

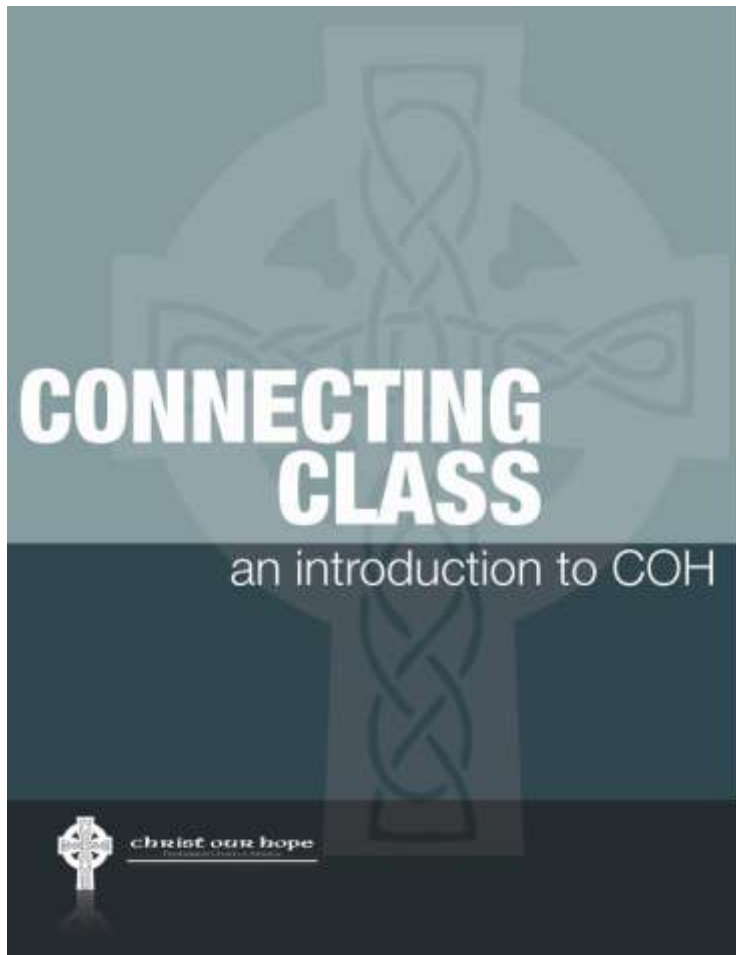
CONNECTING CLASS

an introduction to COH



christ our hope

Welcome!



“Every church is different. Every true church is a thing of beauty in its own unique way.”

Class Material Available Online

- **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Go online. Password is “**grace4you**”
- Go to www.christourhopechurch.com
- In Search bar, type & enter “connecting”
- Click on “Continue Reading”
- Each session is listed & downloadable
- **HINT: At the back of each lesson, there is an Answer Key for all fill-in-blanks.**

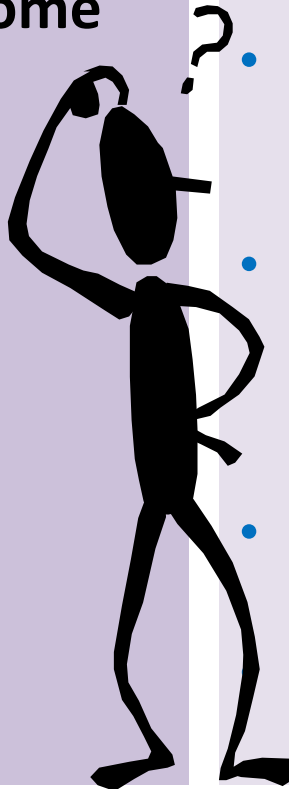
Overview

- **#1- Jesus & The Church**
- **#2- The Gospel & The Christian**
- **#3- Beliefs & Doctrinal Distinctives**
- **#4- Roots, Relationships & Rule**
- **#5- Mission & Ministries**
- **#6- On Church Membership**

Pressing Questions re: Church Membership

The ISSUES:

- More than ever, professing Christians are asking some new questions about The Church & its work.
- More than ever, folks love Jesus. But Jesus' Church? Not so much.
- "Spirituality" is hot; Church is not. Growing in grace is *in*; going to church is *out*.

