

CCCB Member Church Membership

CCCB Consists of five Member Churches:

- Coopers Plains Evangelical Church (English speaking at Coopers Plains)
- CCCB Southside Church (Chinese speaking at Coopers Plains)
- Huai En Tang (Chinese speaking at St Lucia)
- SLE Church (English speaking at St Lucia)
- 5:17 Church (English speaking evening service at St Lucia)

We in the Member Churches of CCCB seek to glorify God by enjoying Him, loving each other, and bringing the people of Queensland and all other places where we serve into a life transforming encounter with the kingdom of God.

Each Church, under God, must be united for this purpose and so, in an effort to grow our unity and commitment to each other, we are encouraging all attendees of a CCCB Member Church to become official Church members. Members of a CCCB Member Church are also automatically members of CCCB.

There are three classes of membership available within CCCB and explained in our Constitution. (See <http://www.cccb.org.au/cccb/index.asp?pageid=Constitution>)

The normal class of membership is **ordinary membership**. CCCB Member Churches allow dual membership for persons residing in Brisbane for some months or years (e.g. students) who retain their membership in some other church to which they are expecting to return. However, we do not encourage dual membership if a person has membership in another church within 100 Km of the CCCB Member Church in which he normally worships.

Where a person is a member of another church at least 50 Km away but who does not want to assume full membership of a CCCB Member Church, the Church allows that person to be an **associate member**. Associate membership gives a person considerable privileges as a member of CCCB except for the ability to vote in General Meetings and to hold certain offices within the Church.

Where an ordinary member of a CCCB Member Church will be away from Brisbane for some months or years, that person may apply to change his membership status to **absent member**. Absent members retain links with the Church and are able to reinstate their ordinary membership when they return to Brisbane.

Each Church is obliged to inform applicants for membership the amount of public liability insurance held by the Church. In 2014 each CCCB location held \$10,000,000 of public liability insurance and undertakes to maintain at least this amount in coming years.

We strongly believe that there are many good reasons why attendees should be Church members. Firstly, we believe that Church membership is biblical for the reasons given below. Secondly, it helps the attendee to be faithful follower of Christ. Thirdly, it edifies the Church. Fourthly, it glorifies our Lord.

We trust this document will aid you in your decision to become a member, if you are not already one. If you are already a member, we hope it will reaffirm your conviction and encourage you all the more to be a responsible Church member.

Firstly, what does the Bible say about Church Membership? Was Church Membership practised in the New Testament Church?

Although there is no explicit statement describing Church Membership in the New Testament church, Scripture does give us indications that membership of a local church was the common practice.

1. The List of Widows

In 1 Timothy 5:9-12, Paul writes: *Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works...But refuse to enroll younger widows...*

The verb translated "enroll" (*katalageô*) can be either specific ("to put on a list") or general ("to consider as part of a certain group"). Why mention the widow's list? It's difficult to imagine the church keeping a list of widows but not keeping a list of members. If it didn't keep the latter list, what group of widows would even be considered for inclusion on the former list? Any widow in the entire city of Ephesus? The widow who showed up three times four years ago? Of course not. The church would have some specified pool that it was drawing from. The early New Testament church was clearly keeping an accessible list of widowed members in a way consistent with the practice of church membership.

2. The Punishment of the Majority

In 2 Corinthians 2:6, Paul refers to the discipline the church inflicted on an individual as the "punishment by the majority." What we first should see is that there cannot be a majority of an unspecified group; it must be a majority of something.

Was it the majority of people who happened to be present the day the vote was cast? Could non-Christians then vote? Could any Christians who happened to be visiting from another city who didn't know the situation vote? The most natural assumption to make is that Paul meant the majority of an acknowledged membership of the church.

Among other pieces of evidence, these two examples suggest that participation in the life of the church body wasn't casual or easily dissolved. It was a relationship that one entered into (joined) and that came with responsibilities (determining punishment) and privileges (support for the widows). It is hard to imagine how this was accomplished without a clear sense of the membership of the church.

Is Church Membership helpful for CCCB Member Churches?

