

# Why should my church have well defined membership?

## *Some objections*

- 1) It isn't necessary
- 2) It isn't beneficial
- 3) It isn't biblical

## *Some definitions*

- Centred set

Defining the centre: The membership of the local church is the community which gathers around the word of God.

- Bounded set

Defining the boundary: The precise membership of a given local church is well defined.

## *Some reasons for church membership*

### **Church membership is biblical.**

- a) The biblical images of church.
  - A. Sometimes Paul uses the image of building (1 Cor. 3:9, Eph. 2:21, 2 Cor. 6:16)
  - B. Sometimes of course the very famous image of a body (Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor 10, 12 Heb. 12)
  - C. Sometimes the church is a flock (1 Peter 5:2).
  - D. Sometimes the image of a family (1 Tim. 3:15. Eph. 1:5).
  - E. There is a difference between the 'insider' and the 'outsider' (1cor 14:23)

But in all these things, we have to ask, "If we are Christians, what should our relationship to the church be?" Using those images...

- "Where are the bricks? They are in a building, and if they aren't in the building then they can't really identify with it.
- If we are members of physical body, then how can we not be attached to it?
- If we are sheep, we are going to be in a flock.

- If we are called to be God's children, we are going to be in his family.
- b) The corporate responsibility of the church
    - a. Baptism (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)
    - b. Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 10:17)
    - c. Church discipline (Matthew 18:17, 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 2 Corinthians 2:6)
    - d. Recipients of New Testament Letters (Galatians 1:2, 6-9)
  - c) The responsibilities of church leaders and members to one another.
    - a. Hebrews 13:17
      - i. Members need to know who their leaders are.
      - ii. Leaders need to know who the members are.

### **Church membership is beneficial.**

- a) For God's Glory.
- b) For other members
  - a. Enables us to love them corporately (John 13:31-35)
  - b. Enables us to serve them responsibly (Ephesians 4:11-16)
  - c. Enables us to speak to them univocally (1 Cor 5, Matthew 18)
- c) For non-members
- d) It benefits non-believers
- e) It benefits church leaders
- f) It benefits each member.
  - a. Leadership
  - b. Prayer
  - c. Service
  - d. Discipline

### **Church membership is particularly necessary today**

The dangers of consumerism, commitophobia and individualism