



# Church Membership 101 Adult (R4)

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## What is Church Membership?

There is membership in Christ's **Universal Church** and membership in a **local church**.

**Universally** – We are baptized into Christ, he sustains us into his universal church (Acts: 2:47). And our names remain in the rolls of the “lambs book of life” (Rev. 21:27)

**Locally** – Christians gather in local congregations for worship, fellowship, and discipleship. Local membership is where you are temporarily “adopted” into a local church family so as to mature in Christ and do good works for the Kingdom of God.

The most basic idea of membership (**local church**) is that it is a commitment that you make to a group of people. You are saying I am here, and while I am here, you will be my community. This is where I choose to grow, here is where I choose to serve, among these people is where I choose to dig in and bury my roots. And I will remain here until God calls me elsewhere. That is membership everyone.

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## Local Membership Doesn't Guarantee Salvation

Local membership does not necessarily imply that one is currently in a right relationship with God. (Matt. 13:24-30. 36-43). From this parable of the wheat and the weeds, we learn that God has the wheat and weeds growing together until the judgment. So it makes sense that within our church walls we will also have wheat and weeds growing together as our welcomed guests (wheat and weeds) and **local church members** (wheat and weeds). We are in this journey together.

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## Are You Wheat or Weeds?

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## What do I need to Qualify as a Member of the Church?

1. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ
  2. A willingness to commit
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## What are the Benefits of Local Membership?

1. **You wish to commit instead of consume.** You wish to and have the opportunity to participate as the active church. It is a deeper commitment, many times sacrificing time, talents and treasures to apply oneself towards the care of the community and fellow members. Simply put, members are “on a mission” for the Kingdom and glory of God.
  2. **It will give you a deeper sense of belonging and Identity.** For you are choosing of your own free will to cast yourself into the lot of this specific family of God in Pitman. You are basically saying “You are the group of people that I want to spiritually journey with together in the good and bad times. I want to officially become one of – and have an identity with – you. I wish to be, and I wish to belong.”
  3. **It gives you a stronger sense of responsibility and accountability.** It brings us to the committed reality that you are part of a bigger whole. That you are now responsible not only to yourself, but to the **local church**. Your life is now accountable and part of the churches' reputation.
  4. You now become a voting member at meetings. As long as you are a member of 16 years or older, you can now cast votes at congregational and special meetings.
  5. You can carry positions of authority and deeper service. As a member you can be voted in as an official Sunday school teacher, a member of the official board, or even a trustee. Becoming a member gives you a deeper level of trust to assume the work of the Lord in various leadership roles with the church body.
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## What are the Expectations?

### 1. Consistent Attendance at Public Worship

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)

<sup>24</sup>Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. <sup>25</sup>And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

### 2. Participation in Ministry

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NLT)

<sup>11</sup>Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. <sup>12</sup>Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and

build up the church, the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup>This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. <sup>14</sup>Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. <sup>15</sup>Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.<sup>16</sup> He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Outlines the importance of special spiritual gifts used to equip the body of Christ to serve and grow in the love of Christ. We are not only meant to consume, but to serve others in ministry. Each member of the local body is responsible for using the spiritual gifts they have been given to minister to the rest of the body. So watch closely where God is at work and join. Serve and try some new things out. If a position or new ministry doesn't fit, gracefully bow out and try something else. God has a place for you here to serve, so try something new and grow.

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### **3. Protect the Interest of Unity**

Ephesians 4:2-3 (NLT)

<sup>2</sup> Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Disunity is Satan's playground and it will destroy any local church, ruining its witness. Unity is a priceless commodity in any church. Nothing so discredits the church's witness to the community as strife, tension, and conflict among their members. You, as a member, must take personal responsibility for peacemaking within the fellowship. Do what you can to foster harmony, silence gossip, and promote a wonderful attitude of relationships. Refuse to be a part of divisiveness and safeguard unity.

### **4. Sacrificial Giving**

As a church member, you should be involved in the sacrificial giving of your resources to the church. Your financial and monetary gifts will be used to support God's Kingdom purposes and this body of believers. You are responsible to give, and the leadership of the church is responsible to use it wisely. Do your part and trust the leadership to do their part. The amount you choose is between you and God and it is a powerful act of worship and thanksgiving.

## 5. Personal Evangelism

1 Peter 2:9 (NLT)

9 But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. Personal evangelism is differently applies for each one of us. Some speak it, others show it. Some invite individuals to church, others pray. What action or mode of evangelism each one takes will be different but needs to be applied in our lives. ! Peter 3:15 tells us that we should always be ready to give an account for the hope that is in us. Remember, evangelism is simply turning another person's gaze towards Christ. This can be done subtly and simply or powerfully and boldly but it is expected and people need Christ. You are God's living example of His grace.