1. Church Discipline

In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul instructs the church on how to deal with a man living in open and scandalous sin. For the sinner's good and for the health of the church the congregation is told to exercise church discipline against the man by "*delivering the man to Satan*". In verse 2, he tells them that rather than letting the man remain among them, they should "*Let him who has done this be removed from among you.*"

There are a few things for us to notice from this passage: firstly, this punishment is described in verse 2 as removing this man "*from among you.*" The result of the church discipline is the removal of the sinner from the congregation. This necessarily implies the presence of a formal membership. How else could someone be removed if they did not belong in a formal sense in the first place?

Secondly, the church's discipline is to occur when "*you are assembled together*" (vs. 4). For our purposes, simply note that there was a definite and formal assembly of the church, and they knew whom to expect when it gathered.

Thirdly, Paul means for the church to discipline only those "*inside*" the church (vs. 12). Obviously, the church knew who was an insider and who was an outsider. Proper church discipline is impossible without defined church membership.

2. Accountability to Leaders

The New Testament warns church leaders to discharge their responsibility for oversight diligently. In Acts 20:28, Paul instructs the Ephesian elders to "*Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock.*" In Hebrews 13:17, the church is told to respect elders since "*they watch over your souls, as those who must give account.*"

Who constitutes the flock over which the elders watch? For whom must the leaders of the church give account? The citizens of their city? Anyone who ever attends their church? Of course not. They must be accountable for the members of the church; those whom everyone recognizes have been committed to their care. Church leaders cannot function properly without church membership.

3. Metaphors for the Church

The New Testament makes use of several metaphors to describe the local congregation. We've seen in Acts 20:28 that the church is referred to as a flock. In 1 Corinthians 12:12, it is compared to a body. In 1 Peter 2:5, the church is pictured as a building.

In each of these metaphors, there is an obvious relationship between the individual and the congregation as a whole. The individual Christian is a member of the body and a sheep in the flock. The individual believer is, in Peter's words, "a living stone" in the spiritual house.

Each of these word pictures, so vital to our understanding of the church, demand more than a casual commitment from the individual. There are no informally connected stones in a building. They are cemented together unambiguously. Sheep do not hop from flock to flock; rather, the shepherd knows exactly how many sheep he has in his care. Body parts do not relate to each other informally; they are intricately connected to each other and are mutually dependent. Surely, we best reflect these metaphors when we formally tie ourselves to a local congregation.

Conclusion

Church membership is a thoroughly biblical concept. There is strong circumstantial evidence that it was practised in some form by the New Testament church. More compellingly, the Bible prescribes a certain organization and inter-relation within the church that is inconceivable without formal church membership.

Why you should become a member of a CCCB Member Church

Firstly, to become a member for the sake of non-Christians. Membership in the church provides a unified witness to newcomers and the surrounding community by holding each other accountable to a shared statement of faith, encouraging unity in doctrine, and encouraging unity in lifestyle.

Secondly, to become a member for the sake of weaker Christians. Church membership is a long-term commitment to be a provider – coming to serve others, not to be served. Happily, this means we get served by others too!

Thirdly, to become a member for the sake of the church leaders. If regular Church attendees don't eventually make themselves known to the Pastor (or Elders) as members of the Church, then the Pastor cannot take responsibility for them as part of his particular flock. Pastors need to know for which sheep God will hold them accountable so that they can tend to them most responsibly and effectively (Heb 13:17). Regular attendees benefit from the commitment of other people who have become members and who give and serve and pray regularly.

Fourthly, to become a member to edify the Church. Joining a local church counters wrong individualism, giving us a long-term commitment to live out the corporate nature of Christianity.

Fifthly, to become a member for the sake of God's name. The building up of the church is ultimately GOD'S work. *The LORD added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42, 47). Saul, Saul, why do you persecute ME (Acts 9:4).* Jesus so closely identified himself with His church that He said Saul was persecuting *Him* when he was persecuting the church.

