

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | OCTOBER 13, 2019



Class 1 – The Local Church as a Growing Structure

PURPOSE: Determining what biblically warrants a given congregation formalizing their church membership, as it becomes a springboard for genuine church growth.

Introduction

As most of you know my name is Wes Wieman. I am a retired Pediatric Dentist. My wife Jan and I met in 1976 and were married in 1978. Our first son, Andrew, was born in 1980 and the same year we moved to Long beach to a new house and dental practice. We were both saved through Grace Brethren Church sending evangelists to our house. We soon became members and also were involved in Bible studies. Our second son, Daniel, was born in 1983. Due to managed care changes, I decided to purchase a practice in Eureka and we moved here in 1984. Soon after we attended and joined Grace Baptist Church. We had no family or friends when we arrived here. Once we were involved at Grace we had both. Membership does have its advantages.

I. Our Foundation

- A. Point 1: The key verse for today's discussion is Ephesians 2:19-22, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are also being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."
- B. Point 2: There is a theme of establishment with Christ as the cornerstone of the church. We know that the church is not just a building, but a collection of believers. The foundation is the Word of God as directed by the Spirit through the apostles and prophets.
- C. Point 3: "Being fitted together," implies an edifice that is growing into a "dwelling of God in the Spirit" or a holy place. And we know that "Where two or three have gathered together in My name, 'there I am in their midst.'" Matt. 18:20..
- D. Point 4: "Strangers and aliens" are the nonbelievers. We become "fellow citizens" when we are saved and also become part of God's household or church. Church can refer to the overall collection of believers in the world or a local congregation. There are also many denominations or divisions of believers based on Biblical interpretation or nowadays based on whatever their leaders teach.

II. Other Bible Verses

- A. Point 1: Acts 2:41-44. “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common.”

Note: This was when the church was first being established and new believers were continually being added day by day.

- B. Point 2: Heb. 10:24-25. “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”
- C. Point 3: I Cor. 12:12-14. “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.”

Note: Here the body of Christ is the church and its members all have different functions unable to work properly alone but doing well in harmony together.

Membership Matters Course Outline:

- Introduction
- Local Church as a Growing Structure
- Local Church for Building Up a People
- Vital Leadership Roles
- Examples of Accountability in the NT
- More Examples of Accountability in the NT
- Failed Systems of the Past
- (Thanksgiving Break – No Equipping Hour)
- *Trellis and the Vine* Book Review - Part 1 of 2
- *Trellis and the Vine* Book Review - Part 2 of 2