

# Membership: A Biblical Priority

*Updated: 5/5/2026*

## What am I committing to?

Church membership is a serious commitment with major implications. Few decisions compare with it in weight. Where you go to church has the potential to undermine or strengthen your faith. Your church has the potential to grant you the life saving gospel or bewitch you with a false gospel. Your church has the potential to be either the greatest tool in your sanctification or its greatest barrier. Choose wisely when considering who will shepherd your soul and you may gain discerning shepherds who can protect you. Choose wisely when choosing what congregation to fellowship with and you may gain a church family who can love you in ways you've never imagined. However, choose poorly and it could lead to a world of hurt. For this reason it is essential that you give careful thought to finding a faithful local church.

Far too many people give far too little thought to the essential role of the local church in their spiritual life. They rightly consider carefully their choice of education, career, employer, spouse, home, financial priorities, retirement plans, and so many other important concerns and yet when it comes to involvement in a healthy local church, they give little, if any thought to a matter that will not only impact all their other choices, but will also deeply affect their relationship with their Creator.

## Roadmap: Four Questions about Membership

This document was designed to explain all that you need to know about church membership. It has been structured to answer four questions about membership:

1. **What is Membership?** In this section we will define the local church, and then local church membership.
2. **Why do I need membership?** In this section we will give four compelling arguments for why everybody needs to be a member of a local church. These will be (i) Membership expresses our love for Christ, (ii) It makes our profession of faith credible, (iii) It provides necessary accountability, and (iv) It allows us to be useful to the Kingdom.
3. **Who is eligible for church membership?** Having established that membership is a necessary thing, we will move on to understanding the biblical requirements for joining a local church. In this section we will aim to clarify the three standards for church membership. These are: A Credible profession of faith, a valid baptism, and a willingness to submit to the teaching of that church.
4. **What am I committing to?** In this section we will elaborate on our expectations for new members. Grace Bible Church (GBC) has six of these expectations: Pray, Attend, Live Holy, Make Disciples, Serve, and Give. These expectations form our church covenant.

## What is Membership?

Membership is **joining a local church** and **being committed to that local church**. With this in mind, it's important to define both membership and especially the church.

You might wonder, "why do we need to define the church?" There are at least two reasons: First, because wrong thinking produces wrong living. Misunderstandings about the nature of the church, inevitably result in an improper approach to church life. For example, if someone has a consumeristic view of church, it will result in a transactional, selfish, and pragmatic behavior toward the Body of Christ.

Second, bad churches abound. Some of these either lack the marks of a true church and/or preach a false Gospel. Others, while true churches, are unhealthy churches because they either don't have sound doctrine, lack shepherding, or fail to prioritize the mission of the church, which is making disciples by proclaiming Christ both to unbelievers through evangelism, and to believers through discipleship. Carefully defining the local church allows us to avoid a lot of problems with bad churches and bad church practices.

## The Church: The People of God Gathered to make disciples for the Glory of God

The **local-church** properly defined is **the saved people of God gathered together in a specific location under Biblically qualified elders to worship, edify one another, and keep the ordinances, in order to fulfill its mission of making disciples**. This definition has the following elements: The People, the Gathering, the Elders, the Practices, and the Mission.

1. **The People:** "*The saved people of God*" By this we understand that true churches consist of born-again believers. Because of this, we have rejected the current trend of pragmatism that uses business marketing strategies to appeal to non-believers. It is also important to remember that the church is not a building, nor an event, nor an organization, nor anything other than the people of God themselves. The church is the people. This is essential because when most people think of joining a church, they fail to recognize the necessity of joining their lives to the lives of the current members.
2. **The Gathering:** "*gathered together in a specific location*" By this we understand that the church exists in local gatherings. The Greek term which the New Testament translates as "church" means "assembly." For example, in Acts 19:32 it refers to a secular public assembly of citizens. This terminology reflects a fundamental characteristic of the universal church, which is that it manifests itself through local bodies of believers who gather together in specific places with specific leaders and specific members (more on that later). The people of God must be gathered together. It is a practice foreign to the New Testament for professing Christians to forsake the assembling together of the Saints (Hebrews 10:24-25).
3. **The Elders:** "under biblically qualified elders" By this we understand that every true local church must possess a valid form of church government consisting of three elements: Biblically Qualified Elders who teach and shepherd, members who submit through membership, and church discipline.