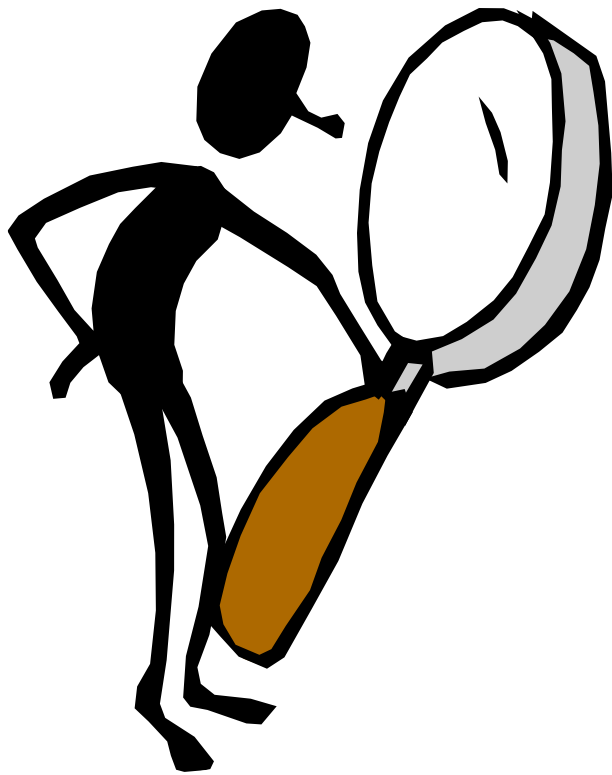


The QUESTIONS:

- "Should I join a church or not join a church?"
- "Isn't church just one of many options for Christian growth and service?"
- "Is membership a matter of choice to the individual or a matter of obedience to the LORD?"
- "Is church membership just optional or really essential?"
- "Is church membership even biblical?"

Today's Session:

We Will Explore...



- **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP's:**
 - Biblical Basis
 - Practical Reasons
 - Substantial Privileges
- **COHc's MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS**

Church Membership:

The Biblical Basis

- The Bible teaches that all Christians are indeed members of God's Church.

- “... you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” (Eph. 2.19)
- “... we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”



(Rom. 12.5)

- The Bible teaches that Christians are to be devoted to the fellowship of a specific group of believers.

- “And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2.42)
- “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another...” (Heb. 10.25)

What Some Say:

R.C. Sproul, Jr.

*“The community we seek is found not in some generic love for man, but in a specific love for the redeemed. Our love should be greater toward those with whom we have Christ in common than toward with whom we share a job or a hobby... Every Lord’s Day we have a reunion. We, all His children, gather in the throne room, the church militant and the church triumphant gathered **coram Deo**, before the face of God. And there we are one, in union with Him.”*



Church Membership: The Biblical Basis (contd.)

- The Bible teaches that Christians belong to Christ, belong to Christ's Body & thus belong together.

- *"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."* (1 Cor. 12.27)

- *"You are not your own, for you were bought with a price."* (1 Cor. 6.19)

- The Bible teaches that Christians are to be in a loving accountability relationship with shepherd-leaders.

