



Membership Matters
Series Bible Study—Part 2
From September 2024 Sermons

Read *1 Corinthians 12:24-26*

Overview From Last Two Series Sermons: Continuing in the study of just how much membership matters in the local church, it's also obvious that membership conveys loyalty and keeps the believer under spiritual protection. Our redeemed priorities become clear to the world when they see our loyalty to the Body of Christ. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and all true believers come under His care at conversion. However, Jesus also established and ordained under-shepherds to oversee local flocks (congregations).

1. When we are saved, what is our loyalty to the church universal vs our loyalty to the local church? Becoming a believer connects us to all other true believers in all times and locations. We are just as much spiritual family with that first church in the book of Acts as we are our local church. But it's at the local church we connect, get fed, get restored, find support, corporate worship, serve and give.

2. Loyalty: from the dating relationship to the committed marriage relationship. Just as in human romantic relationships, there should be a time of "dating" without formal commitment. This lets both parties get to know each other and assure commonality and cohesiveness. But, eventually, the formal commitment before God and family is needed. Becoming a member conveys fidelity, concern, and priority.
See *Ephesians 4:11-16*

3. Read about that first church in *Acts 2:41-47*. What are some of the overriding themes of their spiritual life? Various Answers. Include: a commitment to Christ by being committed to one another. Voluntarily coming under the teaching and leadership of the Apostles. Devotion to fellowship, care, and love. Visible unity seen even by the outside world.

4. What is church consumerism? Where the focus of church is me/my family: My needs, my desires, my preferences. The visitor/seeker driven service, preaching, and ministries. Anonymous attendance & Church hopping.

4a. Who should be the focus of the faithful local church? Jesus Christ the Savior.

5. How is membership in the local church protection for the believer? 1) there is safety and accountability in numbers. Each member is praying for one another and for the pastor (shepherds). In turn, the shepherds are praying for and looking out for the flock and each individual sheep. 2) there is an umbrella of protection that comes from being obedient to attendance. The Scriptures make it clear that the enemy is always prowling looking for someone to devour (see 1 Peter 5:8). Outside of the fellowship, we are easy pickings and subject to another level of vulnerability. This is seen in the effects of biblical church discipline.
See also *1 Corinthians 5:5* & *1 Timothy 1:20*.

6. What would you say to someone who is opposed to formal local church membership? Various Personal Answers.