

## Is church membership biblical?

I have encountered many people on either side of the question of church membership. There are those who claim that to be a Christian, one must place themselves under the authority of the local church as a member of that church. Others claim that church membership is unbiblical and therefore they will never become a member of a local church body.

1. What does it mean to become a local church member?  
Hebrews 10:25 & Ephesians 4:12-14

Becoming a member of a local church body means that the individual Christian has willingly chosen to submit himself to the rule and authority of the local body of believers. In particular, they have chosen to submit themselves to be under the authority of the local church pastor or elders.

2. Which of the first generation churches have members?  
+ Acts 1:26, Romans 16:5-7  
1 Corinthians 1:1-2, Colossians 1:2-3  
Ephesians 1:1-2, 2 Corinthians 1:1-2

While church membership is not explicitly spoken of in the scriptures, there are multiple references to people being considered to be on some sort of list. The scriptures speak of people being a "roll" (1 Samuel 26:22). This could be a metaphorical allusion or an actual list of people who have chosen to associate together as one people. Furthermore, the epistles are written to the church or to the saints at a specific location. In some form, it appears that there was some sort of identification system for those who are considered to be a part of or a member of the church.

3. Who should be a member?  
+ Acts 1:26, Romans 16:5-7

Everyone who names the name of Christ should locate and become active in a local congregation. It is through service that we grow and prosper in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. What are the ramifications of being a church member?  
+ Acts 1:26, Ephesians 4:12-14  
- Romans 16:5-7, Hebrews 10:25  
Galatians 1:1-2

But willingly submitting ourselves under the authority of another, you are also willingly submitting ourselves to the spiritual discipline of being a minister to the local church body. The local church body is also a place where you can exercise your spiritual gifts and grow in the promises of the gospel of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You are in the midst of a people to whom you are expected to be accountable before God for your actions and your spiritual growth. It is also where you are expected to hold others accountable for their actions before God.