



When we are saved, we immediately become a member of the "Body of Christ". A Christian should find a bible believing local church and get baptized as well as participate in the Lord's Supper and weekly worship and fellowship as often as possible. Christians are not commanded to fill out paperwork and join a local church. Some churches require membership for anyone who desires to become a church leader (elder, deacon, etc...) but this is not scriptural. Some people say that membership is required in order to have the ability to enact church discipline...this is incorrect...church discipline is to be enacted by any Christian upon any sinning Christian at any time and in any setting. Just because someone isn't a church member doesn't make them immune to church discipline if they sin. The main goal of church discipline is repentance.

Verses Showing Membership by Salvation

Romans (12:4-5) For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Acts (2:44-47) Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. **And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**

Acts (5:14) And believers were increasingly **added to the Lord**, multitudes of both men and women...

Ephesians (5:30) For we are **members of His body**, of His flesh and of His bones.

Philippians (2:1-2) Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

The Lamb's Book of Life

All Christians ("The Elect") have their names written in the "Book of Life". This is our "official" membership document into the church and body of Jesus Christ.

See Verses: Revelation (3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:15, 21:27), Isaiah (4:3), Psalms (69:28), Daniel (12:1), Luke (10:20), Philippians (4:3).



Misinterpreted Verses That Seem to Infer a Membership Requirement but DO NOT

Acts (2:41) Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were **added to them**.

Acts (4:4) However, many of those who heard the word believed; and **the number of the men** came to be about five thousand.

- These verses from Acts are simply stating that many people became Christians. There were no Churches at this time and people met in homes, out in the open, or visited synagogues on occasion.
- If there truly was a membership record being kept, there would have been an exact number listed and not just an estimate.

Church Discipline

There are many opinions about church discipline and how it should be handled. I believe the procedure is simple and clearly described by Jesus. The biggest problem is when people think they have the right to apply disciplinary "works" to a sinner even after they have repented. Jesus made it very clear that when a person repents, that is the end...nothing more needs to be done (see discipline procedure below).

1st Corinthians (5:12-13) For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "PUT AWAY FROM YOURSELVES THE EVIL PERSON."

Many abuse the Galatians (6:1) verse and come up with a list of "works" for a sinner to perform in order to be properly "restored". This verse is actually warning them not to do this!

Galatians (6:1) Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Discipline Procedure – Matthew (18:15-17)

Moreover, if your brother sins against you...

- 1) Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
- 2) But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED.'
- 3) And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church.
- 4) But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Matthew (18:18-20) expresses God's support of the decision reached by the individuals involved in the disciplinary action...

"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

"Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Purposes of Church Discipline

- 1) To Glorify God.
- 2) To Bring About Repentance.
- 3) To Maintain the Purity of The Church.
- 4) To Deter Others from Sin.
- 5) To Prevent Giving God Cause to set Himself Against the Local Church.

