

Church Membership at Lancaster Alliance Church

The Value of Church Membership

There seems to be confusion today about the significance and meaning of church membership. Some churches have done away with the idea. Others have changed the name. Some churches have raised the bar and began to ask people to make serious commitments to the local church.

If you consider this your church home and participate regularly in our worship services, smaller groups and ministries serving, you are a part. You get the same attention as a person who has been a member for years. However actually becoming a member is important not only for what it does for you but also how it helps the church accomplish its mission. There is a difference between being associated with this church family and being a member.

Membership is not mentioned specifically in the Bible but is certainly implicit. We are called to assemble together and to commit to one another for growth, service and outreach. We are referred to as the body of Christ. This involves taking a stand with others of common faith and conviction. It encourages other believers when we publically declare our commitment to the local church.

Membership is also important because it gives church leaders a sense of who is committed to the life of the church. The level of investment directly reflects the relationship that a person establishes with the local church. It means that you are taking a longer term interest in this church and intend to invest yourself in its growth and fruitfulness.

Committing to become a member of a local church helps you as well. Membership establishes a base line of commitment that can sustain the ups and downs of church life and relationships. There is inherent value in making commitments and then fulfilling those promises. Committed people have the satisfaction of moving from spectator to participant which brings joy to you and brings honor and glory to God.

Therefore if you have committed your life to Christ, received his gift of forgiveness and begun to walk in the Spirit, we invite you to consider joining the church as a member. Steps are simple. We ask you to participate in our Welcome class offered each spring and fall. After that we schedule a conversation with some of our elders to share your spiritual journey and then you are publicly welcomed into the church membership.

The Qualifications for Church Membership

- A credible profession of faith with evidence of transformation.
- A lifestyle that is consistent with the Word of God.
- A willingness to be a good steward of their time, resources and energy in support of local church and international ministries.

- A commitment to cooperate with local church leadership and submit to Godly authority as established in the church.

The Steps to Church Membership

Step One: Attend the Welcome to LAC class offered three times a year.

Step Two: Complete the Application for Membership and submit it to the Elders.

Step Three: Be interviewed by at least two (2) Elders.

Step Four: Be approved by the Church Leadership Team upon recommendation of the interviewing elders.

Step Five: Be introduced to the congregation during a public service.

The Concept of Church Membership:

- A person joins the universal church when they choose to accept God's free gift of forgiveness and eternal life by faith in Christ. They join the local church when they determine to be a part of a local body in order to be a part of God's plan for reaching the world.
- People do not join the church in order to get to heaven.
- The Church is the universal body of "born again" believers wherever they are around the world. We are one body.
- The local church is the visible expression of the universal Church which meets locally for worship, fellowship, instruction and service.
- Joining a local church is a tangible expression of belonging to the universal church and is an expression of the bond that unites every Christian with Jesus Christ and each other.
- Church Membership binds us together. It is the beliefs that we hold, the mission we share and the relationships we value.
- Two terms are easily confused in church life: Fellowship and Membership. Here at LAC everyone who sees this church as their "home church" is a part of our FELLOWSHIP. You are welcome to be a part of what we are and do regardless of where you are on your spiritual journey. MEMBERSHIP is a next step of commitment. Becoming a member involves having made a profession of faith in Christ and begun to walk the Christian life. It involves studying our convictions and values. It means that you are taking a long term interest in the direction and support of this local church. It is a very positive step of responsibility and accountability where we move from being spectators to players.

Biblical Basis for Church Membership:

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV) ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Ephesians 4:11-15 (NIV) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Romans 12:4-5 ⁴ Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

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