



Biblical & Practical Reasons for Local Church Membership

We believe the Scriptures emphasize that every believer should become identified and committed to a specific local assembly of believers following the leading and direction of God (Acts 2:41-47; 11:26; 13:1; Romans 16; Phil. 1:1; etc.). Although the Scriptures contain neither a mandate for nor a command against an official membership roll, Valley Heights Community Church does have a membership roll for the following purposes: to encourage unity and stability in doctrine, to aid in conducting business in an orderly manner, and to provide legal protection in important church decisions. An individual's decision to be placed on the membership roll should flow from a commitment to this local church and its doctrinal understanding.¹

Reasons for Formal Local Church Membership

- As the early church knew its members, local churches are to know its members. Acts 2:41,42,47; 5:14; 6:5; 16:5; 1 Cor 14:23; Heb 10:25
- The elders of a local church need to know who they will be held accountable for before the Lord. The elders are not responsible for the souls of those who visit or attend sporadically. On a related note, believers are called to submit to their elders which infers that they have become members of a local church. Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2,3; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:7
- Believers need the accountability that is provided by the exercise of church discipline. The Bible's teaching on church discipline assumes the church knows its membership. Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:1-13; 1 Tim 5:20; Titus 3:10-11
- Believers are called to serve and practice the "one anothers" of Scripture which presupposes that believers have committed themselves to other believers in a local church. Heb 10:24-25; Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:4-7; 1 Pet 4:10-11; John 15:17; Rom 12:10,16; 13:8; 14:13,19; 15:5,7,14; 16:16; 1 Cor 12:25; Gal 5:13,26; Eph 4:2,25,32; 5:19,21; Phil 2:3; Col 3:9,13,16; 1 Thess 3:12; 4:9,18; 5:11,13,18; Heb 3:13; Jam 4:11; 5:9; 1 Pet 1:22; 4:8-10; 5:5,14; 1 Jo 3:11,23; 4:7,11-12;
- Membership provides the opportunity to publically commit oneself to a church and thus receive an equally public commitment from the church. Loyalty and care flow in both directions from the church to the member and from the member to the church. Acts 4:34-37; Gal 6:10
- Membership affirms the fact that Christians need each other. All believers need the fellowship of other believers to encourage them, confront them, teach them, disciple them, and help them grow in Christ. God has not designed the Christian life to be a "lone ranger" activity. 1 Cor. 12:18-21; 1 Thess. 5:11
- Membership opens up new opportunities for service and ministry. Valley Heights requires all Sunday school teachers, deacons, elders, and leaders of ministries to be members in good standing. This protects the church from false doctrine and promotes unity. Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11,12
- Membership provides a solid foundation for evangelism. The reputation of the church should aid your witness for Christ. The church provides a family and an environment for new believers to be taught Jesus' commands and to grow spiritually. Matt 28:18-20

¹ This section is quoted from Bylaw V, Section A, "Church Membership" of the VHCC Bylaws.