without belonging to a local church is something that’s completely **foreign** to the New Testament.*

2) The Existence Of Church Government (*I Timothy 3, Titus 1*)

*The specific duties that were given to Elders clearly assumes that there was a **clearly defined group** of church members who were under their spiritual oversight and care.*

3) The Exercise Of Church Discipline (*Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 5*)

*The Bible’s teaching on church discipline **assumes** church membership.*

4) The Exhortation To Mutual Edification

*The Bible exhorts all believers to consistently edify the other members of the Body by both practicing the “**one anothers**” of the New Testament and by exercising their **spiritual gifts**.*

II. It Matters Because The Believer Needs It

- *The Bible gives us several reasons why the Christian needs to be a part of a local church:*

A. Because Our Covenant Connectedness Demands It

- When believers join a church they are actually entering into a covenant relationship with God and one another.
- *In I Corinthians 12 Paul didn't say that the church is like a body, he said that the church is a body.*
- Membership can be defined as a meaningful engagement and a mutual connectedness to the Body of Christ!
- *I John 4:7*

B. Because Our Spiritual Growth Depends Upon It

- *Galatians 4:18; Ephesians 2:19-22*
- Christ's design for the church is that it provides the ideal atmosphere for well-rounded and balanced Christian growth.
- *Ephesians 4:13*
- Please don't misunderstand, membership doesn't save us but it does enables us to grow & become spiritually mature in Christ!
- *Perhaps the most often overlooked reason for joining a church is that establishes a base from which we can reliably care for and minister to others.*

III. It Matters Because The Effectiveness Of Our Mission Depends On It

- Church membership provides a context for strategic ministry to a fallen world!
- *John 13:35*
- Being part of a committed, Christian community is increasingly important in our witness today.

"When the whole community of faith comes together to put Christ on display, they can do it a whole lot better than any individual Christian can ever do alone!"

Conclusion:

- Whether you call it "membership," "partnership," or something else, the New Testament assumes some form of committed, accountable, belonging for every true follower of Jesus.
- *It's only when every believer is faithful to this kind of commitment that the church will be able to live up to her calling as Christ's representative here on earth.*

To put it simply, membership matters!