

# Membership at Grace EFC

Greetings!

We are pleased that you have expressed an interest in becoming a member of Grace Evangelical Free Church. We are excited about what God is doing in the family of Grace and through the family of Grace, and we would love for you to become part of it.

## Why membership?

We understand that people have different understandings about membership and what the Bible actually has to say about becoming a member of the local body. While you will not find the verse “become a member” in the Bible, we believe that there is an association with the local body that implies a deeper level of commitment that we think is best carried out through the process of membership.

1) **It has a Biblical foundation.** Jesus established the local church and all the apostles did their ministry through it. The Christian life in the New Testament is church life. Christians today should expect and desire the same.

2) **The church is its members.** To be “a church” in the New Testament is to be one of its members (read through Acts). And you want to be part of the church because that’s who Jesus came to rescue and reconcile to himself.

3) **It’s how to officially represent Jesus.** Membership is the church’s affirmation that you are a citizen of Christ’s kingdom and therefore a representative of Jesus before the nations.

4) **It’s how to declare one’s highest allegiance.** Your membership on the team, which becomes visible when you wear the “jersey,” is a public testimony that your highest allegiance belongs to Jesus. Trials and persecution may come, but your only words are, “I am with Jesus.” “I am part of the team.”

5) **It’s how to embody and experience biblical images.** It’s within the accountability structures of the local church that Christians live out or embody what it means to be the “body of Christ,” the “temple of the Spirit,” the “family of God,” and so on for all the biblical metaphors (see 1 Cor. 12). And you want to experience the interconnectivity of his body, the spiritual fullness of his temple, and the safety and intimacy and shared identity of his family.

6) **It’s how to serve other Christians.** Membership helps you to know which Christians on earth you are specifically responsible to love, serve, warn, and encourage. It enables you to fulfill your biblical responsibilities to Christ’s body (for example, see Eph. 4:11-16; 25-32).

7) **It’s how to follow Christian leaders.** Membership helps you to know which Christian leaders you are called to obey and follow. Again, it allows you to fulfill your biblical responsibility to them (see Heb. 13:7; 17).

8) **It helps Christian leaders lead.** Membership lets Christian leaders know which Christians they will “give an account” for (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).

9) **It enables church discipline.** It gives you the biblically prescribed place to participate in the work of church discipline responsibly, wisely, and lovingly (1 Cor. 5).

10) **It gives structure to the Christian life.** It places an individual Christian’s claim to “obey” and “follow” Jesus into a real-life setting where authority is actually exercised over us (see John 14:15; 1 John 2:19; 4:20-21).

11) **It builds a witness and invites the nations.** Membership puts the alternative rule of Christ on display for the watching universe (see Matt. 5:13; John 13:34-35; Eph. 3:10; 1 Peter 2:9-12). The very boundaries which are drawn around the membership of a church yield a society of people which invites the nations to something better.

*Resource: Jonathan Leeman is the author of The Church and the Surprising Offense of God’s Love: Reintroducing Church Membership and Discipline (Crossway, 2010) and is the editorial director for 9Marks.*

## How to become a member?

We welcome all those who are interested in becoming a member of Grace Church to complete a Membership application. The application asks you some basic questions about your relationship with Jesus Christ and your desire for a relationship with the local body of believers, that being Grace Church. It's not a test! It's simply our attempt to get to know you a little better and begin to understand where you are in your spiritual journey so that we might help you grow in your relationship with Christ and with his body.

We will also ask you if you agree with the Biblical beliefs of Grace Church. Don't worry. You may or may not understand all of the points of doctrine, but we are interested in if you understand those things that we believe are fundamentally important to understand about the Bible and the work of Christ. It's ok if you don't necessarily agree with a certain point of the doctrinal statement. Just explain how your belief differs and we can have a good discussion about how that impacts our unity in the body.

What you believe is important, but how we live and function together is also important. We are also asking you to sign a membership covenant which expresses your intent to practice the Biblical principles that we believe.

## Grace Church's responsibility to you.

- To provide support through accountability in your journey with Christ.
- To provide opportunities for you to use your gifts in ministry.
- To provide you with opportunities for growth and training.
- To pray for you – seeking God's will for your life.
- To treat you as an important member of the family.

## Your responsibility to your church family. (Covenant of Membership)

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and being in agreement with Grace Church's vision, mission, purpose, strategy, and structure, I feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Grace Church family. In doing so I commit myself to God and the other members to do the following:

### 1. I will protect the unity of Grace Church,

- by acting in love toward other members
- by seeking to be a peacemaker
- by following the leaders

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."  
Romans 15:5-6

". . . have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart." 1 Peter 1:22

". . . I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."  
Ephesians 4:1-3

"Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you." Hebrews 13:17

## **2. I will share in responsibility for the health and growth of Grace Church,**

- by praying for its continued health and growth
- by inviting the unchurched to attend services and events run by the church
- By warmly welcoming those who visit

“We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.” 1 Thessalonians 1:2

“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full . . .’” Luke 14:23

“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” Romans 15:7

## **3. I will serve in the ministry of Grace Church,**

- by discovering my gifts and talents
- by being willing to be trained and equipped
- by developing a servant’s heart

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up . . .” Ephesians 4:11-12

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus who made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant . . .” Philippians 2:3-4; 7

## **4. I will support to the best of my ability the cause, community, and corporate life of Grace Church,**

- by attending worship services faithfully
- by living a godly life
- by giving financially regularly

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:25

“Whatever happens, as citizens of heaven live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ . . .” Philippians 1:27

“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income . . .” 1 Corinthians 16:2

“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.” Leviticus 27:30

# Membership Application

(Please complete one per person)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ Carrier \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_ Anniversary \_\_\_\_\_

Children \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been baptized? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Have you read the statement of faith of Grace EFC and agree with it? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you read the constitution and by-laws and agree to abide by them? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree to fulfill, to the best of your ability, the expectations of your Membership Covenant?

Signature of applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## For office use only

Elder(s) completing interview \_\_\_\_\_

Pastoral signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date filled in office \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership recommendation

(to be completed by Elders)

Name (s) of applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

Elder (s) completing interview \_\_\_\_\_

### Steps toward assimilation:

What small group are they being connected to?

What ministry or area of service are they being connected to?

Are they currently being disciplined or are they interested in being connected in a discipleship relationship?

Are there any follow up needs or things that the office/staff/pastors should be aware of?

Recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Not recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Tabled \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Pastoral signature \_\_\_\_\_