

1) Join a church to display the gospel

*"Church membership is the natural outcome of the gospel itself...
God saves us into the kingdom of the Son he loves (Colossians 1:13)—a kingdom bustling with
other redeemed sinners who just like us, are now citizens of heaven."* —**Mark Dever**

As part of a Christian joining a local church, the rest of the church family gets to 1) take a close at look at their doctrine and life and 2) hear their testimony of God's work of salvation for the purpose of giving them the metaphorical 'Thumbs Up' and letting them know that they too are indeed a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, together with the rest of us (Matthew 16:19).

The privilege to display the gospel together with other Christians is truly astounding! Every potential for personal conflict and division fizzles out when we rightly believe that being part of a church family means that we are fellow citizens of God's kingdom and members of God's household (Ephesians 2:19), a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22).

2) Join a church to love what Jesus loves

There's no one more undeserving but also more loved by Jesus than the church (Ephesians 5:25).

To love the Lord Jesus Christ requires loving what Christ loves.

When you join a local church, not only do you get to identify with your loving Savior but you also get to visibly be included in what He loves most here on earth!

3) Join a church because the New Testament expects it

We shouldn't hesitate to say that the New Testament is overwhelmingly church-focused; and more specifically the New Testament is 'local church focused'.

There's no other way to appreciate the dynamics of church life except if we have a clear understanding of membership: *baptized Christians submitting their life of discipleship to a church family by formally joining that church and being in covenant with a specific group of brothers and sisters in one place.*

Some examples to consider in the New Testament: Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Timothy 5:9-16

4) Join a church to live out the ‘One Another’ commands of the Bible

“A life of holiness may begin between God and the individual soul, but it finds full expression in community with other people—other wonderful, glorious, frustrating, and sometimes offensive people in the context of the local church.”
—Scott Hubbard

Almost sixty times in the New Testament God tells us to do something towards ‘one another.’

Biblically, the most immediate context where we obey the ‘one anothers’ is **the local church** (in our case, Calvary Baptist Church). In order to faithfully live out the ‘one anothers’ and bring glory to God through our obedience, we can’t be a lone ranger Christian or a Christian who is noncommittal about joining a church through membership.

5) Join a church to assure yourself of your salvation

You need fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to hold you accountable to the word of God—and this for the eternal good of your soul.

You need a church family to help you persevere well until the end against the threats of backsliding and apostasy which are very real according to the New Testament!

Proper accountability between members in the local church will ensure us that we’re all treading in the right direction: **towards maturity in the gospel as we become increasingly grounded in the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4:13).**

6) Join a church for the joy of your pastors/elders

You need proper, individual nurture and oversight of your soul as a Christian.

Biblically qualified pastors/elders have a very particular task given to them by the risen Christ: “*shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight*” (1 Peter 5:2).

In order for pastors/elders to do their job faithfully, they need to know *who exactly* are the sheep Jesus has entrusted to their care. If their responsibility is to feed the sheep, love the sheep, comfort the sheep during their pain and hardships, lead the sheep and protect the sheep from false teaching & unrepentant and divisive sinners, then your pastors/elders need to know *who are the sheep* who gladly submit themselves to their pastoral authority. This is why meaningful membership in the church is extremely important!

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).

“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” (Hebrews 13:17).

7) Join a church to display the glory of Christ in a dark world

If there are no sound, gospel-preaching local churches in our communities, our world will remain hopelessly lost and condemned under the weight of sin.

Every faithful local church is just like a glimmer of light that shines clearly against the backdrop of sin and dispels its darkness (Philippians 2:14-15).

The way God is pleased to transform our culture is through healthy, local churches that both boldly preach the gospel and meaningfully live out the gospel in their ordinary, day-to-day relationships. So your commitment to a local church is for the eternal good of those in our town.

By joining a church, you get to stand out in our community as a light for Christ. Your character and life should exude a luminous hope displaying the majestic glory of Jesus Christ; the more of us do this together, the greater our impact will be for the sake of the gospel!

“One of the greatest needs of our times is for living, biblical churches. No other institution can adequately replace them. Every Christian ought to give much thought and prayer to this subject, and then order his life in such a way as to further the work of God’s true churches. This is not a time for an apathetic, easy-going attitude toward churches. The needs are great. The pressures of ungodliness are heavy. Those who demean God’s churches are plenty. Let us, then, rise up and go forth with boldness to declare ourselves servants of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by following His will in His local church wherever His providence directs us.”

—Daniel E. Wray