

Membership Madness – Part 2

Excerpts Taken from the *CLC Membership Statement*

Our church membership is a simple expression of a commitment to be a functioning part of the congregation where God has placed us. At CLC, we receive members simply so we know who God has called us to care for and co-labor with. We are not legalistic or demanding about membership, and its not meant to be a heavy, lifelong obligation. It is simply a way to formally express our commitment to the spiritual family that we believe God has placed us in.

Requirements for Membership

- 1) CLC members must be a born again believers (John 3:3).
- 2) CLC members are required to complete the CLC membership course.
- 3) We ask CLC members to:
 - a) Uphold “CLC’s Basic Beliefs.”
 - b) Support “CLC’s Theological Distinctives.”
 - c) Walk out “CLC’s Biblical Obligations.”
- 4) Finally, we ask all potential members to voluntarily sign the *CLC Membership Agreement* form which is presented at the conclusion of the CLC membership course.

Understanding Church Membership

Church membership is biblical.

In the epistles, we find more than sixty “one another” commands that necessitate relationships with other Christians.

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

1 Corinthians 12:25 - *That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.*

We cannot obey the “one another” commands within the larger body of Christ while living isolated and worshipping alone.

Note: In the New Testament, it is clear that individual members were known intimately by the apostles and the church leaders:

- Paul greets the different members of local congregations by name over 25 times.
- Paul praises many of the servants by name.
- Paul rebukes certain individuals by name.
 - On one occasion in Corinth, he commands the church to disassociate from a member who was openly practicing immorality with his father's wife (1 Corinthians 5)
 - Note: There was a public, open level of church discipline because of defiant sexual sin.

Church membership is a partnership.

In our membership at CLC, you will have the opportunity to:

- Be cared for and encouraged, while caring for and encouraging others.
- Serve and meet the needs of others in the body by using your gifts and resources.
- Participate in reaching unbelievers and prodigals through prayer, relationships, and outreach.

Church membership is beneficial.

- Being a member provides you with a spiritual family to support and encourage you in your walk with Christ.
- Being a member provides you a place where you can discover and use your spiritual gifts.
- Being a member places you and your family under the spiritual covering, protection, training, and help of godly leaders.
- Being a member gives you the accountability you need to grow spiritually.
- Being a member gives you the privilege of expressing your opinions and desires without being disregarded.

- Being a member opens up additional opportunities for you to serve in positions reserved for committed members such as small groups, ministry leadership, worship teams, and other activities approved by church leadership.
- Being a member grants you access to the CLC facilities and properties, specifically for weddings, funerals, and/or approved functions that support the vision and values of Christian Life Church, not available to non-members.

Christian Life's Basic Beliefs

At Christian Life Church, we believe:

1. The Holy Bible is the written Word of God and it alone is the final authority determining all doctrinal truths.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, v.17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2. There is one God who exists eternally in the wonderful and mysterious triune Godhead as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19; Luke 1:35).
3. All humanity, Christ excluded, is sinful by both birth and action (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23, 5:8, 5:12-21, 7:18). The deserved penalty for sin is physical and spiritual death (Genesis 2:15-17, 3:19; Romans 5:12, 6:23; James 1:14-15).

Ephesians 2:1-3 - And you were dead in the trespasses and sins v.2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— v.3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Romans 5:12 - Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

4. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin, and is both fully God and fully human (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Colossians 1:15-20 - For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. v.17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. v.18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. v.19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

v.20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

5. Jesus Christ died as the sacrificial substitute to pay the penalty for sin (John 1:29, 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18).

Galatians 1:3, 4 - Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, v.4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

6. Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven and will one day physically return (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-52; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28).

Revelation 1:7, 8 - Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. v.8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

7. There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Only those who have turned from sin and to Jesus in faith and repentance in this life will be raised to an eternal reward. Those who have not turned from sin and to Jesus in this life will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 21:8).
8. Only through faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ and through repentance from sin can one be reconciled to God and find eternal life (John 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26).

1 Timothy 2:5-6 - For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, v.6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

9. After believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, the new convert is commanded by the Word of God to be baptized in water (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38).
10. Marriage is ordained by God to be a covenant relationship between one born biologically as a male and one born biologically as a female (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-32; Romans 1:19-22; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20). Note: For more on this issue, see the *Christian Life Church Policy on Marriage and Human Sexuality*.

Genesis 2:21-24 - So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. v.22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. v.23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman,

because she was taken out of Man.” v.24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Theological Distinctives

While the doctrines expressed in the statement of “basic beliefs” are recognized to be the primary beliefs of Christian Life Church, there are a number of additional beliefs that we are passionate to proclaim. Not all denominations and/or independent churches hold to these beliefs, but they are nonetheless important and true as we understand the Scriptures. Complete agreement is not required for the sake of membership, but it should be known that we will preach, teach and counsel in accordance with these convictions.

- 1) Baptism with the Holy Spirit - Initiated at Pentecost (Acts 2), the baptism with the Holy Spirit accompanied with many outward manifestations (tongues, prophecy, unity, power, etc...) is the promise of the Father and available to every believer who seeks it (Joel 2:28-29; Matthew 3:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 1:5, 8, 2:1-4, 17, 8:14-17, 10:38, 44-47, 19:1-6).

Act 2:38-39 - And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. v.39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

- 2) Divine Healing - Healing from sickness is a provision of Christ’s atonement. Healing of the sick is illustrated in the life and ministry of Jesus and is given as a sign that follows New Testament believers (Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:17-18; Acts 8:6-7; James 5:14-16; 3 John 2).

Mark 16:17-18 - And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; v.18 they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

- 3) Spiritual Gifts - God has given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit to the members of His body for the purpose of edifying the body and advancing the Kingdom of God in power (1 Corinthians 12, 14; Ephesians 4:11-14).

Romans 12:4-6 NLT - Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, v.5 so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. v.6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.

- 4) Water Baptism and Communion - Many churches have different practices and beliefs concerning water baptism and the ordinance of Communion. At Christian Life Church, we

believe and teach that baptism by immersion is an outward sign of the inward work of regeneration (Matthew 28:19) and should be followed by every believer. We believe in the commemoration of Christ's death through the sharing of bread and juice of the vine, representing His body and blood offered for our salvation (Baptism: Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27 / Communion: Matthew 26:26-30; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-26).

- 5) Complementary Roles of Males and Females in Ministry - In some churches, women are not allowed to speak or hold any church office. We see scriptural evidence that many women served in leadership positions and taught in the local congregations. Therefore, we conclude that women, along with men, may both serve in leadership positions as long as they are in proper alignment and fully submitted to the spiritual authorities within the church (Luke 2:36-38; Acts 17:4, 21:8-9; Romans 16:3, 6, 7, 12; Philippians 4:2-3).

Romans 16:1, 2 - *I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. v.2 Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.*