

Church Membership: a picture of forgiveness

Ephesians 4:25-32

September 12, 2021

“ . . . for we are all members of one body.” Eph. 4:25 (also 5:30)

A local church is where Christians speak truth, reconcile when angry, resist the devil’s attempts to divide them, live lives of generosity, speak words of healing, are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, are ‘clean freaks’ to get rid of malice, and forgive each other as freely and without strings attached as Jesus forgave them.

1. Put off **falsehood** and speak **truthfully** (25)

2. Don’t sin* when angry but **reconcile** and resist (26-27)
(*quoting Psalm 4:4, see also Matt. 5:22)

When you are angry, if you don’t leave room for God (Rom. 12:19) then you will leave room for the devil (Eph. 4:27).

3. Do not steal; a thief should start **working** and aim to live a life of **generosity** (28)

4. Do not allow **rotten** (Gk. spoiled) words to come out but only such talk as is good and **needed** to build another up and give **grace** to the hearer. (29)

5. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit (only a **person** can be grieved). Remember, He will see us safely to the end. (30)

6. “Get rid of . . . all forms of malice” = clean out evil thoughts that lead to hurtful speech and damaging actions. (31)

7. Be **becoming** kind and compassionate to one another *forgiving yourselves, just as in Christ God forgave you.* (32)

This word for forgiveness is the unmerited bestowal of **grace** .
χαρίζομαι / charizomai is found 2x in Eph. 4:32 and Col. 3:13

The primary characteristic of the membership of this local church is that we are to be a group of forgiven and forgiving people, increasingly enjoying and sharing God’s grace together.

Is FCM a good idea for you?

Formal church membership (FCM) is a good idea when . . .

- It formalizes a relationship by reviewing and agreeing to the doctrine and practices of the local church where you already worship, give, pray, etc.
- It formalizes a relationship by a public commitment to serve Christ in a local church by supporting the leaders and ministry and carrying out the “one another” commands of the Bible.

Formal church membership (FCM) is a bad idea when . . .

- It reinforces a mistaken idea that membership in a local church is required, but following Christ as a disciple is optional.
- It reinforces a mistaken idea that the local church is a social club of importance for one’s personal agenda and networking.
- It reinforces a mistaken idea that a person is simply “jumping through hoops” to complete the paperwork to serve in church.

What is the process for becoming a member?

Steps to becoming a member of First Baptist Church of Silverton

1. Our church is a community of baptized followers of Christ
2. Pick up an application and read church documents
3. Complete both sides of the application and sign
4. Share your testimony with the elders and/or attend a class
5. Announcement to the church, certificate, prayer, welcome!