- a. **Elders who teach and shepherd** - The Biblical pattern of leadership is a government made up of qualified male undershepherds.<sup>1</sup> Christ as head of the church, did not desire his church to be left without leadership. For this reason Scripture records that Christ gave men to be pastors and teachers of the church (Eph. 4:11). Churches are responsible to raise up faithful and qualified men from their congregations to be leaders (2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:5). Scripture records the qualifications those men must meet (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Some of their qualifications include the ability to teach (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:9), leaders of their home (1 Tim 3:4; Titus 1:6), of sound reputation (1 Tim. 3:6), and blameless in their moral character (1 Tim. 3:2-3; Titus 1:6). It must also be noted that churches which lack elders are, technically, not valid churches.
  - b. **Members who submit through membership** - As will be seen below, membership involves submitting to the leadership of a local church (Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5). Churches, without membership and whose members do not submit to the loving guidance of their pastors, lack the ability to properly shepherd the congregation (Acts 20:28).
  - c. **Church Discipline** - When a local church is properly shepherded, it will practice church discipline as Christ commanded (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Titus 3:10; Romans 16:17-18; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15).<sup>2</sup> Ideally, members of the church will be quick to turn from their sin; however, when individuals refuse to repent, it leaves the church with no other option than to enact discipline. Discipline of sinning members is an act of love to the sinner, because it exposes the seriousness of their unrepentant sin (1 Cor. 5:10; 1 Tim. 1:20). Additionally, discipline protects the unity and purity of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 5:1-13, Titus 3:10-11). Without it the church is left vulnerable to false teachers and false converts. The entire process must be carried out with patience, gentleness, and love with a view to the restoration of the sinning brother (Gal. 6:1-2).
4. **The Practices:** *“to worship, edify one another, and keep the ordinances, By this we understand that true churches are characterized by their faithfulness to Biblically defined activity.*
- a. **Worship** - We recognize that the Church exists to worship God. If God’s purpose in saving believers is the praise of His own glorious grace (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14), and if the end of all of redemptive history is that all the redeemed will one day be praising God in heaven forever (Rev. 7:9-12), then it is safe to say that one of the essentials of a church must be worship. Believers then are not to choose a church for their own entertainment, nor for their self-satisfaction, but so that they might worship God.

---

<sup>1</sup> The New Testament is exceptionally clear that the office of elder is restricted to men (1 Tim. 2:12-13; 3:1-2; Titus 1:5-6). Women are not to teach men (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

<sup>2</sup> The Biblical order for church discipline provided in Matthew 18:15-17 involves the following four steps: Private confrontation (v. 15), confrontation with one or two witnesses (v. 16), public announcement to the church in order that they may call him to repent (v. 17a), and excommunication (v. 17b). At the same time, Scripture allows for the skipping of the first two steps in certain cases such as, egregious, unrestrained, and/or public sin (1 Cor. 5:1-2) or factious sins which attack the unity of the body (Titus 3:10).

- b. **Mutual Edification** - The church body is designed to build itself up, and members in a church are called to seek to build each other up through fellowship, service, and other acts of love. Ephesians 4:16 says, “from [Christ] the whole body, being joined and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the properly measured working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” Going to church is as much about fellow members, as it is about us. Sadly, so many professing Christians think so little of their brothers and sisters in the pews next to them. They fail to realize that a major reason for joining a church is to serve fellow members through the gifts that God has given them. Many are satisfied if they know people’s names and have a surface level understanding of their fellow members, yet they don’t realize that God calls us to sacrificially love one another (John 17:20-23; Rom 12; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Phil. 2:1-11; 1 John 3:10). This sacrificial love and the fellowship of the saints is an irreplaceable means by which God completes His work in us (Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 2:42).
  - c. **The Ordinances** - The two ordinances which every true church must administer are baptism<sup>3</sup> and the Lord’s Supper.<sup>4</sup> Extreme errors on Baptism or the Lord’s Supper can disqualify a church. False views on the ordinances, such as those held by the Roman Catholic Church or Eastern Orthodox Church, separate false churches from true churches.
5. **The Mission** - *in order to fulfill its mission of making disciples.* By this we mean that the church seeks to fulfill the great commission. We believe that the mission given to the church by our Lord Himself is to go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that He commanded us (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Col. 1:28). We believe that this mission is carried out by proclaiming Christ both to unbelievers in the form of evangelism, and to believers in the form of discipleship.<sup>5</sup> A Church which does not corporately evangelize the lost, nor disciple its members is being unfaithful to its very mission. Believers would do well to find a church that prioritizes the Great Commission.
- a. **Evangelism** - While churches must be faithful to proclaim the gospel from the pulpit; faithfulness to the Great Commission does not stop there. Faithful churches engage in corporate evangelism and equip their members to faithfully preach the gospel to their unbelieving family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

