

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN THE BIBLE

When we look to Scripture, we see the church functioning as groups of believers devoted in fellowship to one another [[Acts 2:42](#)], in local assemblies [[1 Cor 1:2](#)] [[Col 1:2](#)] [[1 Thess 1:1-2](#)], under the loving care and instruction of biblically qualified elders and deacons [[Acts 20:28](#)] [[Phil 1:1](#)] [[1 Pet 5:2-3](#)] [[Heb 13:7](#)]. The word translated as 'fellowship' in the New Testament is the Greek word *koinonia*, which speaks of joint participation and community. God intends believers to know, and be known in the local church, within mutually submissive, inter-dependent, accountable and meaningful relationships [[Eph 5:21](#)] [[1 Cor 12:21](#)] [[Heb 10:24-25](#)] [[1 Thess 5:11](#)]. Our corporate fellowship is simply an expression of this. However, these kinds of relationships cannot function effectively when believers drift from church to church or attend only occasionally as "long term" visitors with no intention to commit to a church family. In light of these things, we believe the pattern in Scripture is that of believers not just "going" to a church, but rather "belonging" to a church.

Since the church is made up of God's people, membership simply describes the commitment believers are to have towards their brothers and sisters in the local church as they seek to carry out the "one anothers" in Scripture, and as they are equipped for the work of ministry, each doing their share [[Eph 4:11-16](#)]. Those who lead in the church need to know who they are accountable for, and those they are accountable for need to know who their leaders are [[Heb 13:17](#)]. Additionally, without a meaningful church membership, a local church cannot protect its members through the practice of loving and patient church discipline in the event that this is required [[Matt 18:15-17](#)] [[1 Cor 5](#)].

In conclusion, although church membership is not specifically *commanded* in Scripture, we believe it is strongly *implied*, for good and beneficial reasons. This is why we have a formal church membership here at CBC.

MEMBERSHIP AT CBC

On any given Sunday, our congregation will be made up of members, those who are considering membership, and visitors. As stated above, we believe that belonging to a local church is not optional for believers, but an essential component of our Christian walk. We recognise it takes some time for people to get a feel for the fellowship, the teaching, and whether or not they see the potential of connecting with other believers on more than just a surface level.

Our desire is to provide transparency and clarity about who we are as a church, so that prospective members can make an informed decision about whether CBC is the right church for them. If you are new to CBC, we encourage you to take your time to get to know the people, the leaders, and what we are about as a church, before deciding if you want to pursue membership.

We would also encourage you to read our **Vision & Mission (Why We Exist / What We Do)**, **Doctrinal Statement (What We Believe & Teach)**, & **Core Values (Guiding Principles & Practices)** and also to read/watch/listen to any other articles or teachings that will help you to get to know more about how we function as a church (please see our website for these).

If you have any questions, please feel free to talk to any of the leaders, or existing members of the church. We would be happy to arrange a time to meet with you/your family if this would be helpful - otherwise please feel free to chat to us on a Sunday. See the next section below for more about how to become a member of Community Bible Church.

BECOMING A MEMBER OF CBC

If you/your family have been attending CBC long enough to get to know who we are, what we're about, and are interested in pursuing membership, here's an outline of the process:

- 1. Please review the CBC Membership Requirements/Expectations listed below.** The CBC leaders are more than happy to answer any questions you may have, or if you need clarification on any of the points please just ask.
- 2. If you are in agreement with the membership requirements/expectations, please let us know so we can arrange a meeting with you/your family.** This is for the purpose of getting to know you a little better, talk about your previous church involvement, answer any further questions, and also (our favourite part) hearing your testimony of how you came to faith (this is very casual, and does not have to be polished so please don't stress about it!).
- 3. Following this, and provided you and the CBC leadership are happy to go ahead, we will arrange a time on a Sunday to pray for you and welcome you into the CBC family** (though you should already feel a part of it by then!). We will then add your details to the church directory, CBC email list, and there will be multiple opportunities for spiritual growth, serving, discipleship and outreach as *we strive together for the faith of the gospel* (Philippians 1:27).

CBC MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

There are just 4 requirements for a person to become a member of Community Bible Church:

- 1. That you are a born-again, baptised believer, having repented and placed your trust in Christ alone for salvation.**

NOTE: For families, this refers to the adults in the family who are living in the same household and who desire to become members.

- 2. That you are in support of CBC's vision and mission listed below and accept this as the biblical basis for our purpose and function as a church.**

THE VISION OF CBC (why we exist as a church)

To wholeheartedly love God and genuinely love others.

[Matt 22:37-40]

THE MISSION OF CBC (what we do as a church to fulfill our vision)

[Matthew 28:16-20]

EXALT GOD (through a lifestyle of WORSHIP)

EQUIP BELIEVERS (through a lifestyle of DISCIPLESHIP)

EVANGELISE THE LOST (through a lifestyle of OUTREACH)

NOTE: Our vision and mission is intentionally “unoriginal”, so that we can keep things simple, focused, and biblical. In using the phrase “lifestyle” we are highlighting the fact that although members are equipped and encouraged during our corporate meetings, our vision and mission is carried out in our daily lives through our various roles and vocations. For more information, please watch the message, “The Vision & Mission of CBC” available on our website.

