

Church Membership at The Gates Church

The Bible uses the term “member” to describe the follower of Jesus functioning in his or her rightful place in the local church (Romans 12:4). 1 Corinthians 5 talks about “insiders” and “outsiders.” Our church has a process in which outsiders become insiders. We take people through a teaching process in which pre-members make a commitment- or covenant- to be members of our church. As a young church, we need to know who is “all in,” as we seek to impact our world by “gathering people in the name of Jesus.” B-R-E-A-D lays out what a “member” is and receives in our view.

B – Blessings and Benefits

Being a member of a church should have spiritual and physical benefits. Being a member of a local gathering of called-out, collected people helps confirm us in the faith. Our assurance of salvation is completely found in the gospel, but as we are joined to the church, we operate in a way where we know that we are not strangers to God and his people anymore but a part of the household of God. Ephesians 2:19-22 There are physical benefits too, as we are to care for and help one another. Galatians 6:10

R– Responsibilities and Roles

When we make the church more than just something we “go to,” but something we “belong to,” our identity is rooted in the makeup of God’s organized kingdom on earth. We have a greater sense of divine purpose and calling as we find our place in the local church. The Holy Spirit gives us unique and essential spiritual gifts, strengths, grace and powers to build up the church ministry, and this makes us a vital part of the local body as it grows and progresses. As we find our place in the church, we experience the satisfaction of being invested in the only divine organization on planet earth where Christ is the head. 1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:18

E– Encouragement and Energy

When we actually become invested in the local church of Jesus Christ, this should be a great source of power for our life as we come together and emphasize the teaching and mission of Christ. Not only do we fill each other with courage, wisdom, and accountability through our support system with one another, but God gives us special power to live life as his community of witnesses in a full driven way. Acts 1:8 In membership we fight for each other’s courage, well-being, and strength in the Lord. 2 Timothy 1:7

A– Adoption and Ancestry

We are designed to be in community- not on an island alone. The institution of the church is meant to be a family of refuge, help, hope and mission. In Romans 8, we can read about how the work of Christ has adopted us into the family of God with all the benefits of being sons and daughters of God. Functionally being with other sons and daughters in this covenanted relationship of the church lets us begin to experience the divine family here on earth. Joining a local church in membership is not just signing up for an extended family of people who will love Jesus with you in this life, but it also is an investment into future generations who will have the church to change their lives and eternity. Being adopted functionally into the church will lead to a spiritual legacy in which one hundred years from now your investment into the local church will continue to live making you a spiritual ancestor to thousands that come after you. Psalm 145:4

D– Duty and Industry

Most Christians function at church as consumers who receive spiritual goods, but in membership we want to call people out of consuming and in to contributing. Membership is the opportunity to get out of the stands and on the field. Colossians 3:23 says, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,” and we should have this attitude about church. As members, we have the privilege to work on the front lines serving God and others. We want to use our God-given time, treasures, and talents to see the church grow and mature in accordance with God’s will.