- *"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."* (Heb. 13.17)



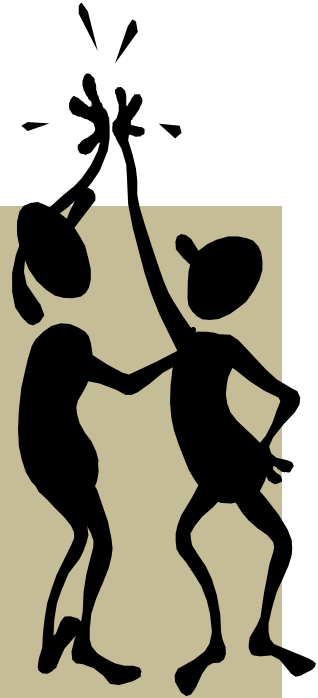
What Some Say:

J.I. Packer in *Concise Theology*

“The New Testament assumes that all Christians share in the life of the local church, meeting with it for worship (Heb. 10.25), accepting its nurture and discipline (Matt. 18.15-20; Gal. 6.1), and sharing in its work of witness. Christians disobey God and impoverish themselves by refusing to join with other believers when there is a local congregation that they can belong to.”



Church Membership: The Biblical Basis (contd.)



- The Bible shows that pastors were to keep lists of certain members. Member lists are both Biblical and normal.
 - “No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty... As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list.” (1 Tim. 5.9, 11)
- The Bible’s N.T. epistles simply assume that Christians will practice life together in mutual commitment within the context of local church membership.
 - “... encourage one another and build one another up.” (1 Thess. 5.11)
 - “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (Col. 3.13)

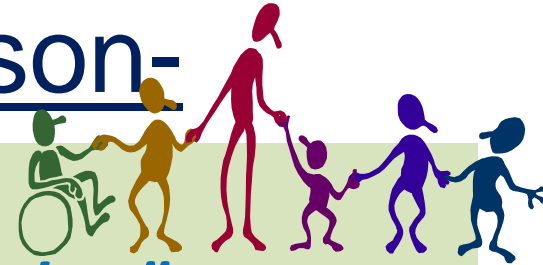
Church Membership: The Bible's # 1 Reason-

*“Every Christian ought to be a member of a local church **because the breadth and depth of our biblical responsibilities to other Christians requires it.** We cannot rightly fulfill our biblical responsibilities to other believers without being part of a local church.”* – Wayne Mack

- The 58 “**One Another**” commands in Scripture:

- “love one another”
- “serve one another”
- “be devoted to one another”
- “bear one another’s burdens”
- “submit to one another”
- “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another”

(Jn 13.34; Gal. 5.13; Rom. 12.10; Gal. 6.2; Eph. 4.21 & Jms 5.16)



Church Membership: The Practical Reasons

- Membership **clarifies the distinction between believers and unbelievers.**
- Membership **helps the Visible Church to better reflect the Invisible Church.**
- Membership **facilitates the orderly administration** of the church.
- Membership **provides an opportunity to better educate folks about the nature, work and marks of The Church.**



Church Membership: Its Blessings & Privileges

- **CORPORATE WORSHIP-** Celebrating the Gospel in public worship helps us refocus on God and spiritually prepares us for the week ahead.
- **VIBRANT FELLOWSHIP-** Enjoying the Gospel in real relationships with other believers helps strengthen us in light of life's inevitable trials, setbacks and discouragements.
- **DYNAMIC DISCIPLESHIP-** Learning the Gospel helps ground us, equipping us with real answers to life's ultimate questions so we can productively live out our faith.
- **MISSIONAL PARTNERSHIP-** Partnering in the Gospel assists you in fulfilling your mission to reach others for Christ.



Church Membership:

Its Blessings & Privileges (contd.)

- Church membership is **not just a commitment on the member's part** to the church...
- Rather, it is likewise and **equally a commitment on the church's part** to all its members.
- The **church body and its leaders commit to care for its members by providing such benefits as:**
 - **HELPFUL SERVICES**: e.g. counseling, prayer, baptisms/weddings
 - **MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES**: e.g. teaching, leadership, music
 - **LOVING ACCOUNTABILITY**: e.g. conflict coaching, peacemaking help, relationship restoration



A Final Appeal:

“The Dearest Place on Earth”

“Give yourself to the Church. You that are members of the Church have not found it perfect and I hope that you feel almost glad that you have not. If I had never joined a Church till I had found one that was perfect, I would never have joined one at all! And the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect Church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us... All who have first given themselves to the Lord, should, as speedily as possible, also give themselves to the Lord’s people. How else is there to be a church on the earth? If it is right for anyone to refrain from membership in the Church, it is right for everyone, and then the testimony for God would be lost to the world!”



