

Active

Colossians 1:5-8; 2:6

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START  
HERE

Am I active in my church?

Colossians 1:5-8 *because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup> which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, <sup>7</sup> just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf <sup>8</sup> and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.*

#### Where you fit into God's plan

- The local church is God's primary plan to share hope with the world – Colossians 1:5-6 *because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup> which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,*
  - First wave: Missionaries/church planters.
  - Sustainability: Pastors/elders who guard, love, and lead local churches to live out Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations.

John Chrysostom: *“Fruitful. In works. Increasing. By the accession of many, by becoming firmer; for plants then begin to thicken when they have become firm.”<sup>1</sup>*

- Solid local churches serve as Gospel outposts – Colossians 1:7-8 *just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf <sup>8</sup> and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.*

- All kingdoms have outposts.
- The Colossian church influenced far beyond its immediate location.

Colossians 2:6-7 *Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*

Q: What is church membership?

A: According to the Bible, church membership is a commitment every Christian should make to attend, love, serve, and submit to a local church.<sup>2</sup>

*Is church membership biblical?*<sup>3</sup>

1) Matthew 18:15-17 *If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.*

- Removing someone from “the church” presupposes that it’s known who belongs as a member of “the church.”

2) Acts 5:13 *None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem.*

- So, people faced the decision of whether they would *join* the church in Jerusalem. This joining is more public and definite than an informal association.

3) 1 Corinthians 5:12-13 *For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? <sup>13</sup> God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”*

- Paul the Apostle paints a clear distinction between those inside and outside the church. Those inside the church were responsible for the testimony of those who

belonged to the church, not those who didn't. This passage would make no sense if the Corinthian church didn't have some public, formal means for people to identify themselves with the church (AKA church membership).

### Reasons to step into church membership

1. A biblical reason: Jesus Christ is committed to the church – Ephesians 5:25 *Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*
2. A cultural reason: It's an antidote to the culture of church-hopping and consumer religion.
3. A personal reason: Commitment produces spiritual growth.
4. A practical reason: Commitment to church membership defines who can be counted on.

Q: How do I join Grace?

A: Starting Point! [www.gograce.church/startingpoint](http://www.gograce.church/startingpoint)

### What are church membership expectations?

- 1) Salvation: All church members must be Christians.
- 2) Baptism: Baptized by immersion since committing your life to Jesus Christ.
- 3) Serving and supporting: Investing your time, talent, and treasure.
- 4) Faithfulness: God's Word is the final authority in every sphere of life.

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<sup>1</sup> John Chrysostom, [\*The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians\*](#) (Oxford; London: John Henry Parker; J. G. F. and J. Rivington, 1843), 185.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.9marks.org/ninemark/membership/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.9marks.org/answers/church-membership-biblical>