



Church membership explained

A guide to the 'whats' and 'hows'
of Church Membership





What is a church member?

At SBC we follow the Baptist model of Church Governance under which the discernment of our vision of God's purposes and direction for the church, and the making of key decisions, **is the responsibility of the many not the few.** All the significant decisions, such as calling a new Pastor, affirming Elders, setting an annual Budget and making any sizeable financial expenditure are taken by a vote of 'Church Members'.

Church Membership, as practised today, has its roots in the Protestant Reformation several centuries ago where the church sought to emphasise and reinforce commitment to a fellowship as something that is more than just attendance.



FACT

You are welcome, loved and cared for at SBC just the same whether you are a church member or not

Anyone is welcome to be part of the SBC family but being a Church Member at SBC involves going a stage further. The Book of Acts talked about believers 'devoting themselves' to the fellowship of the early church. Church Membership involves entering into a personal and public commitment to SBC and taking on personal responsibility. Church Membership is a two-way covenant between each member and all the other members.

FACT

being a Church Member gives you an involvement in the important decisions

Being a Church Member gives you the right and the privilege to vote on key decisions in the life of the church – such as appointing Pastors and Elders, agreeing annual budgets and affirming new members.

Many of you are regular attenders who are committed to SBC and already serve in some of the many capacities and ministries within it but have never taken the step of becoming affirmed Church Members – if that is you then maybe now is a good time to ask yourself...

Why not?

**I didn't know
about Church
Membership**

**I didn't
understand
why Church
Membership
was important**

**Why
not?**

**SBC is my church
family home –
why should I not
become a Church
Member?**

**I was thinking
about Church
Membership but
just never got
round to it**

What are the responsibilities of being a Church Member?

Becoming a Church Member is entering into a Covenant Commitment to God and to your fellow Church Members to play your part in the life of SBC. It will involve being intentional about:

Maintaining a faithful Christian walk - serving Christ while growing in grace and in the understanding of God's word

Promoting and enjoying the Fellowship of Believers – attending regularly, striving for unity and caring for others in the church

Contributing to the Business and Governance of the Church – praying for the church, attending gatherings and members meetings, and voting on important issues

Honouring those in leadership through listening, prayerfully considering and affirming their direction and counsel

Giving of your time and financially to the church and its mission

FACT

We believe that God calls us to partner with him in the building of his kingdom and that it is by doing this that we fully experience the joy of fellowship and relationship of walking with him

Prayer, service and financial giving are all part of our walk with him but individual circumstances are different so we do not lay down rules, quotas, amounts or keep scores. It is left between each individual and God to contribute as they are able in each season of their life

Can I become a Church Member?

There are some qualifications to being a Church Member. You need to:

- 1** Be already part of the SBC extended family
- 2** Have committed your life to Christ and be seeking to grow in him
- 3** Want to partner with us in the delivery of the SBC vision



FACT

The SBC Vision is what we believe God is calling us to be and to do in this season

For a reminder of our SBC Vision & Values see page 10 and 11

4

Have read and understood the SBC Statement of Beliefs and be seeking to live in the light of this through your relationship with Jesus Christ



FACT

The SBC Statement of Beliefs is a summary of what we believe about the truth of the nature of God and of the gospel as revealed through the Bible and is a beginning, not an end, to the study and understanding of scripture and the whole counsel of God. It can be found on the SBC website

5

Be willing to honour those called to the leadership of the church by listening, prayerfully considering and affirming their direction and counsel

FACT

As a Church Member you have an **equal say** in affirming those who lead the Church

If all the above applies to you then the answer is YES then we would absolutely love to see you affirmed as a Church Member

How do I become a church member?

A 'HOW-TO' GUIDE

1

To start the process please either ask or write a note to one of the Pastors or Elders

2

We will arrange for someone to contact you to arrange to meet up for a chat about your reasons for wanting to become a member and offer to help you through the process. For convenience we call this the 'membership interview'

Don't be put off by the word 'interview'. This is a necessary part of the process but it is nothing like a job interview - it is a warm and relaxed time of fellowship and chat. But if you are nervous or shy you are welcome to bring someone along to accompany you

3

You will need to write a short testimony of how God brought you to the point of wanting to become a member. This will be sent to all the existing Church Members, so they know who you are and how God brought you to this point

We are always thrilled to hear the testimony of your journey of faith and that you want to be even more committed to the SBC family

4

Existing Church Members will vote to affirm you as a new Church Member at a Church Gathering

To be affirmed by a bunch of godly, prayerful people is a special blessing

5

You will then be warmly welcomed into your new status as a Church Member

Welcome to your expanded role in the life of SBC

Affirmation

4

Welcome!

5

Share
your
story

3

2

Meet up

1

Get in touch



SBC Vision



**An extended family,
growing and
being transformed
in Jesus Christ
and sharing
the good news
wherever we go**



Values

The following four values that underpin our life at SBC are drawn from a reflection on the God we worship. Put together the essence of the gospel is expressed through them

Above all we value...



Relationship

Based on our understanding of God as **Trinity**, God in community

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love... This is my command: love each other’
JOHN 15.9,17



Mission

Based on our understanding of the **Incarnation**, of God who sends his Son in the flesh into the world

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us”
JOHN 1.14



Holiness

Based on the cross, recognising our **salvation**, our identity in Christ as a ‘holy people’ and the reality of suffering

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”
1 PETER 2.9



Transformation

Based on the **resurrection**, calling us to be a people offering hope and life in new creation

“He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’”
REVELATION 21.6



#SBC LIVE LIGHT

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