

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.

Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV



BEREAN BIBLE CHURCH

Worship Service & Communion

Sunday, 1 August, 2021

Morning Worship Live Stream - 11:00am

 <https://www.youtube.com/user/bereanbarbados/live>

 <https://www.facebook.com/BereanBarbados/live>

Midweek Online Service (Wednesday)

7:30 pm | ZOOM links provided

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Is Church Membership Biblical?

by Matt Chandler

TWO QUESTIONS FROM HEBREWS 13:17

With conflicts already brewing over other doctrines that I viewed as far more central, I wondered if we should let this church membership thing slide and come back to it later. I was preparing at the time to preach through the book of Hebrews and “happened” to be in chapter 13 when verse 17 leapt off the page: “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.”

Two questions occurred to me. First, if there is no biblical requirement to belong a local church, then which leaders should an individual Christian obey and submit to? Second, and more personally, who will I as a pastor give an account for?

These two questions started my search for a biblical understanding of the local church, and they began around the ideas of authority and submission.

Regarding the first question, the Scriptures clearly command Christians to submit to and honor an elder body (Heb. 13:17, 1 Tim. 5:17). If there is no understanding of local church membership, then who are we to submit to and obey? Is it anyone with the title “elder” from any church? Should you as a Christian obey and submit to those loons at Westboro Baptist? In order to obey Scripture, must you picket soldiers’ funerals, as the pastor of Westboro seems to imply?

Regarding the second question, the Scriptures clearly command an elder body to care for specific people (1 Pet. 5:1-5; also, Acts 20:29-30). Will I as a pastor be held accountable for all the Christians in the Dallas Metroplex? There are many churches in Dallas that I have strong theological and philosophical differences with. Will I give account for what they teach in their small group, how they spend their money, and what they do concerning international missions?

LOTS OF OTHER EVIDENCE FOR MEMBERSHIP

There are other evidences to support local church membership in the Scriptures.

We see in Acts 2:37-47 that there is a numerical record of those who have professed Christ and been filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 41) and an acknowledgement that the church was tracking the growth (v. 47).

In Acts 6:1-6, we see elections take place in order to address a specific problem and accusation.

In Romans 16:1-16, we see what appears to be an awareness of who is a church member.

In 1 Timothy 5:3-16, we see a clear teaching on how to handle widows in the church and in verses 9-13 we read this:

Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.

In this text we see criteria for who would or would not qualify for Ephesus's widow care program. The local church in Ephesus is organized, and they are working out a plan.

We could go on and on here, asking questions about how we could be obedient to the commands of God in 1 Corinthians 12 or Romans 12 if we aren't connected to a local covenant community of faith. But to unpack all the possible texts would require longer than I have for this article.

GOD'S PLAN IS THAT WE WOULD BELONG TO LOCAL CHURCHES

When you begin to look at these texts it becomes clear that God's plan for his church is that we would belong to a local covenant community of faith. This is for our own protection and maturation, and for the good of others.

If you view church as some sort of ecclesiological buffet, then you severely limit the likelihood of your growing into maturity. Growth into godliness can hurt. For instance, as I interact with others in my own local body, my own slothfulness in zeal is exposed, as is my lack of patience, my prayerlessness, and my hesitancy to associate with the lowly (Rom. 12:11-16). Yet this interaction also gives me the opportunity to be lovingly confronted by brothers and sisters who are in the trenches with me, as well as a safe place to confess and repent. But when church is just a place you attend without ever joining, like an ecclesiological buffet, you just might consider whether you're always leaving whenever your heart begins to be exposed by the Spirit, and the real work is beginning to happen.

What's the bottom line? Local church membership is a question of biblical obedience, not personal preference.

Order of Service

August 1, 2021, 11:00 am

“Come let us worship together”

1. Welcome
2. Announcements
3. Meditation
4. Medley: Sacrifice of praise, Sanctuary, Come let us worship
5. Reading; Job 1:20-22
6. Hymn 49 Blessed be the Name
7. Prayer & Offering
8. Fellowship Reception
9. I run to Christ
10. Message: Pastor Paul Garnes
11. 836 He giveth more grace
12. Communion
13. 816 Have Thine own way
14. Benediction



PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR:

- That the recent spread of COVID-19 would be contained
- Against gun violence and societal ills.
- Pray for the ministry and wellbeing of our Pastor and family.
- For healing for our sick members and grace for our shut-in members.
- For the Berean Church families in The DR Congo as they combat Covid-19, the volcanic activity in Goma and related challenges.
- For the friends of Berean – The Gilmours, Haecks, Hulls, Moores, Montagues, Porchers, Rogers, Rudders and Taylors.
- For our unemployed members to find meaningful employment.
- For the economic recovery of our country Barbados.
- For the peace of Jerusalem.

August Birthdays

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1st - Michelle Knight | 13th - Michael Patrick | 23rd - Nicholas Williams |
| - Louise Moore | 14th - Steve Brewster | 24th - Monica Crawford |
| 3rd - Deirdre Boyce | 18th - Jean Slocombe | 27th - Tyrone Lowe |
| - Audrey Lloyd | 19th - Jean Connell | 30th - Cynthia Lindsay |
| 11th - Bernadette Holder | - Patricia Gaskin | - Johan Rogers |
| 13th - Chad James | 21st - Celeste Porte | |

Anniversaries

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2nd - Truneal & Mikhail Kwang | 11th - Stephen & Betty Mendes |
| - Owen & Jenny Thompson | 27th - Richard & Brigitte James |
| - Lorna & George Ward | Dacre & Pearlita Franklin |