---

<sup>3</sup> Baptism, which is a public declaration of faith and obedience in Christ through immersion in water. Baptism was instituted by our Lord Himself (Matt. 28:19) and practiced universally by the early church (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12; 10:47; 1 Cor. 1:13). GBC does not recognize infant baptism, baptism through sprinkling, or baptism by false churches as legitimate baptism. They likewise reject the erroneous view that water baptism saves, regenerates, or washes away the stain of original sin. The Spirit saves through Regeneration (Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 4:21).

<sup>4</sup> The Lord’s Supper, also known as Communion, is the second ordinance instituted by our Lord Himself as a memorial to His sacrificial death on the cross (Matt. 26:26-28; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). It consists of partaking of the elements of the bread and the cup as symbols of and in remembrance of the death and resurrection of Christ. It is essential to recognize that the elements contained in communion are merely symbols of the body and blood of Christ and do not convey special favor, nor do they impart salvific grace.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted From *Grace Bible Church Philosophy of Ministry*, 2026, 1.

- b. **Discipleship** - When Christ commanded His disciples to make disciples of all nations, He instructed them to be “teaching them to keep all that I commanded you” (Matt. 28:20). Faithful churches train up their people to train up other people (Matt 4:18-19; Eph. 4:11-16).

In Summary, we have seen that the local church consists of the saved people of God gathered together under Biblically qualified elders to worship, build each other up, and keep the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, in faithfulness to the great commission. We hope that you have seen that this is the New Testament pattern for the people of God.

## Membership: The People of God Joined Together

Having defined the church, it becomes clear that the church is so much more than many people realize. And this high view of the church results in a high view of membership. See, membership is not merely a commitment to a certain organization, or a building, or even a service, but to the people of God who gather with us in the pews. By joining a church, you are joining people and committing to getting to know them by living life on life with them. Membership is not merely committing to a preacher preaching a good sermon on Sunday, but also committing to being shepherded and seeking counsel for important life decisions. It is not merely joining a church for our own benefit, but instead the benefit of others. So that everyone can be encouraged as we pursue the Great Commission.

So what is Membership? The term *member* refers to a body part such as a hand, a foot, or an eye. Membership, drawn from 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 4:15-16; and Romans 12:3-13, is rooted in the idea that every Christian is Spiritually incorporated together into Christ. For example, Romans 12:4-5 says, “for just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

Local Church Membership is ***a mutual covenant of discipleship, submission, and love made with one another and leadership before God.***

“***A mutual Covenant...***” It’s a covenant, like marriage. There is a commitment between both the church (current members) and the new member. This is not just a person agreeing to attend a church, but a group of people committed to each other.

“***Of discipleship, submission, and love...***” Within the covenant of membership there are certain biblical expectations for members. These three terms are a summary of those biblical obligations.

***Discipleship*** ultimately refers to Christ calling us to follow Him as disciples (Matt. 11:28-30; 16:24-28) and to make disciples (Matt. 28:17-20). The local church, as Christ’s body and temple (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 2:4-5), is the context in which believers pursue this mission of making disciples. To be a member is to seek to disciple and to be disciplined.

**Submission** is required of members (Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:12-13). Pastors are called to give an account for their flock. In light of this, membership is a request to be shepherded. It is agreeing to submit to leadership and abide by the teaching of that church. To be a member is to submit to Christ and to those whom God has chosen as under shepherds of the church.

**Love** is the foundation of how Christians ought to live together (John 13:34-35; 1 John 5:7; Phil. 2:1-3). To be a member is to display Christ-like sacrificial love to your fellow members.

**“...made with one another and leadership...”** When you become a member of a local church, you are covenanting with both the current members and the leadership of the church.

**“...Before God.”**(1 Cor. 3:17; 1 Peter 5:4; Rev. 2:23) The church is described as the Church of the Living God. God takes special care of His church. The Covenant of membership, like all of life, is conducted under the careful watch of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

## Why do I need Membership?

Membership in the Bible is something that is more assumed than explicitly stated. There are no easy proof texts to show that one must be a member of a local church; however, there are some very compelling reasons why we must join a local church. These include: Our Love for Christ demands membership, our profession of faith cannot be credible without membership, the real accountability necessary for sanctification depends upon membership, and our usefulness to the Kingdom requires membership.

