



THE COMPELLING COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY RUNS DEEP | FEBRUARY 1, 2026

COMFORT-BASED COMMITMENT

This model is a process where, over time, as people see the church community meeting their _____, they become more comfortable. As they become more comfortable, they commit more deeply.

As a result, our instinct is to smooth the path into our churches and to highlight the benefits of getting further involved. The hope is that, as people settle in, they'll act less like consumers and more like _____.

This is the most common way people think about commitment in churches in America. People move from casual attender to committed _____ — by way of service opportunities, small groups, leadership roles, etc. There are three problems with this approach:

1. It tells at best a half-truth about what it means to be a Christian.

The New Testament doesn't treat Christians as consumers who need to become providers as they mature. Instead, it assumes that _____ Christians act as providers — that all Christians commit deeply to a local church in ways that are meaningful, sometimes painful, and quite deliberate.

For the apostle John in 1 John 4:19-21, love between believers isn't a sign of _____; it's a sign of saving faith. If people's church involvement is motivated entirely out of what's in it for them, where do they fit in 1 John's portrait of a Christian?

Even though churches built around Comfort-Based Commitment seek to battle consumerism, they still attract people as _____. And when we attract people as consumers, we fail to tell them the whole truth about what it means to follow Christ.

2. It doesn't necessarily demonstrate the gospel's power.

Easing people down the path of Comfort-Based Commitment produces a commitment no different from commitment to any other civic-minded organization. When commitment in a local church transcends the _____ we receive from it, it points to something deeper.

3. Relationships thrive on commitment.

Commitment is foundational to community. Churches that downplay the commitment they require often produce relationships that are relatively _____ in depth. Churches that appeal to people as consumers are generally full of consumers, and consumerism stifles authentic relationships.

CALLING-BASED COMMITMENT

A church built on the commitment of church _____ requires commitment up front: you bind yourself to a group of Christians that, frankly, you don't actually know that well.

When a person is baptized, he or she is making an up-front commitment to follow Christ — and much of that is a commitment to love other _____. Church membership attaches that general commitment to a specific group of people.

That commitment doesn't stem from feelings of attachment or comfort or belonging (though hopefully those feelings follow). Instead, it's a commitment you make because doing so is part of following Jesus. We commit to other believers in the local church simply because it's part of God's calling us into His _____. It's what it means to be a Christian.

We should stop viewing commitment to a local church as a process and start viewing it as an _____. The event is our salvation, and commitment is something that inevitably follows — not something that merely happens as we mature.

Growth in commitment is good. But growth *into* commitment is _____. If we lower our initial expectations for newcomers (Christians) to near zero and rely on Comfort-Based Commitment to kick in over time, we will have a community that is consumerist, relationship-light, and not-that-different-from-the-world.

THE BIBLE ASSUMES COMMITMENT THAT IS SIGNIFICANT

1. _____ One Another Deeply and Sacrificially (Romans 12:13-16)
2. _____ Regularly with One Another (Hebrews 10:24-25)
3. _____ One Another (Hebrews 10:25)
4. _____ One Another (Hebrews 3:12-13)

THE BIBLE ASSUMES FORMALIZED COMMITMENT

Paul assumes a _____ between those "inside" and "outside" the church, not just those who physically gather with believers. On one side are those who call themselves believers and submit that profession to the judgment of the church. On the other side are those who may attend but who have made no such commitment (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

In matters of church discipline, the congregation made membership sufficiently _____ that Paul could tell when "the majority" had acted. The believer understands who he is accountable to, and the church understands who it is accountable for (2 Corinthians 2:6; Matthew 18:17).

We also see the formalized nature of church commitment in the NT's teaching on church leadership. Christians obey the leaders of the church to which they belong, and leaders are _____ for the specific members of their church (Hebrews 13:17).

All Christians are to be meaningfully and self-consciously committed to a _____ body of believers, acting as providers rather than as consumers. And this behavior doesn't exist to indicate that they are *mature* Christians, but that they *are* Christians.