



## What if I am already a member of another church?

We would encourage you to write to your old church and resign your membership once you have decided to become a member at Christ Church. We think it is vital to have one church family that you are accountable to.

If you are an undergraduate student we recognise that this is, in many ways, a unique time. Our **Student Membership** scheme enables you to retain membership of your home church and also be a member at Christ Church in recognition of the fact that you will probably only be living in Liverpool for around half the year. Student Members can attend Members' Meetings but are not entitled to vote on some issues (such as the election of elders, church discipline and changes to the constitution). Undergraduate students may choose to become full members if they wish.

## What is the process for becoming a member?

If you would like to become a member you will need to arrange to meet with one of the elders for an informal interview (another church member, often a Ministry Apprentice, will usually attend this interview unless you request otherwise). This is really an opportunity for the elder to get to know you a bit and you will be asked about your own testimony (story of your Christian life) and to explain what you understand the Christian message to be.

If everyone is happy to proceed at the end of that interview the elders will then discuss your application and, normally, put it forward to the next church Members' Meeting (which you should not attend). The members will take a vote and if 75% of those present at the meeting vote in favour you will be admitted into membership. You will then receive an official welcome letter within a few days and will be invited to subsequent members meetings.

## Any questions?

Please speak to any of the elders.

# Membership

## What is church membership?

We live in a society where many people are reluctant to join any organisation – and where freedom from commitments and obligations is generally perceived to be a good thing. We believe, however, that, for Christians, membership in a local church is a vital part of a healthy spiritual life.

Membership is a voluntary covenant to associate ourselves with a body of Christian believers. It involves a commitment to attend, pray, give and serve. But more than this membership is a statement that you want the other members of your church to help you in your Christian life – and that you want to give of yourself to helping them.

## Is church membership in the Bible?

The word “membership”, in the sense we use it, isn’t found in the New Testament. And throughout the New Testament period there was only one local church in each place.

But it does seem that the church in each city knew definitely who was part of the church and who was not. Hence the lists of widows supported by the church (1Tim 5). The church at Corinth was asked by the apostle Paul to exclude someone because of their deliberate rebellion against Christian moral standards (1Cor 5). The church is also asked to reinstate someone (2Cor 2). This passage (2Cor 2:6) also says that the man was punished by “the majority” – so clearly the church knew how many people were “members”.

## Who can be a member?

At Christ Church we welcome into membership anybody who is willing to make the necessary commitment to be part of our church family and can enthusiastically commit to our **Statement of Faith** (a summary of essential Christian beliefs). We also ask members to assent to our **Doctrinal Distinctives**. These are issues where we recognise that true evangelical Christians may hold different views and where we welcome into membership of the church those who hold a different view on these matters, provided that they are prepared to respect the beliefs and practices of the church and that they will not seek to undermine them. If you have real difficulty with any of our Doctrinal Distinctives it may be that there would be another local church where you would be happier and we would encourage you to talk about this with one of the elders.

## What does membership involve?

There are really three aspects to church membership:

**A formal aspect.** As a church with congregational church government the members are ultimately responsible for the running of the church. The members elect and re-elect the elders and deacons, approve the church budget and are ultimately responsible for exercising church discipline against other members. This means that by becoming a member you are signalling your willingness to submit to the discipline of the church leadership and its members.

**A strategic aspect.** As leaders we try and give a significant part of each Members Meeting to discussing an issue of our church vision or practice (eg our pastoral care, evangelism, or Sunday meetings). The church’s vision is to reach people who live, work or study in the city with the good news of Jesus Christ. Our commitment is to doing this by proclaiming the message of the Bible in many and varied contexts. The role of the church members is for us to think together about how we can do this most effectively.

**A commitment aspect.** Becoming a church member is an invitation to the other members of the church to encourage and challenge you in your Christian life. In order for that to happen it is important to be committed to:

- ✚ Attending regularly on Sunday
- ✚ Attending Members’ Meetings
- ✚ Serving
- ✚ Giving financially
- ✚ Praying
- ✚ Being involved in evangelism.

## Do I have to be baptised to be a church member?

We do not insist that you need to have been baptised as a believer in order to become a member of the church – though we would encourage all members to seek baptism if you have not been baptised since you have become a Christian.

If you have never been baptised (either as an infant or as a believer) we would very strongly encourage you to do this – as all Christians are agreed that Christians should be baptised!