

One Another: Scriptural Guide to Church Membership
Selected Scripture
February 1, 2015

Introduction

This will be a very unusual sermon since it has only one point. Usually I have three, but as I studied for this topic, which is church membership, I realized that I needed only one point and Scripture.

The words “church membership” are not in Scripture. However, we do see implications of membership from Scripture.

Acts 2:41 *Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

They have numbers, so they had a list somewhere. The word “added” indicates a joining or placing something to be a part of something. This is implied membership.

2 Corinthians 2:6 *The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him.*

This is the same man that Paul asked the church to remove him.

1 Corinthians 5:4 *When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,*

The majority of the assembled decided to remove the man from fellowship. Scripture does not say how they came to the decision, just that a majority decided. Who are the assembled? Just anyone who comes to church? No, those who are members—those who belong to the church. There is precedence for church membership in Scripture.

What is church membership? Church membership is actually a commitment to the local church. You are putting yourself under the authority of the church and its leaders. You are allowing the church to discipline you. You are joining the church so you can grow spiritually. But most of all, joining the church is to fulfill Christ’s command when He told us to love one another.

“One another”, this is the phrase that shows up many times in the NT, in the letters of Paul, Peter, James, the writer of Hebrews, and John. All the letters were written to the local church and in the context of the local church. We are going to look at those instances and see what church membership is. I want to say that when we look at these instances of “one another” or “each other” we cannot perform those acts outside of the local church. It is impossible. God has designed the local church to be the place where we can act for one another.

I believe God has commanded us to join the local fellowship through the “One Another” commands.

I. One Another

Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

- The writer of Hebrews is clear—to spur one another only happens when we are assembled together
 - To be isolated from the fellowship is to be isolated in sin
 - Sin isolates people
 - What the church membership means for us is that it has a purifying effect on us
 - We are to be striving for regular attendance with our fellow believers
 - When we meet, we are to consider how we are to spur one another
 - To love (love covers a multitude of sins and love fulfills all the law)
 - Good deeds—we are created to do good works—a spiritual mature person will do works.
- Love one another

John 13:34-35 *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.*

John 15:12 *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*

John 15:17 *This is My command: Love each other.*

Romans 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

Romans 13:8 *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.*

1 Thessalonians 4:9 *Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.*

1 Peter 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

1 Peter 4:8 *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*

1 John 3:11 *This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.*

- This is actually Jesus' command
- Being in membership and in fellowship is fulfillment of that command
- This is a regular, continuing practice—not occasional, when I feel like it
- This command has been repeated so many times in different ways
- Peace with one another

Mark 9:50 *Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.*

Romans 12:16 *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

2 Corinthians 13:11 *Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.*

1 Thessalonians 5:13 *Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.*

- Serve one another

John 13:14 *Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.*

Galatians 5:13 *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature rather, serve one another in love.*

1 Peter 4:10 *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

- Be in unity with one another

Romans 15:5 *Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,*

2 Corinthians 13:11 *Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.*

- Honor one another

1 Corinthians 11:33 *So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.*

- Not causing one another to sin

Romans 14:13 *Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.*

1 Corinthians 6:7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

James 4:11 Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

James 5:9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

- Welcome one another

Romans 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.

1 Corinthians 16:20 All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

2 Corinthians 13:12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

1 Peter 5:14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

- Care for one another

1 Corinthians 12:25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

- Comfort one another

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

- Bear one another's burdens

Galatians 6:1-2 Brothers if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. **2** Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

- Be truthful to one another

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

- Be kind to one another

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

1 Peter 4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

- Forgive one another

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

- Gather with one another

Ephesians 5:19 *Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,*

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

- Submit to one another

Ephesians 5:21 *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

1 Peter 5:5 *Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

- Encourage one another

1 Thessalonians 4:18 *Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

1 Thessalonians 5:11 *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

Hebrews 3:13 *But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*

- Do good for one another

1 Thessalonians 5:15 *See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.*

- Confess sins to one another

James 5:16 *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

- Pray for one another

James 5:16 *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

Coram Deo

Joining a church is not salvation. Joining a church is actually a declaration to the local body that you will do all these things for the glory of God. Just as we baptize to profess to the world that we are a believer (the act in itself does not save us), we join the church to profess to the church that as believers we want to fulfill Christ's commandment to love one another and encourage one another to do good works.