

Sermon Title: Belonging
Sermon Series: Who We Are 101
Scripture: Acts 2:42-47
Speaker: Pastor Mike Barnhart



What does it look like to belong to a church?

Why membership?

“Commitment-phobia is the fear that in promising to do something good, we will miss out on getting something even better.”

—Mark Dever

Leadership is hard. Sometimes leaders make good decisions and have good motives to their leadership....other times they don't.

We've got to have a proper understanding of the church, and then we can gain insight into why commitment to the church is important.

Acts 2:42–47 ESV

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Love Jesus, love one another, and live with purpose.

- Worship
- Grow
- Serve
- Invite

Biblical reasons to belong to a church:

1. To _____ Ourselves

“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him...If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love...You are my friends if you do what I command...Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” —John 14:21; 15:10, 14; 13:17

Romans 12:1–13 ESV

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

2. To _____ the Gospel

Ecclesiastes 4:9 ESV

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.

Matthew 28:16–20 ESV

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

3. To _____ False Teachings

1 John 4:1 ESV

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2 Timothy 4:3–4 ESV

3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

“We dispel the false notion that Christians are nauseatingly self-righteous people who are worried that someone somewhere might be having fun, and who believe, above all else, in their own goodness. This is how many non-Christians think of Christianity. We can combat that false image by having a church that is not marked by such an attitude.”

—Mark Dever

4. To _____ the Church

Hebrews 10:24–25 ESV

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

5. To _____ Responsibility

1 Peter 5:1–5 ESV

1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Hebrews 13:17 ESV

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Becoming a church member formalizes the relationship between a church participant and a church's leadership.

6. To _____ God

Glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

1 Corinthians 6:20 ESV

20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Colossians 3:17 ESV

17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Church membership is about trusting God.

One of the most challenging things in the life of a church is for church people to extend grace to those around them...just as Christ has done for us.