



## WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER OF SCC?

This is a question many Christians are asking in our day and age. While there are many arguments for why Christians should formally join a local church in membership, we want to present what we see as the five most biblically faithful and compelling reasons why you should become a member of a local church.

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1. In 1 Peter 5:2, pastors are commanded, “*shepherd the flock of God that is among you....*” And Hebrews 13:17 says that pastors will “*have to give an account*” to God for the way they watched over the souls in their churches. Let that sink in for a moment, and imagine that you are a pastor. Who are you responsible for? Whose soul will you have to give an account for before the Lord? Is it every soul that passes through the doors at any time? Is it those souls who come five times? Seven? Formal church membership helps your pastors to know whose souls they are responsible for. It brings clarity to this sobering and serious reality. With formal church membership, pastors know exactly who they are caring for and praying for and watching out for.
2. Again, Hebrews 13:17 says, “***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.***” How can the pastors of SCC identify who has committed to submit to their leadership? How can they know who they should expect to follow and submit to them in the Lord? The reality is that without formal church membership, there can be no clarity on this question. Formal church membership helps to clarify who exactly is committed to following the pastoral leadership of this church.
3. Church membership is implied in the metaphor of the body in 1 Corinthians 12:12–27. The meaning of the word “*member*” in this text is literally “a body part.” So a member is a hand, foot, eye, nose, or ear, etc. Verse 12 says, “*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*” How are we to know who exactly desires to be treated as a hand or foot or eye or any other part of this local body? Imagine for a moment the idea of a person associating with or attaching themselves to a body of believers without declaring that they wanted to actually be a body part. Formal church membership is a declaration that we are members of this body together at SCC.
4. The last two reasons come from Matthew 18:15-17. In verse 17, after giving instruction to believers on how to privately and humbly confront a brother or sister in sin, Jesus says, “*If he refuses to listen even to them, **tell it to the church.***” How are we to interpret this verse without formal church membership? How do we determine who we share this incredibly sensitive personal information about a brother or sister in sin with? Do we simply share it in the middle of a worship service when there are visitors and uncommitted people present? It is our conviction that this verse instructs us to share this information with members of the church only. Formal membership is the only way for us to be able to definitively call only committed members together for such an announcement.

5. Finally, in Matthew 18:17, Jesus gives further instruction to the church for what to do if a sinning brother or sister continues to refuse to repent even after the church members have lovingly and repeatedly reached out in love to them: *“And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”* Similarly, the apostle Paul told the Corinthians church in the case of a church member who was practicing blatant sexual immorality, *“When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened.”* These passages speak of what is commonly called excommunication from the church. A person who repeatedly refuses to repent of serious sin is to be removed from the fellowship of the church, and treated as one who needs to come to Christ for forgiveness of their sin in repentance in order to be lovingly welcomed back in as a brother. Loving excommunication makes sense only in the context of formal church membership. In order to be excluded, you must have been at one point included. This is one function that formal church membership performs.

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As you prayerfully consider membership at SCC, please read these challenging words from Pastor John Piper to his church in Minnesota: *“I close by urging you to pray and to think this through for your own life. The New Testament knows of no Christians who are not accountable members of local churches in the sense that we have just seen. “Lone-Ranger Christians” are a contradiction because becoming a Christian means being united to Christ, and union with Christ expresses itself in union with a local body of believers. It seems to us that in the New Testament, to be excluded from the local church was to be excluded from Christ. This is why the issue of membership is so important.*

*Are you an accountable member of a local church? Not just: Is your name somewhere? But, are you committed to discipline and being disciplined according to biblical standards? Have you publicly declared your willingness to be shepherded and to be led by the leaders of a local church? Do you see yourself and your gifts as part of an organic ministering body? Do you show by your firm attachment to Christ’s body that you are attached to Christ?*

***Church membership is a blood-bought gift of God’s grace. More than most of us realize, it is a life-sustaining, faith-strengthening, joy-preserving means of God’s mercy to us. I urge you not to cut yourself off from this blessing.”***<sup>1</sup>

It is our prayer and humble request that you will prayerfully consider and commit to formal church membership at SCC for the biblical reasons given above. We are more than happy to answer any questions you may have. Please see SCC’s *Membership Covenant* for greater detail as to what exactly membership entails at SCC. You should also reference our *Relational Commitments* packet, which contains a large amount of information on how we seek to live out the gospel together as members of one body in Christ at SCC.

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<sup>1</sup> Piper, John. How Important is Church Membership?  
[http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/2008/2989\\_How\\_Important\\_Is\\_Church\\_Membership/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/2008/2989_How_Important_Is_Church_Membership/)