

#### 4. Worship

*Acts 20:7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.*

According to Acts 20:7, a local church meets on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Table. We invite our guests to join us in worship, but particularly this is our work together to prepare this worship.

#### 5. Support Church Discipline

*1 Corinthians 5:4-5 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

One of the difficult works of a local church is to discipline those who are erring. Without discipline, many will be lost. Membership in a local church is necessary both to receive and to support the admonition of brethren.

#### 6. Work Together

*Romans 14:1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.*

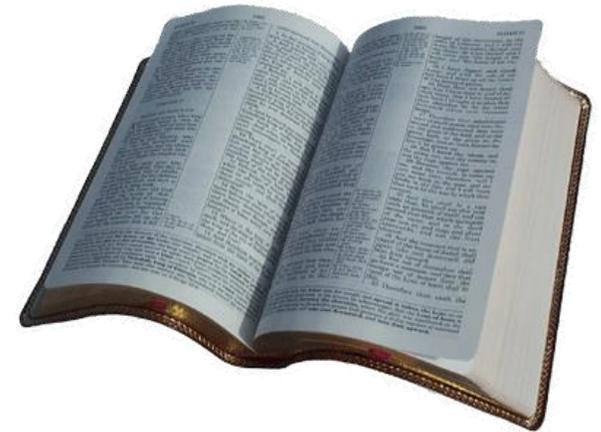
It is important to understand that we must work together to accomplish the purposes of the local church. This means learning to accept each other in Christ. This is an important work of church membership; we need to work together to grow together.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Are you a member of a local church? Have you made that identification known to all? Too often people presume that membership means just being there; yet this is not the case. Being a member of a local church necessitates making that known. We cannot fulfill our obligations to God without that membership, and we bring great blessings to the local church when we do work together.

*Psalms 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity!*

# Membership in the Local Church



Scriptures speak about three different types of relationships people have: **Fellowship**, **Membership** and **Companionship**. Fellowship is defined in 1 John 1 as the relationship all Christians everywhere have with each other (also called “brotherhood”). Companionship is those with whom we have non-spiritual relationships (Scriptures refer to “keeping company” with both believers and non-believers, 1 Cor. 5). Membership is the relationship of believers in a local church family.

A local church consists of a group of Christians in physical nearness to each other who work together to do the work of a local church. The local church is designed to be a family that helps each other get to heaven. It is given a limited purpose in Ephesians 4:11-13: (1) to organize itself with elders, deacons and evangelists; (2) to take care of Christians (benevolence); (3) to teach and preach the word and equip Christians to teach (evangelism and edification).

The Scriptures speak of the relationship of a Christian with the local church:

Romans 12:5 *So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

1 Corinthians 12:27 *Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.*

## PLACING MEMBERSHIP

We can see from Scriptures that we are to be members of a local church. This is NOT simply being present, but making it known that we are a part of the local church. It is a pledge of a sort; we are promising to watch out for the particular needs of that group of Christians. We are letting them know that they can depend on us for their needs, both spiritual and physical. We are no mere visitors or guests, but family members. This requires making our membership known; we sometimes use the term “placing” membership, or identifying with a local church.

As Christians, we are commanded to be members of a local church. We understand this by examples of Christians joining local church (such as the Apostle Paul joining the church in Jerusalem in Acts 9:26-28). Specifically, there are certain works that we are to do as Christians that require membership in a local church.

### 1. Presence

Hebrews 10:24-25 *Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

We owe a local church our presence. We are also told that it is a sin to forsake the assembling of the local church:

### 2. Contribution

1 Corinthians 16:2 *On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.*

In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 we are told that members of the local church must work together to “lay by and store” for the work of the church. This is not a work for those who visit, but since its use is under the direction of the local church, it is only done by members of a local church. If the contribution is not a work of membership, then the direction of the use of that collection would not be either.

### 3. Encouragement

Galatians 6:1-2 *Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.*

We are repeatedly told that part of our work as Christians is to encourage other Christians; this is part of our obligation to the local church.