## 6. Keep your Focus on Christ

Colossians 3:17 New Living Translation (NLT)

17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:23 New Living Translation (NLT)

23 Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

## 7. Live in Harmony with the Disciple of the Evangelical Church

This means you don't have to agree with every single issue in our discipline, but you agree not to do a disservice to it. Our discipline gives us unity of direction and purpose. You are agreeing that you wish to work with it – NOT against it.

## 8. Choose to be in Community

This means that you are expected to choose to connect with this family of God and not disconnect from it. This family unit is based on relationships, which take time to mature. It takes time together in community. So it is expected that you choose to be an active part of this family by connecting, rubbing shoulder with and living life with the Pitman **local church**.

## 9. Have a Personal Devotional Life with God, Grow & Mature

Prayer, Bible Study, Devotionals, Quiet Time, and Journaling are all considerations and expectations for you to mature in Christ. These things in your life may rightfully start out as a discipline a formula or an obligation but eventually your relationship should mature beyond this to love. You do these things because you love Jesus not because you are expected to or you feel you need to, but because you love Him. You are expected to have a personal devotional life.

## 10. Be Ready to Yield your Preferences for Others

Mark 9:35 (NLT) <sup>35</sup>He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

Philippians 2:5-8 (NLT) <sup>5</sup>You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. <sup>6</sup>Though he was God,<sup>[a]</sup> he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. <sup>7</sup>Instead, he gave up his divine privileges<sup>[b]</sup>; he took the humble position of a slave<sup>[c]</sup> and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form,<sup>[d]</sup> he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

## 11. Pray for your Leaders

1 Timothy 2:1-3 New (NLT) **2** I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. **2** Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. **3** This is good and pleases God our Savior,

## 12. Lead Your Family

As a church member you are to encourage your family to become members of this church as well. Why? Because we pray together. We worship here together. We serve together and we grow together. And we live in a world – that if you haven't noticed – is tearing the family unit apart. And here – in this church – we preach Jesus who is the glue that can keep the family unit together. Members aim your family towards membership – not because we want numbers and not because we want power, control, or prestige – but because we want the family unit to thrive and humble themselves together under the banner of Jesus Christ.

## 13. Treasure Membership

Don't take membership for granted – it's a gift. All believers everywhere received salvation as a gift through Jesus Christ and automatically became members in the Kingdom of God. But as a member of the greater Kingdom of God you choose to serve, grow and mature here where you are planted. In this church – is where you choose to grow and mature here where you are planted. In this church – is where you choose to sink your roots. In this church is where you will grow. In this church you will find community, support, grace and love. In this church we are a family and this is our home. Don't take that for granted – this is a beautiful place.

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## Can I Be Removed/Forced From Local Membership? – Yes

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 (NLT) *Paul Condemns Spiritual Pride*

<sup>1</sup> I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you—something that even pagans don't do. I am told that a man in your church is living in sin with his stepmother. <sup>2</sup> You are so proud of yourselves, but you should be mourning in sorrow and shame. And you should remove this man from your fellowship.

<sup>3</sup> Even though I am not with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit. <sup>4</sup> And as though I were there, I have already passed judgment on this man in the name of the Lord Jesus. You must call a meeting of the church. <sup>5</sup> I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved on the day the Lord returns.

<sup>7</sup> Your boasting about this is terrible. Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? <sup>8</sup> Get rid of the old "yeast" by removing this wicked person from among you. Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us. <sup>9</sup> So let us celebrate the festival, not with the old bread of wickedness and evil, but with the new bread of sincerity and truth.

<sup>10</sup> When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. <sup>11</sup> But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. <sup>12</sup> I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people.

<sup>13</sup> It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. <sup>14</sup> God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."

**Only persistent, obvious sin is given as Biblical grounds for withdrawal from a local church (1 Cor. 5). This process would be according to our discipline in (#602).**

## What about our Church Discipline?

**104. Of the Holy Scriptures** – We hold and accept the authority of the OT books (Genesis – Malachi) and NT Books (Matthew – Revelations). All other outside books do not carry the same authority and trust as those given to us in our holy scriptures. Simply put we believe and know that our original bible (Genesis – Revelations) is a flawless, perfect work of God and is sufficiently abundant in Truth, so we can know Christ and live a life worthy of his calling.

