



CHURCH MEMBERSHIP *Matters*

As you go through each lesson, look up the Bible verses and answer the questions in the blanks provided. When you are finished with this lesson you and your mentor will meet to discuss your answers and any questions you may have. This is not a pass/fail test, so answer honestly as you understand things. We want you to understand, not just to give the “right” answer.



Many people have become pretty skeptical about “organized religion” these days. Because of the failings of some religious leaders, modern Christians are often suspicious of local church leaders and have real doubts about the importance of the local church.

A big question in many people’s minds relate to church membership. For instance: *Should I join a church? Is church membership Scriptural? What kind of church should I join?*

In this lesson, we endeavor to answer these and other important questions most often asked by new Christians.

The church in the Greek New Testament means “a called-out assembly” and refers to Christians who have been called out of this world. They are born again, baptized, and united for the purpose of strengthening one another in fellowship and carrying out the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ in fulfilling the Great Commission.

1. Read **Matthew 28:19-20**. The Great Commission includes more than salvation. What else did Jesus tell His disciples to do with new believers?
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2. What other descriptive terms are given in the Bible that refer to the “called-out assembly” of God’s people?

OLD TESTAMENT TERMS

A. Psalm 89:7 _____

B. Psalm 149:1 _____

C. Ezekiel 34:15 _____

NEW TESTAMENT TERMS

D. Ephesians 1:22-23 _____

E. I Timothy 3:15 _____

F. Hebrews 12:23 _____

G. Revelation 21:9 _____

3. What local church is mentioned in Colossians 4:15-16?

4. Where did the church meet that is mentioned in Colossians 4:15?

5. Read Matthew 16:18

The true Greek reading of this passage is as follows: *And I also say to you Peter, you are Peter* [Petros—little stone] *but upon this Rock* [Petra—a big rock; indicating Jesus, see *Psalm 18:1*] *I will build my church.*

Who is the founder and builder of the church?

6. What is Christ’s relationship to the church? Read Ephesians 1:22 & Colossians 1:18

7. How many people were added to the first church in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost? Read **Acts 2:41**

8. After the people had been saved, what took place next, adding them to the local church? Read **Acts 2:41**

9. How often were people added to the church? Read **Acts 2:41**

10. Locate in the following verses the ones whom God has made overseers or rulers of the local churches:

® **Acts 20:17 & 28** _____

® **Ephesians 4:11-12** _____

® **I Timothy 3:1-5** _____

® **Hebrews 13:17** _____

® **I Timothy 5:17** _____

11. What two offices were given to the local church? Read **I Timothy 3:1-8**

12. What other offices were given to the church? Read **Ephesians 4:11-15**

13. What word is used to describe the apostles and prophets? Read **Ephesians 2:20**

NOTE: *The foundation of a building is the platform upon which the building rests. The apostles and prophets laid the foundation of the church upon Jesus Christ the chief*

cornerstone. Read **Ephesians 2:20**

The functions of the office of apostles and prophets were fulfilled upon the completion of the New Testament Scriptures and are no longer in existence. The offices of Evangelists and Pastor-Teachers remain to the present day.

14. Is there ever a legitimate biblical cause to withdraw fellowship from another professing Christian? Read **II Thessalonians 3:6**

Yes No

15. Read **Matthew 18:15-17**. These verses explain how the Four Steps of Church Discipline are to be implemented:

(1) **vs. 15** – Go and tell him his fault *how*? _____

(2) **vs. 16** – If he won't listen to you, *what's next*? _____

(3) **vs. 17a** – If he *still* won't listen to you, *what's next*? _____

(4) **vs. 17b** – If he won't listen to the church, *what's next*? _____

(Read and compare this to **I Corinthians 5:1-5**)

16. What should be some of the basic purposes of the local church and its members?

A. **Acts 1:8** _____

B. **Matthew 28:19-20** _____

C. **II Timothy 4:2** _____

D. **Acts 2:42** _____

E. **John 4:23** _____

17. What are the marks of a true New Testament church – the kind you should join?

A. Isaiah 8:20 _____

B. II Corinthians 5:14-18 _____

C. Galatians 1:6-9 _____

D. II John 7-11 _____

E. Revelation 22:18-19 _____

18. How should a Christian respond to those churches which violate the principles of God's Word? Read Romans 16:17.

NOTE: *In the Christian world today, not everything which calls itself Christian is truly Christian. We are told in Scripture that Satan distinguishes himself as an "angel of light" and his ministers as "ministers of righteousness". Read II Corinthians 11:14-15.*

Our Lord spoke of wolves in sheep's clothing. Read Matthew 7:15.

Satan's grand tactic is to counterfeit the true and genuine. He does this by perverting, twisting and compromising the Word of God. Read Genesis 3:4-5 & Matthew 4:6.