### **1. One cannot say that they love Christ if they do not love His church. And His church is made up of the people of the church. In light of this, it's nearly impossible to properly love the people of the church without local church membership**

- a. Biblical Basis: Scripture requires us to love each other in a way that is only possible in the community of a local church. It is not that we cannot love each other outside of church, but the New Testament standard for love can only be fulfilled in a local church.
  - i. *Love for one's brother is the primary way that we show our love for God:* One cannot say that they love God if they do not love their brother (1 John 4:20; 5:1). Christ commands His disciples to love one another (John 13:34-35). Those who neglect church membership neglect the greatest opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ for fellow Christians. If we are to learn to follow Christ, then we must learn to love. Yet without membership in a local church how does one learn to love?
  - ii. *The specific love commands in the Bible require a commitment to a body of believers:* There are numerous “one another” commands in the Bible. God uses these commands to define and clarify our understanding of what it means to Love others. Truly loving requires Truly “one

another"-ing. These include: service (Phil. 2:3), praying for others (Eph. 4:29; 1 Thess. 5:25), pleasing others (Rom. 15:2), teaching and admonishing (Col. 1:28), correction (1 Thess. 5:14; Gal. 6:1), showing hospitality, fellowshiping (Hebrews 10:24-25) and building up (Eph. 4:29). All of the "one another" commands of Scripture which so define love require people to be a part of the body of Christ. Additionally, there are no real opportunities to demonstrate love to "the least of these" outside of the body of Christ (Matt. 25:40).

- iii. *The Love chapter in 1 Corinthians 13 was specifically written to a church as a means of explaining how to use one's spiritual gifts.* Looking at chapters 12 and 14, it's very apparent that Paul is addressing how members of the Corinthian church used their Spiritual Gifts. Paul's goal was to help them see that serving in the church is a matter of love; however, it is interesting that he assumes that true Christians will not only be joined to a local church, but will seek to serve with their gifts. If Paul disapproved of those who serve in the local church selfishly, how much more so when people fail to serve at all?
- b. Implications: If we love Christ, then expressing that love through the local church is not just an obligation, but an opportunity. Those professing love for their savior ought to be eager to love their fellow saints by drawing close to them. Otherwise their love for Christ and in turn their salvation is questionable.

## **2. One cannot have a truly credible profession of faith without membership**

- a. Biblical Basis: Scripture does not allow those who refuse to be part of a church to be viewed as Christians.
  - i. *Scriptural Model:* There's no example of a Christian outside of the local church in the New Testament. This is especially noteworthy because many risked their lives to be baptised and identify with the local church. When combined with the fact that much of the New Testament was written to local churches, it becomes clear that a lack of membership in the local church signifies a lack of salvation.
  - ii. *Church Discipline:* Those disciplined out of the church are not to be considered Christians (Matt. 18:17). They are delivered to Satan (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20). This is reflective of the fact that the Spirit will not allow genuine believers to remain in sin or doctrinal error outside of the church (Phil. 3:15; Gal. 5:10), but He would instead lead them to repent. In addition, those who apostatize are actually considered to have never been believers (1 John 2:19). Therefore, if disciplining someone out of the church leads to the rejection of their profession of faith, then how can the profession of anyone outside of the church be considered valid?
  - iii. *The language of Outsiders applied to non-believers:* Those outside of the church are not considered Christians (1 Cor. 5:10, 12). Meanwhile those who departed from the fellowship of the church are considered to have never been genuine believers (1 John 2:19).

- iv. *The practice of giving letters of introduction:* In the New Testament believers would often carry with them letters to indicate their genuineness (3 John 12; Romans 16:1-2). This practice protected the church from bad actors and provided a mechanism for supporting the credibility of fellow believers. The Apostolic Fathers' concern for affirming credibility should be our concern as well. We too should desire a system to protect the church from bad actors and to affirm faithful fellow servants. When done properly, local church membership is an effective successor to the ancient church practice of giving letters. Whenever a new person comes from a local church which practices membership to another local church which practices membership, they can reference their old church, thereby giving the new church a reference from an old church.
- b. Implications: Biblically one who is not a member of a church cannot even be considered a Christian. He neglects to associate with those who bear the name of Christ and instead chooses to remain outside of the church with non-believers and heretics. Sadly, many genuine believers do not realize the damage they do to their own Christian witness and to the name of Christ by lingering outside the fold.