**111. Of Sanctification** – Sanctification – also known as Christian Perfection – as per the E.C. Church is understood to be attainable on this side of heaven. Though I personally (Pastor Todd Wolfe) have never seen an individual actually achieve it, I will never discount the fact that God can do amazing things in a person if He pleases; Christian Perfection is a mode that a believer can attain and also

loose. It is the state of perfect relationship with the Lord. Loving Him with everything that you are, and loving others as yourself. Ultimately, in Glory this will become an absolute, but here on earth it should still be our ultimate goal.

**113. Of Apostasy** – Apostasy means that a man can choose, and have the power, to break their saving relationship with Jesus and lose their soul to Hell. The E.C. Church believes that God will honor man's freewill choice to walk away from Him. It is healthy to struggle with this position as there seems to be scriptures to support both sides of this argument. Ultimately, this is a minor issue. Unfortunately, people make it into a major issue. I personally struggle with this position of the E.C. Church, **BUT** I honor this position and the real fact that I would rather *be safe than sorry*. SO I choose to present both sides of this issue of apostasy, and will teach this doctrine of the E.C. Church because I believe this view makes man more accountable and hopefully more serious about their relationship with Christ. Simple Solution: Walk the good walk with Jesus Christ, and this should never become an issue.

**118. Of Hell** – Hell is a real, literal place for those who reject the grace of Jesus Christ In this place of eternity there is no hope of rescue. There is only torment and everlasting punishment. Originally created by God for his fallen angels, it will also be used to confine those who aren't qualified to enter into Heaven. It is clearly displayed and warned about in the Bible. Believe it, for it is true.

**121. Of Baptism** – Baptism does NOT save an individual from Hell. The thief on the cross was allowed to enter into paradise without any water application of baptism (Luke 23:29-43). Proper adult baptism is the full submersion of an individual into water, showing a wonderful example of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is an outward expression of an inward faith in Christ. It is a powerful declaration to all watching that says "I am Christ's and He is mine."

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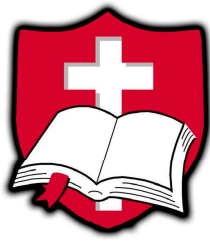
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**122. Of the Lord's Supper** – This is a precious moment of remembrance, honoring the fact that Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for you. It is to be taken by believers only, and in a worthy manner, The juice and the bread are really only juice and bread, BUT they represent so much more. Ultimately, the bread represents the broken body of Christ. The juice represents the blood shed from Christ for the believer's forgiveness.

**123. Of Church Polity** – Jesus Christ never presented any correct or absolute form of government for his church. This means that all church bodies may run a little differently, and our rules and regulations may change or be clarified. You see as our culture around us continues to spiral downward, our standards and practices will need to be rewritten to speak to and against this influence. For example: (143 Moral Standards) – New policies and positions were written to clarify what is right and what is wrong. Absolute Truth did not change but it became more specifically spelled out to a confused culture. So, simply put expect wordings, rules and policies to change but not the core issue of the Truth behind it. The Truth of the Bible is always the absolute authority over all leadership, all church discipline and all other manmade structures.

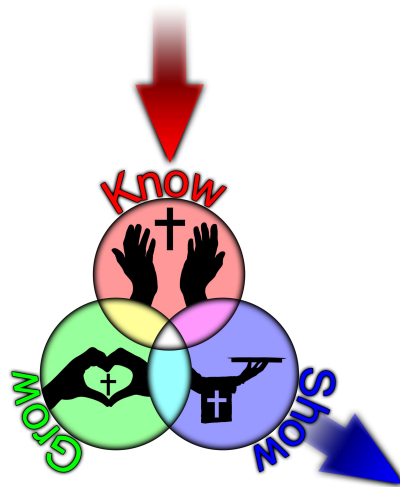
# Understanding Our Church Direction

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## Pitman E.C. Church

1 CHURCH 2 LOCATIONS



Our Pitman E.C. Churches exist to cultivate a genuine environment where authenticity & transparency encourage people to know Christ, grow spiritually and show His love to others as we live for His Kingdom.

### What does the Process look like?

1. Names of potential individuals are brought to leadership
2. Individuals are interviewed and are asked to go through an orientation/membership class
  - a. A personal relationship with Christ must be expressed
3. Your names will be brought before the official board to be voted upon
4. Approved individuals will be brought before the congregation publically in celebration
5. Certificates of membership will be given
6. Your names will be recorded in the official rolls

### Final Questions:

1. Do you still wish to commit and become a member of Pitman E.C. Church?
2. Would you or have you considered baptism?