

SESSION IV: WHAT'S NEXT?

Steps to Getting Connected and Involved

A. Consider Church Membership

1. WHY DO WE HAVE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

Every organization that takes itself seriously has an understanding of the importance of membership.

We are no different in this regard.

We understand that members usually bring with them commitment, investment, and a deep concern for the well-being of the church. This has implications for enabling our church to cultivate a vital presence in our community and for developing the next generation of committed, involved Christians who understand the importance of the local church.

Membership is implicit in a local, autonomous body of believers.

It fulfills psychological/emotional, spiritual, ethical, and practical purposes.

Psychologically, membership provides an individual with a **sense of identity**. Membership identifies a believer with a particular community of followers of Christ who share like beliefs and practices. Identity and community are fundamental human needs.

Emotionally, membership provides a person with a **crucial sense of belonging** to something of value, an entity possessing both local and world-wide significance with eternal implications! In a very real sense, a church member is a member of an earthly, temporal expression of the heavenly, eternal kingdom of God. Membership speaks to the fundamental search for meaning in life.

Spiritually, membership allows a believer to **profess personal faith and to demonstrate the desire for spiritual growth** in the context of other Christ-followers. It not only provides opportunities for Christian maturing—it strongly encourages the member to be involved in this life-long process.

Ethically, membership implies **the learning of and practice of Christian character**. Scriptures such as Exodus 20, Matthew 5:1-12, and Galatians 5:22-23 provide insight into the kind of character that is taught and promoted among members of the Body. Both accountability to and responsibility for others is inherent in church membership.

Practically speaking, membership **gives the individual a say** (a vote) in the decision making process of the church. Membership, as in any organization, implies a commitment to the healthy and effective functioning of the organization and facilitates the conducting of the business of the church in a decent and orderly manner.

2. WHAT SHOULD A MEMBER BELIEVE?

The member of the White Rock Baptist Church should...

...Be committed to the stated purpose of the church:

“The White Rock Baptist Church is a community of believers bound together by faith in Jesus Christ that exists to worship God through Jesus Christ, to teach biblical truths, to nurture Christian relationships, and to reach the world with the Gospel of Christ.”
(Bylaws, Art. I.1)

...Affirm the basic beliefs of our faith:

- Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God, Savior of mankind and Lord over all.
- Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- The Bible is inspired, authoritative and trustworthy, the objective standard for faith and ethics.
- The local church, under the Lordship of Christ, is locally owned and operated.
- Baptism by immersion is a symbolic statement of the believer's faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- Every believer in Christ is free and responsible: free to follow his conscience in matters of faith and worship, and responsible for his actions, both to God and to the Body of Christ.

3. HOW DOES ONE BECOME A MEMBER?

The following is not necessarily easy nor is it a legalistic set of demands designed to make membership difficult. Rather, it is a means of taking membership seriously. We believe that membership indicates commitment, a response to the consumer or “shopper” mentality of many American Christians. This is a means of providing the individual who desires to become part of a God-ordained entity in the world an opportunity to learn more about what this church is, to decide if indeed he/she wishes to become a committed, invested member, and to establish a means by which that may take place effectively and successfully.

We recognize the need for formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for four reasons:

A Biblical reason: Christ is committed to the church. (Eph. 5:25)

A Cultural reason: Membership is a response to the casual approach to church prevalent in our society. A hesitance to commit has produced a trend of “church shoppers and hoppers.” Membership stands against this current of “consumer religion.”

A Practical reason: Membership defines who has said “I have been led and am committed to this particular church, its beliefs, its practices, and its life in community.”

A Personal reason: Membership promotes spiritual growth. Commitment to a particular church demands that there is accountability to each other and responsibility to each other.

Our goal: That we “*speaking the truth in love...grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*” (Eph. 4:15-16)

1. Invest some time with the church and learn about it.

- Attend worship services regularly.
- Make some time to visit with a pastor or deacon.
- Get to know one or more current members who will walk alongside you to help you find your way around.

- Participate in a “Discovery Class”. The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of our church, what we believe, and how we function.
- Demonstrate an interest in the church. Explore becoming engaged with some aspect of its life and work.

2. Be prepared to publicly state one’s faith and desire to join.

- Publicly express a desire to join the church. This action would generally be done on a Sunday morning when most of the congregation is gathered.
- Be willing to profess faith in Jesus Christ before the congregation.

3. Formally become a member.

- A vote at a business meeting is taken, with a current member voicing personal support for approving the membership request.

4. WHAT DOES A NEW MEMBER DO NEXT?

Get connected.

- A new member should be connected to a LIFE group or other small group as soon as possible.

Continue in the Christian Journey

- Develop your practice of the spiritual disciplines of worship, prayer, Bible study, and regular tithing;
- Find a ministry or place of service and get involved.
- Continue to learn: take advantage of the variety of courses offered that are designed to enhance Christian growth.

B. GETTING INVOLVED

Below is a list of many of the ministry and service activities of WRBC. Look it over. Take some time to reflect. Consider where your strengths, interests, experience, and gifts may be of use. Be willing to try something. If that is not a good fit, give yourself permission to try something else.

Keep in mind that an individual does not really become a functional, connected part of the church until he or she is investing in some part of the church’s life and work, sharing time and effort with others, walking in a manner that is worthy of the calling of Jesus Christ.

Organization

- Volunteer office assistant
- Money counter
- Church council
- Set-up/Take-down crew
- Information Technology team
- Building maintenance volunteer

Sunday Morning Event

- Greeter
- Usher
- Information Desk
- Coffee crew

Connections/Body Life Ministry

- LIFE Group leader (training provided)
- Be in a LIFE Group
- BASIC coordinator
- BASIC server
- Men's ministry
- Women's ministry
- Singles ministry
- Young Adult ministry
- Prayer ministry
- Help organize the annual family retreat

Education/Discipleship

- Children's Church teacher
- Sunday School class teacher (training provided)
 - Adult
 - Youth
 - Children
- Support team for teachers

Missions

- Participate in the annual mission trip

- Participate in a personal mission trip
- Serve on the Missions team
- Promote missions offerings
- Develop a local community ministry
- Help organize/implement
 - 4th of July booth
 - Block Party
 - Trunk or Treat
 - Angel Tree

Youth

- Assist with a youth event
- Youth ministry leadership team

Children

- Children's Church leader
- Do a children's time on a Sunday morning
- Serve in AWANA

Worship

- Create large print bulletins
- Assist with audio and video production (training provided)
- Music—vocal
- Music—instrumental
- Set and stage design
- Acting and drama

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