### **3. One cannot have the accountability necessary for our sanctification without membership**

- a. Basis: Scripture describes accountability as essential for believers.
  - i. *The accountability of pastors:* Believers are called to submit to their pastors (Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5). This office was intended to protect the sheep of Christ from wolves (Acts 20:28, 29). Those who reject membership in a local church, reject the care and protection of a local pastor who can shepherd and counsel them. You cannot submit to someone who is not your pastor.
  - ii. *The Accountability of the body:* Without a local church believers do not have anyone who can admonish, encourage, or help them (1 Thess. 5:14). They have no one who can restore them in a spirit of gentleness (Gal. 6:1). They have no one to warn them against wolves and false teachers.
  - iii. *The danger of isolation:* Scripture warns of the danger of isolating oneself from others. Proverbs 18:1 says, "[He who separates himself seeks his own desire, He breaks out in dispute against all sound wisdom.](#)" Self-isolation encourages foolish pursuits. Meanwhile Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages believers to gather together so that they might stimulate one another to love and good deeds.
  - iv. *Specific dangers that accountability protects from:* Lest anyone think that the danger of isolation is mild, here are just a few of the dangers posed by isolation from a local church.
    - 1. *Unbelief:* Hebrews 3:12-13 says, "[See to it brothers, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from](#)

the living God. but encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "TODAY," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Unbelief is the greatest danger that a person can face. The church is called to protect itself from the toxic influence of unbelief (Heb. 12:15 cf. Deut. 29:18), therefore, pursuing membership in a sound local church is a means of guarding oneself from being self-deceived.

2. *Heresy and false teaching*: Churches protect against false teachers (1 Tim. 1:3-4; Titus 1:10-11) and factious individuals (Titus 3:5). Those outside the church are in danger of being deceived by false teachers. These false teachers use their followers, by stealing their money, leading them into immorality (2 Tim. 3:6) and deceiving them (2 Tim. 3:13).
  3. *Unruliness*: The church applies pressure to those who live in an unruly manner (2 Thess. 3:6-15) so as to protect believers from living unproductive, ungodly lives.
- b. Implications: Neglecting membership and involvement in a local church is a very dangerous choice.

#### 4. Our usefulness to the kingdom largely requires membership

- a. Basis: The Bible views the Church as the most significant institution in our current age and therefore the local church is worthy of our attention.
  - i. *Christ Himself founded the Church*: Our Lord said, "...I will build my church and the gates of hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:18; cf. Eph. 2:13-22). Our Lord gave His life for the Church (Eph. 5:25). It is made up of those whom He purchased with His own blood (Rev. 5:9). If we wish to serve the King, then we ought to begin by joining and serving the local church.
  - ii. *The Church is appointed as the primary witness to the world*: The Church is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). Its mission is the Great Commission to make disciples of Jesus from all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). It testifies about Christ to the world (Acts 1:8). Could there be a greater cause than that of the church?
  - iii. *Commitment to the local church is commitment to the salvation of eternal souls*: The New Testament model for fulfilling the great commission was the planting of local churches which could serve as ministry hubs; therefore, those that desire to see sinners saved, who desire to say "I endure all things for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." (2 Tim. 2:10), would do best to be committed to the local church. To be committed to the local church is to stand united for the life saving gospel (Phil 1:27-28).
- b. Implications: If the Church was founded by Christ Himself, if it is appointed as the primary witness to a lost and dying world, and if commitment to a local church results in the salvation of eternal souls, then we ought to prioritize joining a local

church. How can we say that we have been faithful stewards of our time and efforts, if we have neglected church membership?

In light of these four arguments, it becomes clear that one's attitude toward membership reveals a lot about whether one has a Christlike love for others, whether they have a credible profession of faith, whether they desire real accountability, and whether they desire to be truly useful to the Kingdom.

So how should we view those who do not desire membership in the local church? In order to understand this we must first recognize that there are two different types of people who do not desire church membership.

On the one hand, there are those who lack commitment to a local church. These are people who either don't attend church or refuse to disciple and be discipled. These are people we ought to be concerned about since a lack of commitment to Christ's church generally reveals a lack of love for Christ, which in turn reveals a lack of salvation (1 John 4:20). There are of course exceptions to this, such as those who are homebound or who do not live near a genuine church; however, such believers ought to desire to be part of a church and to see their situation as a trial.

