



and deacons are God's gift to the church. Their wisdom, maturity, judgement and Christ-likeness ought to be considered. But, the Church Meeting does not exist to simply 'rubber stamp' the wishes of the Leadership Team, but rather has a serious spiritual role in accountability.

What's The Next Step...?

If you would like to further consider Church Membership at CBC, just speak to one of the Leadership Team and they will be pleased to 'get the ball rolling'. The process is very simple:

Firstly, a couple of church members will be asked to meet with you so that they can learn more about you; hear your spiritual story; share a little more detail about CBC and church membership; and answer any questions that you might have.

Secondly, assuming both you and they are comfortable with proceeding further, you will be asked to complete a simple application form and your visitors will be left with the happy task of commending you for membership at the next Church Members' Meeting. During the Members' Meeting they will share a thumbnail sketch of your faith in Christ and commitment to CBC.

Finally, you will be publicly welcomed into Membership at the next Sunday morning Communion service.

Still Have Questions...?

Thanks for taking the time to read this leaflet – space does not allow for too much detail so please don't hesitate to contact one of the Ministers or Leadership Team if you have any questions or you still have blanks that need filling in!



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An Introduction to: **Church Membership**

Introduction

One of the things that has marked Baptists out from other church denominations, right from our beginnings in the seventeenth century, has been our understanding of church membership. Membership in the local church should be one of *the most* fulfilling aspects of your Christian walk for reasons which this leaflet will go on to explore.

Why Bother With Membership...?

Belonging to the church has historically been a priority for Christians. At Christchurch Baptist Church (CBC), that belonging is expressed through Church Membership which is a covenant (or commitment) to be in relationship with other believers, in which we agree to walk together as disciples of Jesus, grow together, mature one another, worship and serve together in mission.

Church membership should never be viewed as joining a club or organisation. Properly understood, church membership tangibly signifies our commitment to Christ and also our commitment to other believers.

Who Is Church Membership For...?

Church Membership is for those who are firstly, committed to Christ, and secondly, committed to CBC for the forthcoming 'season' of their faith journey.

To become and remain a Member of CBC you must:

- have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and have a personal relationship with him;
- be baptised as a believer by full immersion;
- with God's help, be seeking to live in a way which honours Christ and the Bible;
- seek to serve Christ within the Church and beyond;
- be willing to live under the authority of Christ as also mediated through his body, the church.

Benefits & Responsibilities...

To be a part of the Body of Christ as expressed through Membership is a high privilege, which carries equally high responsibility.

Benefits include fellowship; encouragement; prayer; pastoral support; love; worship; discipleship; the ability to identify and exercise your spiritual gifts; and the opportunity to attend Church Members' Meetings where we make important decisions like the appointment of ministers and staff, stewardship of finances, and the organisation of our mission and ministry.

Responsibilities include regularly attending church services, prayer meetings and

Members' Meetings; seeking the mind of Christ; supporting the vision of the church; to love, to pray for and to encourage others; giving to the work and vision of the church; and living in a way which is honouring to God in service to him and to each other.

Church Members' Meetings

It's part of Baptist conviction that each local church is free to seek and respond to the will of God as they understand it. Although CBC is a church under the Lordship of Christ with no external authority of bishops or councils, we are part of The Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB). The BUGB provide valuable ministry resources, support and assistance, especially when we need an external reference point. As such, CBC is also financially self-supporting under God.

So, the final responsibility in discerning the mind of Christ rests not with the BUGB, the ministers, elders or deacons but with the church members. Our quarterly Members' Meetings are the occasions when we seek the will of God through prayer and mutual listening. At these gatherings, we consider important ministry and mission decisions which need to be made. We acknowledge that Jesus is in the midst of our meeting, making his mind known to those who come seeking to know and do his will.

Spiritual leaders such as ministers, elders