

Membership vs. Relationship: A Bible Study

Welcome to Ebenezer Baptist Church's Bible study on the difference between holding a membership with the local church and having a daily relationship with God. This study will explore key aspects of church membership and personal faith, examining how they relate to our connection with Christ and our spiritual growth.



Church Membership vs. Being in Christ

Church Membership

Places you in the church building

Being in Christ

Makes you a new creation from the inside out

Holy Spirit

Activated through relationship with Christ, not just membership

Holding a church membership only places you in church but not in Christ. As 2nd Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) teaches, being in Christ makes you a new creation. The Holy Spirit gives new life, which cannot be obtained through mere church membership alone.





The Role of the Holy Spirit



The Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life is not automatic with church membership. Rather, it is the result of a personal relationship with Christ. Being in Christ activates what's needed for the Holy Spirit to do a transformative work in one's life.

Rights and Privileges vs. Grace and Mercy

Church Membership

Provides rights and privileges within the church community

Relationship with God

Grants access to God's grace and mercy

Holding a church membership gives you rights and privileges, but it doesn't automatically grant you grace and mercy. As Hebrews 4:16 (ESV) suggests, the confidence to approach God's throne of grace comes from nurturing a relationship with Him through time spent in prayer.



The Power of Prayer

1

Prayer Strengthens Relationship

There is no relationship with God without time spent in prayer.

2

Stronger Prayer Life

The stronger your prayer life, the stronger your relationship will be with God.

3

Access to Grace and Mercy

A stronger relationship with God leads to greater access to His grace and mercy.

Prayer is essential in building a relationship with God. It's through this relationship, not just church membership, that we receive the help we need from God.



Connection to Christians vs. Connection to Christ

1

Church Membership

Keeps you connected to other Christians

2

Personal Relationship

Builds connection with Christ

3

True Connection

Comes through time spent with Jesus

Holding membership in church keeps you connected to other Christians, but it doesn't necessarily mean you are connected to Christ. As John 14:6 (ESV) teaches, Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. True connection to Christ comes through time spent with Him, both in and outside of church.



Jesus: The Way, Truth, and Life



The Way

Jesus is our path to the Father



The Truth

Jesus is the reality of God's promises



The Life

Jesus joins His divine life to ours

Jesus is the way by being our path to the Father. As the truth, He is the reality of all God's promises. As the life, Jesus joins His divine life to ours. While the church is a place to learn about Jesus, our relationship with Christ is built both in and outside of the church.



Conclusion: Building a Relationship with Christ

Church Membership	Relationship with Christ
Places you in church	Places you in Christ
Gives rights and privileges	Gives grace and mercy
Connects to Christians	Connects to Christ

In conclusion, while church membership is valuable for connecting with other believers, a personal relationship with Christ is essential for spiritual growth and transformation. This relationship is nurtured through prayer, studying God's Word, and spending time with Jesus both in and outside of church.