

Sunday Celebration (August 16, 2009)  
"Why a Membership Process"

New Member Sunday (August 2009)

## INTRO

### *- What's a "Membership Process" and WHY do we have such a thing?*

#### The Process:

1. Attend LCC long enough to discern the doctrine, the vision, and the practice of the church
2. Pray and discern God's leading about your involvement in the church
3. Get involved in the fellowship of the church, not just the Sunday meeting or an Alpha meeting
4. Attend the New Member's Class (to get to know the doctrine and practice of the church)
5. Provide a testimony of your conversion & water baptism
6. Study the Church Covenant and our Statement of Faith and determine whether you are committed to those beliefs and practices
7. Join the church as a member

### *WHY do we have such a process? ...*

How do you define the church and its place in your life?

*"If you walk into various churches and ask the people who comprise the church what the word 'church' means, the odds are that you will get either a blank stare or a series of conflicting definitions. ... Sadly, this is even true from their pastors. In preparing for this book I asked various pastors of some of America's largest churches—godly men and dear friends—if they have a working definition of the church. And not one of them did; they confessed they were giving their lives to building something for which they did not even have a clear definition. ... Their response was not surprising, because for much of the history of the church the definition of church has simply been assumed." Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears, "Vintage Church", p. 35*

*"the effort to cultivate the most innovative and effective postmodern church has led to a market of books, such as "Liquid Church", "Emerging Church", "Organic Church", "Missional Church", "Multi-site Church", "Externally Focused Church", "House Church", "Future Church", "Ancient-Future Church", "Blogging Church", and "Prevailing Church". ...most of the books simply share best practices gleaned from "successful" churches." Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears, "Vintage Church", p. 38*

... If church leaders aren't sure of what it means to be the church, then it stands to reason that those who attend are having a hard time figuring it out

*As we begin to consider the essential marks of a living church, I am making three assumptions. ... First, I am assuming that we are all committed to the church. We are not only Christian people; we are also church people. We are not only committed to Christ, we are also committed to the body of Christ. At least I hope so. I trust that none of my readers is that grotesque anomaly, an un-churched Christian. The New Testament knows nothing of such a person. For the church lies at the very center of the eternal purpose of God. ...So then, the reason why we are committed to the church is that God is so committed." John Stott, "The Living Church", p. 19*

Why Such a Process of Church Membership and Why Draw Such Attention to Being Committed to the Church?

1. Because God is so Committed and Intentional about the Church
2. Because our Times Demand Adjustment in being Committed to the Church
3. Because the church is not just a Hospital—it's an Army on a Mission

***What does the N.T. sound like when it speaks about church involvement?***

## "The Pastoral Epistles"

- 1&2 Timothy, Titus
- Time frame and context
- **Paul's Provision for the Coming Challenges:**
  1. **Establish & Maintain apostolic doctrine**
  2. **Appoint Leaders who have the Ability to Teach Sound Doctrine Effectively and who have the Character that is in Accord with Sound Doctrine**
  - It is safe to say that false teaching & false teachers are the MOST CONCERNING OPPONENT of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century church

*"On the one hand, some preachers have a very faithful prophetic ministry. They show great courage in declaring God's word. ... Other preachers excel in pastoral love and care. Their favorite words are 'tolerance' and 'compassion'. ... It is not easy to combine prophetic witness and pastoral care, firmness and gentleness, discipline and compassion. I think it was Chad Walsh, an American Episcopal layman, who first defined preaching as, 'disturbing the comfortable and comforting the disturbed.'" John Stott, "The Living Church", p. 104*

### 1Tim 3:14-15 ... Paul's Purpose in Writing

*"David Wells argues that the church is weak because it has 'exchanged the sensibilities of modern culture for the truth of Christ.' If Wells is right, then the church is no longer the church. For in the process of explaining his purpose for writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul defines the church by its relationship to the truth...*

*From what we have seen in 1Timothy so far, the kind of conduct the apostle has in mind includes proper doctrine (1Tim 1:1-20), proper gender relations (1Tim 2:1-15), and proper leadership (1Tim 3:1-13) in the church." Phillip Graham Ryken, "1Timothy", p. 138*

- **Christians are called to be TETHERED to God's revelation** in categories that include doctrine, gender, leadership, etc.!

- **Pastors are called to be TETHERED as well** – we're simply a "BIBLE FRANCHISE"

**Titus 1:5, 2:15**

**1Tim 4:11, 5:7, 6:2, 6:20**

*"The church is not only a home for God and for his people; it is also a home for God's truth." Phillip Graham Ryken, "1Timothy", p. 139*

*- In how many churches are God's ideas unwelcomed, disdained, or displaced?*

**1Tim 4:1-3**

- ***This is the fallout of Neglecting Doctrine and Following Poor Leadership.*** Paul knows this therefore he gives important counsel to Timothy & Titus.

**1Tim 1:3-7**

**1Tim 1:18-20**

... Doing Church Wrong has CONSEQUENCES!! (wasting time at best, and shipwrecking faith at worst)

- ***Does this concern you? Does it cause you to be careful about what you believe and who you follow?***