

November 7, 2010

*The Bridge Bible Fellowship*

Pastor Paul S. Brown

Selected Scriptures

**“The Local Church Part Thirteen: Membership in the Local Church”**

I. Memories of the Early Church – 2:41-47

II. Metaphors of the Church

**III. Membership in the Local Church**

**A. Why Become a Formal Member?**

**1. Biblical**

a. Heb. 10:24-25

b. Acts 2:47

c. Acts 18:27; Rom. 16:1; Col. 4:10; 2 Cor. 3:1-2

d. Acts 6:3-5

e. Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-7; 1 Pet. 4:10-11

f. 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28

**2. Legal – Rom. 13 – submission to governing authorities**

a. Corporate laws in the U.S. / California.

b. Church discipline - Mt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5.

**3. Practical**

a. Regenerate church membership.

1) Evangelize or encourage?

2) Dealing with issues like marriage, divorce, and remarriage - 2 Cor. 6:14; 7:15

3) Determining who can serve as an elder - Titus 1:6

b. Shepherding – helps us know whom we are responsible for before the Lord - Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; Acts 18:27; rom. 16:1; Col. 4:10

c. Church discipline – Mt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5

d. Sound doctrine – Titus 1:9.

e. Submission to Elders - Heb. 13:17.

f. Orderly administration of the church - Eph. 4:16

g. Membership calls for involvement from those who are on the fringes.

h. Membership provides an opportunity to educate people about the nature and distinctive of the church.

**B. What are the Blessings / Privileges of Membership?**

1. Protection, Care and Oversight - Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17

2. Helpful Services (counseling, benevolence fund, chaplain care...).

3. Loving Accountability – Ps. 141:5; Prov. 9:8-9; 12:1; 15:32; 27:5-6; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20; Heb. 12:5-6

4. Ministry Opportunities -1 Cor. 12
5. Giving
6. Corporate Witness. Visible expression of the Invisible Church.
7. One Anothers.
8. Leadership Role?

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What are some reasons professing believers give for not becoming a member of a local church? How would you answer those reasons?
2. John Stott said, “If the church is central to God’s purpose as seen in both history and the gospel, it must surely also be central to our lives. How can we take lightly what God takes so seriously? How dare we push to the circumference what God has placed at the center?” How do you answer his questions? What biblical support do you have for your answers?
3. What is the difference between dating and getting married? Name as many as you can. What is the difference between church dating and church membership? How does it impact your commitment level?
4. What are the potential problems of NOT having official members in a local church? What difficulties might arise for the leadership of that church?
5. Read Heb. 10:24-27. Does the author of Hebrews imply it is a sin not to faithfully attend a local church and actively participate? If a person is bouncing around from church to church how would other people know if they were faithfully attending and participating?
6. What are the potential benefits to you when you become a member of a local church?
7. What are the benefits to a local church when people become official members? Name as many as you can. How does this help the leadership of the church (Heb. 13:17)?
8. Read 1 Cor. 12. Why do people have spiritual gifts? Are they for their personal edification or the edification of others? How might official church membership help in the use of the spiritual gifts for the edification of others?
9. Statistics tell us that the average American Evangelical gives 1.6% of their income to charitable causes. How might being a member or not being a member of a local church impact a person’s desire to give regularly and sacrificially? What might happen to ministries around the world if every American Evangelical became a member of a local church and gave at least 10%?
10. Are you a member? If not, why not? If you are a member, how committed are you to your church? How specifically does it show in your:
  - a. Attendance
  - b. Active Participation / Service / Leadership
  - c. Giving
  - d. Prayers