- Charles Spurgeon (from his April 5th, 1891 sermon)

Christ Our Hope church's

5 Membership Commitments:

- Regarding Your Relationship to God:

- Will you acknowledge that you are a sinner without hope except in God's amazing grace?
- Do you believe in and trust on Jesus Christ for your salvation through the forgiveness of your sins?

- Regarding Your Relationship to Yourself:

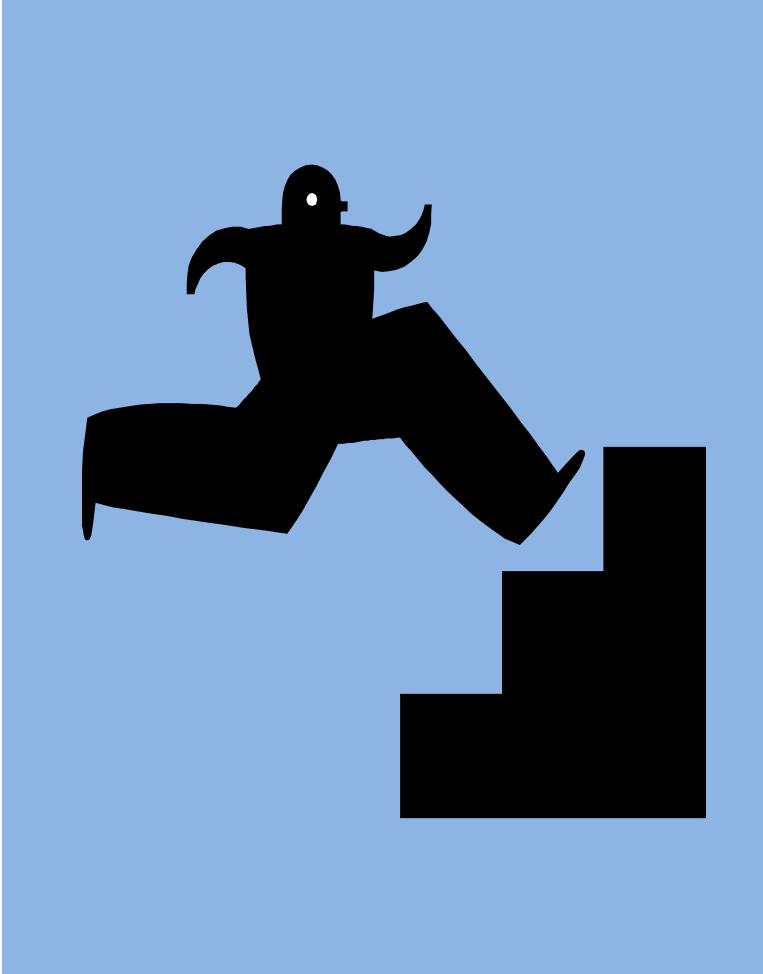
- Will you now resolve to live a holy life by the empowering and transforming grace of God?

- Regarding Your Relationship to This Church:

- Do you promise to support the church in its worship & work?
- Will you submit to the ordained leadership and discipline of the church as well as promise to practice its purity and peace?



Membership to COHc: Next Steps



- **5 Simple Steps:**
 - **#1-** Come to *“Pie Night”*
 - **#2-** Carefully consider our  **Membership Covenant**
 - **#3-** Sign and return **all membership forms**
 - **#4- Interview** with elder
 - **#5-** Be welcomed in public **membership ceremony**

THANK YOU SINCERELY!...
for coming to the Connecting Class

