

**“Why Church Membership?”**  
**Matthew 16:13-20**

**So many people are indifferent about the church. They view the church as outdated and irrelevant. They view the church as a boring place that only exists to rob a few extra hours of sleep on Sunday morning. Many people are skeptical and doubtful when it comes to the validity and purpose of church membership. So, why would anyone want to join a church?**

**The Point: The church of Jesus Christ is a family that is on a mission.**

**I. The church is the church of Jesus Christ. (13-16, 18)**

**a. The church is built on a common confession.**

- The church is a community of disciples who know, love, and follow Jesus. They are those who confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
- What do you make of Jesus Christ? This is the most important question under the sun.

**b. The church belongs to him.**

- The church is his idea. He instituted it. He runs the show. Look at what Jesus says in verse 18. “I will build *my church*” Jesus purchased the church with his blood. Jesus died to redeem his people, the church.
- People like Jesus but not the church. Well, that’s problematic. Because to like Jesus, to really get in with Jesus is to get in with what he’s all about, with what he loves, and Jesus loves his church. Why? Ephesians 5:25 – “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

**Reason #1: *Membership provides the best context to display your allegiance to Jesus to the world.***

**II. The church of Jesus Christ is a family. (16:17)**

- God is our Father. Jesus is our brother. Whoever loves him and does his will are in his family (Mark 3). The New Testament writers consistently refer to the church being the household of God (Eph. 2 & 1 Tim. 3). When Paul addresses believers in all of his letters, he calls them, what? Brothers and sisters. Receiving Jesus makes us children of God (Jn. 1). We have been adopted into God’s family by the Spirit (Rom. 8). Why would the NT speak of the local church as a family?

**a) Families have an identity:**

- The church kept up with who was in and who was out (Acts 2:41, 47)
- The Bible speaks of people joining and not joining the community of disciples (Acts 5:12-13; Acts 9:26-28)
- Just as the gospel is both uniquely and radically inclusive and uniquely and radically exclusive, so the church must necessarily be both radically inclusive and exclusive.

**Reason #2: *Membership marks off who is in the family.***

**b) Families belong together.**

- A strong commitment to other believers should be the natural reflex of a Christian. (See Acts 1 & 2)
- We’ve talked about how the church is to fulfill the one another commands of Scripture. To who? all people? Yes. All Christians? Absolutely. But, there is a heightened responsibility and accountability for fulfilling those in the context of a local church.
- This same idea applies to leadership in the church. Hebrews 13:17 says, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.”

**Reason #3: *Membership provides the context where leadership and mutual care can be exercised.***

**c) Families are imperfect**

- Redemption Hill Church is not a perfect church. There is not a perfect church out there because churches are filled with imperfect people. This is why Jesus establishes church discipline in **Matthew 18:15-17**. Let me say a few of things: **1) Mt. 18:15-17**: “The ability to exclude someone from ‘the church’ presupposes that it’s known who belongs to ‘the church’ as a member in the first place.” **2) discipline in the church starts with formative discipline (1 Tim 4:7) and self-discipline (2 Cor 13:5); 3) the discipline process is always for the good of the individual, that they might be restored to God and their brothers and sisters.**

**Reason #4: *Membership helps keep believers in the faith.***

**III. The church of Jesus Christ is on a mission (18-20).**

**The church is on an unstoppable mission.**

- **“The gates of hell will not prevail against it.” The church is on the offensive.**
- The church does not exist to kick back in her spiritual recliner. This undercuts the consumeristic mentality that plagues the church today. Does the church exist to serve you? Or do you exist to serve the church? Someone needs you: your love, your encouragement, your counsel, your example, your gifts.

**Reason #5: *Membership provides unique opportunities to serve God’s people.***

**The church is the primary vehicle by which God accomplishes his mission.**

- “Mission is not ours; mission is God’s. Certainly, the mission of God is the prior reality out of which flows any mission that we get involved in. Or, as has been nicely put, it is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world but that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church. The church was made for mission—God’s mission.” (Wright, *TMG*, 62).

**Reason #6: *Membership provides unique opportunities to serve the world.***

**The glory of God is displayed in the church**

- Ephesians 3:10: “so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known in the church.”
- We have one life, and our goal should be to spend our lives in such a way that to maximize the glory of God! This happens through the church. It happens in the ordinary and yet extraordinary ways that we’ve been talking about.

**Reason #7: *Membership provides incredible opportunities to display the glory of God.***

***Redemption Hill Church exists to glorify God by living out his mission as a community transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.*** The better question is not “Why would I be motivated to join a local church?” but “Why would you not be motivated join a local church, and more specifically, this church?”

**Redemption Hill Membership Process**

1. Connections Class
2. Conversation
3. Covenant

**We trust Christ to build his church (Mt. 16:18). Join the Family. Join the Mission.**