On the other hand, unlike those who refuse to commit to a local church, there are professing believers who are involved in a church, yet lack formal membership. Shepherding such sheep requires great patience. This is especially true for those who are informally committed to a local church (not members), yet may not fully understand the need for a formal membership commitment. Such saints may possess the love for their fellow brothers, yet lack the wisdom to see the benefit of having their faith formally recognized by the body of Christ. Others may simply lack the conviction to make formal membership an immediate priority. While we understand such circumstances, we must note that in spite of the possibility that these individuals are saved, if they continue to refuse church membership then their profession of faith cannot be treated as fully credible until they are formally affirmed by a local church (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 1:20).

## Who is eligible for church membership?

Joining a church should not be a difficult task with many hurdles to clear. Anyone who can prove themselves to be a Christian should be able to join a likeminded church. We have three standards for membership: a credible profession, baptism, and a willingness to submit.

1. A **Credible profession of faith** means that the leadership believes that the individual is a Christian. It consists of having an elementary understanding of the Christian faith and demonstrating some level of fruit in their life. We expect prospective members to be able to articulate the gospel and their testimony of how God has worked in their life.
2. The practice of **Baptism** consists of immersing an individual in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism is an ordinance commanded by our Lord (Matt. 28:18-20) and therefore all followers of Christ are required to be baptized. It functions as a public declaration of allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. GBC holds to the position that baptism is only available for those who make a confession of Christ as Lord (not infants)

and that proper baptism involves immersion in water. For this reason, we ask some to be “re-baptized” before we allow them to join the church if their previous baptism doesn’t fit those standards.

3. **Willingness to Submit** requires that someone be willing to submit to the leadership and teaching of a church. Put another way, we want to know that you are committed to being a **teachable person**, which is to say that you are **the type of person who desires guidance from your leaders and that you will respond humbly to correction** (Prov. 12:15; 19:20). Willingness to submit and a teachable heart are essential marks of a born-again Christian and a good sign that our church is a good fit for that individual. In addition to this document, there are four specific documents that we expect our members to have read and be governed by.
  1. The Philosophy of Ministry
  2. Deacon Statement
  3. The Doctrinal Statement
  4. The Bylaws

## To what am I committing?

By joining GBC you are committing to a covenant of discipleship, submission, and love with the members and elders of GBC. For convenience we have summarized our expectations into six commitments.

1. Pray - *I will set aside time to pray for the church body, leadership, individual members, and the lost* (Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2-3,12; 1 Thess 5:17).
  - a. In obedience to Ephesians 6:18 “praying at all times with all prayer and petition in the Spirit, and to this end, being on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”
  - b. And Colossians 4:2-3 “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been bound.”
  - c. Following the example of Epaphras in Col 4:12 “Epaphras, who is one of your number, a slave of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings, always striving for you in his prayers, that you may stand complete and fully assured in all the will of God.”
2. Attend - *I will seek every opportunity to gather with my spiritual family so as to share in the life of this church* (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42, 46).
  - a. In obedience to Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”
  - b. Following the pattern of Acts 2:42, 46 “And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers... And daily devoting themselves with one accord in the

temple and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart”

3. Live Holy - *I will strive to live a holy life, sanctifying Christ as Lord over my thoughts, desires, attitudes, emotions, words, and actions through the putting off and putting to death of sin, the renewal of my mind through the means of grace, and the putting on of Christ's righteousness* (Rom 6:11-14; 1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:22-24).
  - a. In obedience to 1 Corinthians 6:20 “For you were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”
  - b. And 2 Corinthians 7:1 “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
4. Make Disciples - *I will, as a disciple of Christ, learn by the grace of God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to evangelize and make disciples of everyone around me, including, my family, my church, and unbelievers* (Col. 1:28; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).
  - a. Following the pattern in Colossians 1:28 “Him we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.”
  - b. And Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the end of the earth.”
  - c. In obedience to Matthew 28:19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
5. Serve - *I will seek to use the gifts that God has given me to serve my brothers and sisters in Christ and build up the body of Christ* (Eph. 4:15-16).
  - a. According to the pattern in Ephesians 4:15-16 “But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head that is Christ, from whom the whole body, being joined and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the properly measured working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”
6. Give - *I will, in obedience and as worship, give cheerfully from the abundance of what God has provided to me* (2 Cor. 9:6-7).
  - a. According to the pattern in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 “Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows with blessing will also reap with blessing. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”