What is the Church?

Study 2: How important is church membership?

READ Ephesians 2:11-22 and LISTEN to Pastor Craig Baxter’s sermon.

Is church membership necessary? Some might say that there is no need for any form of church membership since there is no verse in the Bible that commands Christians to be members of a church. However, if we look closer, the scriptures place obligations and expectations upon the church and her leaders that would help the church know who is saved and to grow into a unified community, with doctrinal and missional agreement that help the church “stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel” (Phil 1:27).

Main lesson: Covenant membership provides the necessary vehicle by which Christ best sanctifies, protects, and builds His church.

Questions:
1. Why might a secular club, such as a cricket, tennis, or gardening club, require some form of membership?
2. What are some of the differences between the universal church and local church?
3. From the following verses what are some attributes of the local church? Consider where and who the church is. 1 Cor 1:1-2; Gal 1:2-4; 1 Thess 1:1.
4. A. What do the following verses tell you about the role of the church in affirming someone’s faith and keeping someone accountable? Why might this be important? Matt 16:19; 1 Cor 5:12; Matt 18:15-20.


B. How would you answer someone who says that Christians shouldn’t judge each other?

6. Read the church covenant, over the page. Do you think it adequately articulates a church members role and responsibility in the body of Christ? How might publicly affirming the covenant help unite, purify, protect, and grow the church?

7. Can you think of reasons why someone might choose not to become a member of a church?

8. What has been most convicting or encouraging about this lesson. How might you apply this lesson as you consider your place in the body of Christ?

STOP AND PRAY:
Praise: Jesus in whom there is redemption by His blood and adoption into His family
Thank: the Lord specifically for those in HBC who encourage and spiritually help you
Pray: for areas where the Lord can help you grow in your commitment to others
HILLS BIBLE CHURCH COVENANT

AS A COVENANT MEMBER: I agree with the Statement of Beliefs and commit to the purposes of the church as articulated in the HBC Mission.

IN MY PERSONAL LIFE: As I acknowledge Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, I will seek to honour Him by my attitudes, speech and actions. I will seek to prioritise my own spiritual nurture, particularly through regular prayer, consistent study of God’s Word and corporate worship.

TOWARD MY FELLOW BELIEVERS: I will work to maintain the unity granted by the Spirit of the Risen Christ and treat others with a loving and humble spirit in recognition of our mutual spiritual frailty. I will earnestly seek to resolve conflict between one another in accordance with the Rule of Christ (Matthew 18:15-20), avoiding the amplification of grievance through other unwitting members. I will always look to support others in situations of genuine need, crisis and suffering.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHURCH: I will exercise my spiritual gifts and talents contributing to the building up of the whole church family. I will participate in the process of discernment of the Spirit’s leading through prayerful participation in church members’ meetings. I will encourage and support the appointed leaders and pastors of the church as they, in turn, coordinate and encourage our ministries to the fulfilment of our mission.

AS A CHRISTIAN STEWARD: I will be faithful in all things entrusted into my care: the Gospel of Jesus Christ, my time and my home. I will express my gratitude to Christ through faithful financial contribution to Hills Bible Church, in accordance with what I have decided in my heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

BEFORE THE WORLD: I will, with the enablement of the Holy Spirit, live consistently with the principles of His Gospel in all aspects of my life in word, attitude and conduct, in order to bear witness to the reign of Jesus Christ.