Of those churches which Christians must be aware are the New Evangelical, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Catholic, and all liberal Protestant churches.

Among the cults to avoid are the New Age Movement, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, Church of Christ, etc.

The True Church that God has for you is the one which is totally committed to believing and practicing all of the Word of God.

19. What does **Hebrews 10:25 say about my need to be a part of a local, Bible-believing church?**

20. What did you learn from this lesson that you did not know before?

21. How can you make this a part of your everyday life?



HAMILTON SQUARE
BAPTIST CHURCH

MEMORIZE THESE VERSES for Lesson Seven

(pick the translation that works best for you)

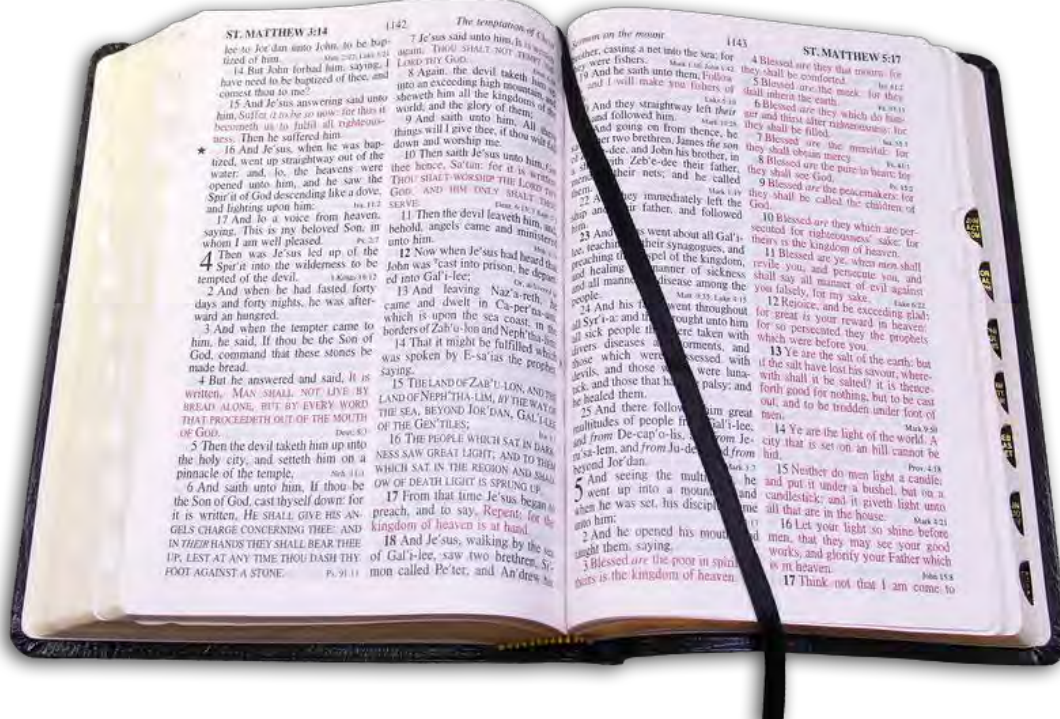
Title to verses: OBEDIENCE

Hebrews 10:24-25 (KJV) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NASB) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Acts 2:47 (KJV) Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Acts 2:47 (NASB) 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.



ACCOUNTABILITY PAGE

My Name: _____

My Mentor's Name: _____

Date I completed Lesson Six: _____

My Mentor's Signature: _____

A Pastor's Signature: _____



HAMILTON SQUARE
BAPTIST CHURCH

Remember:

It's important to be at church whenever you are able, so you can continue to grow in the Lord!

SUNDAYS

9:45 am – Bible Study or Sunday School

10:50 am – Morning Worship Service

Lunch & Mingle

1:30 pm – Afternoon Church Service

WEDNESDAYS

7:00 pm – Midweek Bible Study & Prayer Meeting

DIGGING DEEPER

OPTIONAL: Extra information



Many questions arise when the topic of Church Membership comes up in conversation. Because of an increasing sense of individualism or a fear of overcommitment, some people refuse to “join” a local New Testament church.

But is that a proper, obedient response to the Scriptures? Let’s study this out!

What the Bible says about Church Membership

1. OBJECTIONS AGAINST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. The first objection to church membership comes from those who say that the Bible doesn’t command it. This, of course, is not true as you will see in the rest of this study.

B. The second reason people give for not joining a church is, that some church groups have made church membership something that God did not intend it to be – a requirement for salvation. They make church membership TOO important.



That is no excuse for not joining a local church. After all, just because somebody else does it wrong, does not mean that we should not do it right!

C. A third objection people use for rejecting local church membership is that that Lord Jesus Christ did not join a church. These people just don’t know the Scriptures, because Jesus said that He would build His church.

- **Matthew 16:18** (NASB) *...I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*

Jesus also gave The Great Commission, which called for the salvation of souls and the making of disciples – which is the purpose of the local church.