3. That you have read, understand and are in substantial agreement with our Doctrinal Statement (What We Believe & Teach) & Core Values (Guiding Principles & Practices), accepting that our teaching/doctrines/practice will be in line with these.

NOTE: If there are parts of our statement of faith, core values etc. that you are undecided about, or do not agree with, please let us know. Whilst some components of our doctrine are essential to the faith, we recognise and accept that not all prospective members would have formed a conviction on all points, and also that in secondary issues such as eschatology, there is room for differing views. For more information please watch the message, “CBC – What We Believe & Teach” available on our website.

4. That you are willing to commit to regular fellowship with the CBC family each Lord’s Day under the loving care and instruction of the elders and deacons, for the purpose of being equipped for ministry within the local church.

NOTE: In using the term “regular” we are speaking of a consistency in attendance, not just to “tick the box”, but to allow members to practically love, serve, and support one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We recognise there will be exceptions to regular attendance such as sickness, holidays/being out of town, crisis, essential work etc. It is assumed that a member of CBC has taken the time to acquaint themselves with the existing leadership, and is therefore comfortable being under their care, protection and guidance, in accordance with God’s Word. It is also assumed that a member has a desire to grow and serve God’s people.

CBC MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS:

What is Expected as a Member of the Local Church:

The following is a list of what we believe to be some of the key biblical expectations for a member of a local church. For these characteristics to be genuine, they must be inwardly motivated, out of a love for the Lord, and are therefore not seen as our church’s expectations, but rather that which the Lord expects of all believers in the Body of Christ. As we seek by God’s grace and patience to live more in line with His Word, we should desire these characteristics to be evident in our lives.

- **A willingness to grow and mature spiritually, be disciplined and disciple others under the love, care, and direction of your local church elders.**
- **A willingness to serve the Lord, and your fellow church members, by using your gifts and abilities for God's glory, according to your availability and season of life and in harmony with the vision and mission of your church.**
- **A willingness to love your brothers and sisters in the church: by being prepared to lay aside personal preferences if it helps to maintain and promote unity; through the practice of hospitality; by seeking to resolve conflicts and offences in a biblical manner.**
- **A willingness to support the ministry of your local church financially, according to your means, and as determined between yourself / your family and the Lord.**

For additional comments on membership expectations, please read the excerpt from the book, "What is a Healthy Church Member" by Thabiti Anyabwile [available on our website]

What You Can Expect from the Leadership at CBC:

Once a person/family have become members of CBC, here are some of the expectations you can have of the eldership, who are accountable to God to lead, feed, care for and protect the members of the church, with the assistance of the deacons who serve in practical roles of oversight and administration.

- **A commitment to lead and govern, in accordance with CBC's Vision & Mission, Doctrinal Statement and Core Values**
 - **A commitment to pray for you, care for you, bear your burdens with you, and encourage you in your walk with the Lord**
 - **A commitment to proclaim, defend and preserve sound doctrine, whilst guarding against false doctrine**
 - **A commitment to be accountable to the Lord, to the fellow leaders in the church, and to the church members**
 - **A commitment to lead by a consistent, though imperfect, example of what it means to be a follower of Christ (as per qualifications in 1 Timothy & Titus)**
 - **A commitment to provide you with discipleship, mentoring and equipping for ministry**
 - **A commitment to provide you with pastoral care and biblical counsel as required**
 - **A commitment to provide training and mentoring in church leadership for suitably called and qualified men**
 - **A commitment to provide regular and clear communication in all church related matters**
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CBC CORE VALUES (Guiding Principles & Practices):

As we seek, by God's Grace, to fulfil our vision & mission, we are guided by the following Core Values (Guiding Principles & Practices). Our Vision & Mission states why we exist and what we do, our Doctrinal Statement outlines what we believe as our basis for ministry and our Core Values describe how we carry out our Vision & Mission and the principles and practices that guide us. Whilst it may be simpler to just state that we will be directed by Scripture in all we do, we want to bring further clarity to how this actually looks in certain key areas. We also feel this is important as there are so many different ways that churches function, are guided in their activities, and how much they rely upon Scriptural principles. Here are the Core Values of CBC:

Under the Headship of Christ, in reliance upon the Holy Spirit, as exemplified in Scripture, and for God's glory we are committed to the following guiding principles and practices:

As we seek to GOVERN biblically:

- Biblically qualified leadership
- Meaningful church membership
- The practice of loving & patient church discipline

As we seek to GROW biblically:

- Expository Preaching
- Intentional discipleship & equipping
- Training in biblical counselling

As we seek to GATHER biblically:

- Age-integrated worship & discipleship
- Upholding the biblical roles for men & women
- A Christ-exalting approach to prayer, giving, communion & music ministry

As we seek to GO biblically:

- Proclamation & preservation of the biblical gospel
- Consistent equipping for lifestyle evangelism
- A reliance upon God's sovereignty in conversion