

Faith Bible Church



CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A Policy Statement by the Elder Board of Faith Bible Church

REASONS FOR CONSIDERING MEMBERSHIP

We sincerely hope you will consider becoming a member of Faith Bible Church. We would like to encourage you to do so. Perhaps part of your consideration includes the question, "Is membership in a church really necessary?" The answer to that question is, "Of course not," if by your question you wonder whether we believe that membership is necessary for your salvation! The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is a gift of God. It can be received only through faith in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Why raise the question of membership then? We think it is important to consider for several biblical reasons.

One reason we hope you will consider becoming a member of this church is that the Bible says the Lord adds those who are being saved to the number of those who already profess to believe in Jesus Christ, that is, to the church. God wants saved people to be part of a local body. A body that is recognizable as a group of believers in Christ. A body that is readily distinguishable from those who do not profess to believe in Him (Acts 2:46, 47).

A second good reason for considering church membership is that the Bible says Jesus is not only Savior of His people, but He is also Lord and Head of the church (Colossians 1:18). The visible representation of the universal church is the local body of believers. Is it really possible to obey Christ as Lord of the Church, if you are not willing to take your place in a local body of which He is Head?

A third important reason for considering becoming a member of this church is that the Bible teaches that God wants every believer to commit himself to receiving the pastoral care God provides through conscientious and godly elders (also called "pastors" in Scripture). We make commitments in marriage. We make commitments to our employers. God wants us to make a commitment to Him in being part of a church of which He is the Head. God does not want us to be sheep without a shepherd (I Peter 5:1-5; Matthew 9:36).

God has appointed elders to shepherd or pastor (Latin for "shepherd") His people. He requires elders to feed and care for them. When necessary, elders must attempt to bring back any wanderers. Jesus said that a concerned shepherd would even leave the bulk of his flock temporarily to seek one sheep that had strayed. God really loves His people, and does not want us to be without the pastoral care He knows each of us needs (Luke 15:3-7; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17).

The elders of the church cannot provide you with the pastoral care God says each of His people needs, if you are not willing to commit yourself to receiving that care. Commitment is the

key. Would you for the Lord's sake agree to submit yourself to the biblical, pastoral care of the elders?

It is for these reasons that we raise the matter of church membership. Just as your arm or leg is an integral member of your body, so the Lord wants you, if you trust in Him, to be an integral part or member of a body made up of those who believe in Him (I Corinthians 12:27).

OUR REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERSHIP

Since the Bible gives salvation as the main requirement necessary for being part of a local church (Acts 2:46, 47), that is the main requirement we make. Our primary concern is to make certain (as far as is humanly possible) that each one who becomes a member of Faith Bible Church understands what the Bible says about salvation, and is placing their trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ for that salvation.

Furthermore, we are concerned that our members understand what it means to respond to Jesus Christ as Lord and Head of the church. Quite simply, this means that a professing Christian needs to know that Christ expects all those who love Him to obey Him as Head and Lord. We also require that each member understand and agree totally with the short statement of faith.

As you can see, we want to encourage you and strengthen your desire to live for Jesus, and to grow in your love for Him. We want you to be built up in the faith. We want to help you in your walk with Him as your Savior, as your Lord, and as your Head in the church. Therefore, we strongly urge each member to take an active role in service within this church. Hopefully, you will accept our invitation to consider joining this body of believers and becoming an integral part of this church.

THE PROCEDURE WE FOLLOW

At this point you may have questions regarding our procedure for accepting new members. If, after reading this position paper and getting to know our church a little better, you should decide that Faith Bible Church is the fellowship you would like to make your church home, then you will be asked to submit an application for membership to the elder board. After the board receives the application, a visit will be scheduled with your family. This visit will be conducted by at least two elders for the purpose of discussing in person the matters mentioned in this paper.

We ask four basic questions of each prospective member. These questions look from four different angles at our requirement for membership. They are intended to help each member be clear about his commitment to Christ.

The four questions are as follows:

① Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?

② Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself, but in the Lord Jesus Christ alone?

③ Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord, and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve Him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your sinful nature, and to lead a godly life (Romans 6)?

④ Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church and in case you should be found wilfully disobedient in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline (Hebrews 13:17, I Peter 5:5)?

After we have talked over these important matters with you, the elders who visited your home will meet with the full leadership of the church. A recommendation will then be made to the elders about receiving you as a member. The elders who interviewed you in regard to your faith in the Lord Jesus will speak of your faith to the leadership. If the elders are satisfied that you really do understand what it means to trust in Christ, and do trust in Him, they will joyfully receive you. They will then arrange for your public reception on a mutually suitable Lord's Day in the near future. If you have not yet been baptized, they will appoint that this be done at the time of your public reception before the congregation.

YOUR PUBLIC RECEPTION

Your public reception will consist in being asked to come before the congregation at an appropriate time in the worship service in order to make some public testimony of your faith in Christ and your desire to unite with our church. This is usually done by publicly answering the same four questions you were asked in your interview. You may also wish to make some personal statement of your faith. If baptism is to be administered, it will be given at this time. You will then be publicly welcomed into the fellowship of this church.

YOUR ELDER BOARD

When you are received into membership, the elders of the church will take a special interest in your spiritual growth and welfare. The purpose of this is to keep the ministry close and personal in the church. As churches grow, it is easy to become impersonal and detached. The Bible requires the elders to take oversight of the flock, seeking to maintain meaningful contact with each Christian. This is also meant for your encouragement and blessing. Please feel free to seek out counsel or help from any of the elders at any time. We are eager to help.

GOALS WE FEEL ARE IMPORTANT FOR GROWTH

There are certain goals in our Christian life that we consider important enough to emphasize above others. Although the following list is not exhaustive, it represents a few goals toward which we would encourage all our members to aspire:

- 1.) Continue taking part in the regular worship services of the church every Lord's Day, including the Lord's supper.

Reasons:

- a. God calls us to do so (Hebrews 10:24-25, I Corinthians 11:23-19).
- b. We are strengthened in our sense of oneness as a whole body.
- c. It is the time when we receive the regular, systematic teaching of God's Word.

- 2.) Spend regular time in the study of God's Word.

Reasons:

- a. God calls us to do so (II Timothy 2:15, Joshua 1:8, Acts 2:42, 17:11)
- b. Apart from regular time in God's Word, spiritual growth is impossible.

- 3.) Spend regular time in humble prayer before your Sovereign God.

Reasons:

- a. God calls us to do so (I Thessalonians 5:18, Acts 2:42)
- b. Prayer declares our need for God in light of His grace and sovereignty. It helps us take our wills and conform it to His perfect will.

- 4.) Witnessing about God and His plan of Salvation through Christ.

Reasons:

- a. God calls us to do so (II Corinthians 5:20, Matthew 5:13-16, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:15)
- b. Evangelism is the means of calling God's elect. By works our faith is made mature (James 2:22)

- 5.) Participate in service and utilization of your own unique spiritual gifts.

Reasons:

- a. God calls us to do so (I Peter 4:10, I Corinthians 12:7)
- b. By using your gifts you build up the Body of Christ while you are strengthening your own faith.

We hope that this paper is helpful in explaining important information about our church that will aid you in considering Faith Bible Church as your church home. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact the church at any time. We would love to serve you in any way possible.