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- **Matthew 28:19-20** (NASB) *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...*

Beyond the Great Commission, Christ is the One Who inspired the apostle Paul to go out and start the churches of Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, etc.

- D. A final argument that some use against church membership is that, “I belong to the invisible church body of Christ.” While it is true that all believers are a part of that invisible body, that body will not meet together until we all get to Heaven.



The invisible body of Christ (*or Universal Church*) does not...

- Have any officers, pastors, deacons or system of governance (polity),
- Gather to sing or hold prayer meetings,
- Observe the Ordinances of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism
- Collect tithes and offerings for the work of God,
- Support missionaries financially,
- Have a systematized discipleship program or curriculum, or
- Hold each other accountable or practice church discipline.

Those who refuse to join a local church seem to want to do their own thing, be their own pastor, keep their tithes and offerings for themselves, and be responsible to no one!

The vast majority of times the word “church” is used in the New Testament, it is speaking of a local church.

2. WHAT IS A LOCAL CHURCH?

- A. A local church is a group of born-again believers.

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- **Acts 2:41** (NASB) *...Those who had received his word were baptized; and that day **there were added about three thousand souls.***

B. A local church is a united group of baptized believers.

- **Acts 2:41** (NASB) *...Those who had received his word were **baptized...***

C. A local church is an organized group that meets for a purpose.

- **Acts 2:42** (NASB) *They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

1. They gathered for teaching and preaching

2. They gathered for fellowship and encouragement

3. They gathered to observe the Lord's Table

4. They gathered together for prayer

5. They were unified in spirit and love for each other

- **Acts 2:43-47** (NASB) *Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

A good local church “does life” together! They become a true family – devoted to the service of the Lord and love for one another.

3. WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN A LOCAL CHURCH?

A. The local church is Christ's plan from the very beginning.

- **Matthew 16:19b** (NASB) *...I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*

B. The early church modeled it.

- **Acts 2:41-42** (NASB) *...Those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. 42 They were*

Discipleship Lesson #7: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP Matters

continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

C. Church membership brings blessing to your life.

- **Acts 2:43-47** (NASB) *Everyone [who joined the church at Jerusalem] kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

D. The local church is the center of evangelism in a community.

- **Acts 2:41c** (NASB) *...There were added about three thousand souls.*
- **Acts 2:47b** (NASB) *...And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*
- **Acts 4:4b** (NASB) *... The number of the men came to be about five thousand.*

E. The local church is the place God designed for accountability and discipline.

- **Matthew 18:15-18** (NASB) *If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 17 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. 18 Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.*
- **I Corinthians 5:9-13** (NASB) *I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not*

Discipleship Lesson #7: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP Matters

even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

4. WHY Do Many Believers Never JOIN A LOCAL CHURCH?

- A. Because they have never been taught the importance of doing so.
- B. Because most interdenominational groups emphasize the “invisible church” or the “universal church” and minimize the value of a local church.
- C. Because they want to escape the accountability and discipline of a local church.
- D. Because they do not want to take on the responsibility of making their local church a success.

5. Many Believers Say that They Had No Church Membership in the New Testament.

If that is so, answer the following questions:

A. Who were the new converts “added to” in Acts 2:41 & 47?

- **Acts 2:41** (NASB) ...*Those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*
- **Acts 2:47** (NASB) ... *And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

B. How did they know the number of their converts in Acts 2:41 & 47?

- **Acts 4:4** (NASB) ... *The number of the men came to be about five thousand.*

C. Whose widows did they take care of in Acts 6?

- **Acts 6:1-3** (NASB) ...*Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven*

Discipleship Lesson #7: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP Matters

men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

D. From where did they select and the first deacons and who “laid hands” them to authorize their ministry in Acts 6:3-6?

- **Acts 6:3-6** (NASB) *...Brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.*
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E. From what did Paul tell the Corinthians to remove a sinning brother in I Corinthians 5?

- **I Corinthians 5:12-13** (NASB) *...For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.*
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F. To whom did Paul write the books of Romans, Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, etc.?

- **Romans 1:7** (NASB) *To all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- **I Corinthians 1:2** (NASB) *To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:*
- **II Corinthians 1:1** (NASB) *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother...*
- **Galatians 1:1** (NASB) *Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised*

Discipleship Lesson #7: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP Matters

Him from the dead), 2 and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

- **Ephesians 1:1** (NASB) *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:*
- **Philippians 1:1** (NASB) *Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:*
- **Philippians 1:1** (NASB) *Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:*
- **Colossians 1:3** (NASB) *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.*

G. To whom did Jesus write in Revelation 2 & 3?

Note: The term “angel” is referring to the “messenger” or “pastor” of each local church.

