

# Why You Should Join the Church

Selected Scriptures

Pastor Ron Prorise

April 11, 2010

Shepherd's Community Church

## The Example of the Early Church

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

(John 21:15-17; Acts 2:41; 4:4; 18:27; 2 Corinthians 3:1; Romans 16:1; Matthew 18:15-17; Hebrews 13:17)

## The Teaching of the New Testament

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

(Acts 20:28; 5:13; Proverbs 27:23; Ephesians 2:20-21; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Corinthians 12:21-27; Philippians 1:27)

## The Blessings of Church Membership

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

(Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 4:11-13; John 13:34-35; Matthew 28:19; Mark 8:38)

# Committing Ourselves to Church Membership

Several years ago, Dr. Jay Adams was fielding questions at a counseling conference in San Diego. One man raised his hand and asked, "Should we enact church discipline on people who are not members of our church?"

"No, of course not," answered Jay in his inimitable style of loving firmness. "Church discipline is only for believers." A questioning rumble passed through the room, and so he explained further, "People who are not members of a church should be treated like unbelievers, because they are treating themselves as unbelievers."

A stronger wave of murmurs swept through the audience, and hands shot up. "What if your church doesn't have church membership?" was the next question.

"Your church doesn't have church membership?" Jay responded with surprise. The man went on to explain that he was from a certain denomination of which the leaders did not believe in having a church roll of any kind because they felt that was an unnecessary, legalistic requirement to place upon their people. So, in effect, Jay Adams had just told several hundred pastors, counselors, and committed laypeople that they should all be treated as unbelievers!

Jay had known about that denomination's policy before he made his comments, and his intention was not to insult those brothers and sisters. Rather he wanted to get their attention and cause them to think about the issue of church membership. It worked, because they listened intently as he spoke. Several pastors from that same denomination approached him afterward and said that they had been convinced by his words and were planning to implement membership in their churches.

Considering the privileges of partnership in the local church, every person who is not a member of one should be "banging on the door" to get in. Combined with the command for commitment to the church and our obligation to obey our leaders, you can see why membership is not an option for a true believer. That's why it is accurate to say that those who refuse church membership treat themselves as unbelievers," because they are willingly disobedient to the commands of God and have foolishly denied themselves the benefits of God's community.

Eric Lane says that the believer's relationship to the church is analogous to a marriage. He likens Christians who refuse church membership to a man and woman who merely declare themselves married and move in together without ever submitting to a legal marriage ceremony.

They have only thought of themselves and not of the society of which they are a part. Marriage is a public affair, because, however private a matter individuals may think it to be, other members of the community have a right to know who belongs to whom and who is whose wife or husband. A society in which everyone behaved as this couple would be sheer chaos. Moreover, their selfishness in fact rebounds on their own head, because, by refusing registration, they preclude themselves from certain benefits the state grants to married folk.

To borrow the same analogy of marriage, we need to honor Christ by being His bride in every sense – outwardly as well as inwardly, visibly as well as invisibly, and officially in the local church as well as spiritually in the universal body.