

A Self-Examined Declaration of Belonging

AN
INTRODUCTION
TO MEMBERSHIP
AT THE PLACE &
LAMBRICK PARK
CHURCH

AT THE PLACE, WE DESIRE THAT EVERY BELIEVER EXPERIENCE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "PART OF THE BODY."

The New Testament was written into church communities in order to build church communities (Rom 1:7, 1 Cor 1:2, Eph 1:1, Jam 1:1, 1 Pet 1:1)

When Jesus ascended into heaven, he didn't leave behind a written document or a system of beliefs. He left a community that would embody the message of the kingdom. Then, as now, the stories, teaching and challenges of Jesus - and how they are worked out in community - shape and build the Church.

In fact, it is almost impossible to read the Bible outside of a community lens. So, while the phrase "church member" is not used in the New Testament, the concept of being (a) identified with, (b) committed to, and (c) accountable to a local community of Christians is clear.

HERE ARE 3 REASONS WHY WE BELIEVE MEMBERSHIP CAN MOVE YOU TOWARD THIS DEEPER EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY.

1. Membership commits us to a community of mutually committed people

(1 Thess 2:8, Phil 1:4-6, Gal 6:1-2)

Jean Vanier (in Community and Growth) stated it quite clearly when he said:

"A community is only truly a body when the majority of its members are making the transition from 'the community for myself' to 'myself for the community'.

It is a simple fact that without a high level of dedication, you don't experience community: lukewarm commitments lead to superficial relationships. We see membership as a way of declaring our commitment to fostering deeper relationships. Only a strong devotion to others will lead us out of the self-centeredness that is so pervasive in our culture."

2. Membership affirms that we hold to similar values and beliefs

(Rom 15:5, Eph 4:3-5, 1 Tim 4:11-16, Phil 2:1-2)

Membership ensures that we are corporately building on a strong, shared foundation of faith. In this, we want to keep our expectations as clear as possible. Membership lets the church know where you stand and, perhaps more importantly, in your own spiritual journey it enables you to examine where you stand.

Included in this document is a copy of our statement of faith, our purpose statement and our core values. These are the tools that guide our community toward our basic identity and unified direction. Becoming a member of the Place requires your affirmation of these things.

Baptism is the essential outward expression of the inner change that has already taken place in the life of a follower of Christ. Therefore it should precede becoming a member.

3. Membership allows us to understand our role and the use of our time, talents, and resources for the health of the church

(1 Cor 12:4-27, Rom 12:4-13)

Brian Kay has described the harsh reality of the church in North America:

"Church hopping is the only tolerated promiscuity in Christian culture - enjoying temporary benefits of life in one worshipping community, then another, but without any formal obligation to settle down and serve in any." (Stories of Emergence)

We are all in this together. God has empowered all of us with resources, gifts and time to build into the life of the church (in other words, we all have something to bring). We want to approach money issues and volunteer needs openly without having to pressure people or barrage them with frequent 'emergency' appeals.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

(We seek to)

"...be a community church committed to live and share the historic message of Jesus Christ to our neighbours in Gordon Head, Victoria and throughout the world."

STATEMENT of FAITH

(We believe in)

The divine inspiration of Holy scripture and it's consequent entire trustworthiness and supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

One God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His sacrificial death, His resurrection, His ascension, His present intercessory work, and His personal return in power and glory.

The salvation of lost and sinful man through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit by faith apart from works.

The Holy Spirit given without rite or invocation to all who believe in Christ through the gospel, and by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a holy life and to witness and work for the Lord.

The unity and common priesthood of all true believers, who together form the one universal Church, the body of which Christ is head.

The resurrection both of the saved and the lost, the saved unto life and the lost unto condemnation.

CORE VALUES

(Our navigational tools)

Orthodoxy

We believe all truth is God's truth. Truth has been revealed through creation, God's inspired Word, in the person of His only son, Jesus Christ, and the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the PLACE submits itself to God's truth and is committed to the proclamation of His truth through word, thought and action.

Engagement

We believe Christ's death on the cross has restored and redeemed all aspects of human relationships including spiritual, interpersonal, economic, political and environmental. We believe God is love and His good news is the only hope for a broken, fractured, and insular world. For this reason, the Place encourages the application of faith in Christ and to all aspects of public and private life.

Community

We believe God exists in a perfect community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and created men and women to live in community. For this reason, the Place seeks to model deep and personal faith by serving others in a loving, authentic, and accountable community.

Beauty

We believe God is beautiful and His spirit is the source of all creative activity in the world. For this reason, the Place values expressions of personal and corporate beauty through the arts, expression, and creativity.

WHAT NOW?

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP INTO OUR COMMUNITY, WE'D LOVE TO TALK WITH YOU! WHILE WE DESIRE THIS CONVERSATION TO BE AS RELAXED AS POSSIBLE, WE WOULD LOVE YOU TO TALK ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND JOURNEY AS A CHRISTIAN, DRAWING FROM QUESTIONS SUCH AS:

+ WHAT PAST EXPERIENCES AND RELATIONSHIPS HAVE SHAPED YOUR JOURNEY?

+ WHAT, IF ANY, HAVE BEEN YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES OF CHURCH?

+HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED?

+ WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE PLACE? WHAT HAS KEPT YOU HERE?

+ CAN YOU AGREE WITH OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT, CORE VALUES, AND STATEMENT OF FAITH? DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THEM?

+ IS THERE A WAY IN WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY? IF SO, HOW?



Please fill out, detach and submit

DECLARATION OF MEMBERSHIP

I DESIRE TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH, COMMITTED AND ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PLACE COMMUNITY.

I HOLD TO THE CORE VALUES OF THE PLACE AND THE STATEMENTS OF FAITH AND PURPOSE OF LAMBRICK PARK CHURCH.

I UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF MY ROLE AND DESIRE TO USE MY TIME, TALENTS, AND RESOURCES FOR THE HEALTH OF THE CHURCH.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

“THERE CAN BE NO MATURITY IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, NO OBEDIENCE IN FOLLOWING JESUS, NO WHOLENESS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE APART FROM AN IMMERSION AND EMBRACE OF COMMUNITY. **I AM NOT MYSELF BY MYSELF.** COMMUNITY, NOT THE HIGHLY VAUNTED INDIVIDUALISM OF OUR CULTURE, IS THE SETTING IN WHICH CHRIST IS AT PLAY.”

Eugene Peterson
Christ Plays In Ten Thousand Places
p.226