- **Revelation 2:1** (NASB) *To the angel of **the church** in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:...*
- **Revelation 2:8** (NASB) *And to the angel of **the church** in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:...*
- **Revelation 2:12** (NASB) *And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:...*
- **Revelation 2:18** (NASB) *And to the angel of **the church** in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:...*
- **Revelation 3:1** (NASB) *To the angel of **the church** in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*
- **Revelation 3:7** (NASB) *And to the angel of **the church** in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:...*

Discipleship Lesson #7: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP Matters

- **Revelation 3:14** (NASB) *To the angel of **the church** in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:...*
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H. Who did Barnabas and Saul assemble with, encourage, and teach for an entire year in Acts 11?

- **Acts 11:22-26** (NASB) *The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. 23 Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; 24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. 25 And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*
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I. Who commissioned Paul and Barnabas to go on the first missionary journey in Acts 13?

- **Acts 13:1-3** (NASB) *Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*
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J. Who were the elders appointed to lead in Acts 14?

- **Acts 14:23** (NASB) *When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*
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6. What Kind of Local Church Should You Join?

A. A local church that teaches and practices a born-again membership and baptism by immersion.

- **Acts 2:41** (NASB) *...Those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

B. A local church that teaches and builds up God's people.

- **Acts 20:26-28** (NASB) *Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. 28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

C. A local church that reaches the lost for Christ through church outreach programs, personal evangelism, and world-wide missions.

- **Acts 1:8** (NASB) *...You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

D. A local church that will help you to be accountable to live for Christ and exercise church discipline as prescribed by Scripture.

- **Matthew 18:15-17** (NASB) *"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 17 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.*

- Read **I Corinthians 5**

E. A local church that has the same requirements for membership as is seen in the book of Acts.

- **Acts 2:41** (NASB) *...Those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

1. Receive the word of God regarding salvation

2. Be baptized

F. A local church that practices Biblical separation from sin.

- **II Corinthians 6:14-18 (NASB)** *Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 17 "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.*

No child of God should be willing to stay in a local church that does not believe the Word of God and fundamental doctrines such as the Virgin Birth of Christ, the Inspiration of Scripture, belief in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, salvation through Jesus Christ alone, the value of the Shed Blood of Jesus Christ, and the reality of Eternity in Heaven or Hell.

Any believer that stays in and supports such a liberal church is living in complete disobedience to the Word of God.

As soon as you are saved you are to leave the religion (or lack of it) which did not introduce you to the New Birth you received from Jesus Christ, get baptized, and join a local church. We recommend an independent, fundamentalist Baptist church.

- **Acts 19:8-9 (NASB)** *And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, **he withdrew from them** and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.*
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- **Acts 2:41-47 (NASB)** *those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship,*

Discipleship Lesson #7: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP Matters

to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

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HAMILTON SQUARE BAPTIST CHURCH

Each local church has its own protocol for accepting new members.

At Hamilton Square Baptist Church, we have an application form for potential members. Your mentor can help you get a copy.

We ask that you fill out that form and turn it into one of the pastors, who will then pass it on to the deacons and deaconesses. It includes information regarding ministry opportunities you may be interested in participating in and how we may keep in contact with you.

You will be interviewed by the membership committee, and then they will make a recommendation to the pastor, who will then ask for a vote from the congregation.

After the congregational vote, you will be offered “the right hand of fellowship” during a church service and given a certificate of membership with full rights for voting on church business and other important matters.

Our purpose is to help you grow in the faith and in your walk with God.

Please let us minister to you in this way!



HAMILTON SQUARE
BAPTIST CHURCH

THE DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING COURSE

Lesson Schedule

Lesson #1	What Happens When One is “Born Again?”	Salvation
Lesson #2	What to Do When You Fall	Confession of Sin
Lesson #3	What About Baptism?	Baptism
Lesson #4	How to Pray & Why Should I?	Prayer
Lesson #5	Bible Study: Making it Personal	Bible Study
Lesson #6	Obedience Brings Blessing	Obedience
Lesson #7	Church Membership Matters	Membership
Lesson #8	Tithes & Offerings: Bible Principles	Giving
Lesson #9	Overcoming Sexual Sin & Temptation	Victory
Lesson #10	Our Lord’s Commission	Witnessing
Lesson #11	Putting Anger & Bitterness to Rest	Bitterness
Lesson #12	Alcohol & Other Addictive Substances	Addictions
Lesson #13	Music and the Christian	Music
Lesson #14	Social Media, TV, Movies, The Internet & The Future	Media
Lesson # 15	Biblical Separation: The Dangers of Compromise	Separation
Lesson #16	Bloom Where You’re Planted! Staying in the City	City Ministry
Lesson #17	Happiness Forever: The Fruit of Faithfulness	Heaven

If you have questions, ask your mentor to help you.
If he or she can’t help you, they will help you set up an appointment
with a pastor at our church. They are here to help you!