

## Grace to You :: esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time

### Membership Is Loyalty

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12–31; Ephesians 2:19

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Church membership is not optional. Admittedly, there is no verse in the Bible that specifically commands us to sign on the dotted line and join a church. But the clear teaching of Scripture is that we are to be *members* in the local fellowship of believers, in every sense of the word.

The apostle Paul had that unified fellowship in mind when he wrote Ephesians 2:19: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household.” In essence, we’re now part of a family—God’s family.

And unity within God’s heavenly household requires loyalty, both to Him and to His people. The consumerist attitude that’s taken hold in the church today isn’t interested in loyalty. It leads people to see fellowship as a means to selfish ends—they will meet with other believers, but only when it suits their needs and pleases their interests.

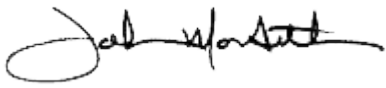
When you come to church the question shouldn’t be, *What can I get out of my church?* but, *How can God use me to serve others here?* Will there be other believers in the congregation who need you, whether it’s for help, support, or encouragement?

The obvious answer is yes. There is no shortage of spiritual, physical, and emotional needs in your church. You won’t have to look hard to find a multitude of ways you can be useful to your congregation. It’s the same attitude you’d hope to cultivate within your own family—what are the needs around you and how can you be useful in meeting those needs? Bring that loyal, Christlike attitude with you to church—you’re not there to be served, but to serve.

By God’s grace and His perfect design, He has equipped each of us with a variety of spiritual gifts for use in the church (Ephesians 4:11-12). The Lord has fitted each of us with specific talents and abilities that tie into His purposes for our lives.

Every believer has a role within the Body of Christ, and that body cannot function unless everyone is working together (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Hands can’t suddenly become ears; eyes can’t replace feet. And you’ll never find a stray finger or tongue that functions better on its own than it does with the rest of the body. The Lord didn’t save us to be solo acts—we’re meant to work in concert and harmony together as one great choir.

How is that possible apart from involvement in the local church? You may have other believers scattered throughout your life, whether at home, at work, or elsewhere. But God’s design is for you to be an active, useful member of your local church body, working side by side with other useful, self-sacrificing believers to accomplish His will in your lives and in your community. That starts with being a loyal member of your local church.



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