If Jesus identified himself closely with the church, we should too. By our being together in a church, we are giving testimony and praise to God through our lives as we live and love each other together. We could serve people socially, but will they be committed to pray, give, serve, love, and attend? These are the marks of a faithful Christian, and these are the characteristics and actions that give God glory in the church.

Sixthly, to become a member for the sake of God's cause. God wants His glory displayed and His gospel spread to all the nations. We can take God's glory and gospel to the nations better if we band together than if we remain alone. We seize the privilege of evangelism best if we work together as one diverse unity.

Seventhly, to become a member you are not ashamed to identify with Christ and his church and openly demonstrate the reality of the Body of Christ. Although membership of the universal church is automatic upon becoming a believer, membership in the local church is based upon our individual choice.

The Elders and Pastors your Church would love to talk with anyone concerning membership – your questions and your possible struggles with the concept of membership etc. We will be encouraging regular attendees to become members. Please do not feel that we want to pressure you into becoming a church member. Instead, please see this as part of our efforts to serve you, and to help you grow in your love and service for God and for His people.

Hopefully the above has helped you in your decision making. Please prayerfully consider joining us as a Church member, and sharing with us in the incomparable riches of together being loved by God, worshipping God in return, and serving His people.

The Process of Becoming a Member of a CCCB Member Church

1. Express your interest to a ministry leader, deacon, elder, or pastor.
2. Attend a membership class/course where you will be given a copy of the Church Constitution. The course leader will help you understand our doctrinal beliefs, church direction, and the responsibilities of membership of the Church.
3. Fill in an application form if you wish to become a member.
4. An interview will be conducted by an elder or a pastor of the church.
5. The names of the applicants will be submitted to the Church Council for approval.
6. New members will be received into membership and presented with a Church Membership Certificate at a church service as soon as possible.

This document has significantly borrowed from the following websites:

<http://sites.silasparkers.com> and <http://marks.9marks.org/Mark6>

CCCB Statement of Faith¹

The CCCB Statement of Faith is found in our CCCB and Member Church Constitutions. See <http://www.cccb.org.au/cccb/index.asp?pageid=Constitution>.

¹ This Statement of Faith was adopted by the Church in 1984. A new expanded version with different wording is being considered for adoption at some future date.

Chinese Christian Church Brisbane

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having received Christ as my Lord and Saviour and been baptised, and being in agreement with the Church Constitution, strategy, and structure, I now feel led to unite with the Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

I will protect the unity of my church:

- ☐ By acting in love toward other members
- ☐ By refusing to gossip
- ☐ By following the leaders

I will share the responsibility of my church:

- ☐ By praying for its growth
- ☐ By inviting the un-churched to attend
- ☐ By warmly welcoming those who visit

I will serve the ministry of my church:

- ☐ By discovering my gifts and talents
- ☐ By being equipped to serve by my pastor/s
- ☐ By developing a servant's heart

I will support the testimony of my church:

- ☐ By attending faithfully
- ☐ By living a godly life
- ☐ By giving regularly
- ☐ By joining a small group

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

CCCB Member Church

Application for Membership

I _____ wish to apply for ORDINARY / ASSOCIATE membership of _____.

I acknowledge this requires my acceptance of the Objects and Statement of Faith and Practices of the Church as stated in the Constitution. I will strive to attend and support Church activities including the Annual General Meeting (AGM). I recognize that acceptance of my application rests with the Church Council.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please fill out the details below:

Full Name: _____ Gender: M / F

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____ City & Country of Birth: _____

Occupation in Brisbane: _____ Marital Status: _____

Present Church membership (if any): _____

Denomination: _____

Place and Year of Baptism: _____

Period of attendance at this Church: _____

Languages: understood: _____

spoken: _____

written: _____

Possible areas of service: _____

Australian Temporary Resident, Permanent Resident, Citizen: TR PR Citizen

Home address if not in Brisbane: _____

When are you likely to leave Brisbane? _____

Can the church help you in any way?

Any other comments?

NB: All applicants will be interviewed by a Pastor or one of the Elders, and shown a copy of the Church Constitution before your application is considered by the Church Council. Please return this form to a Pastor/Elder or to the Secretary of your Church.