

Church Membership Challenge: Encourage what the Bible encourages!

Why do churches have so many people on their membership rolls who give little or no evidence of Christian commitment or even conversion? Why do many churches find it difficult to motivate members to give, serve, pray and share their faith? The answer is simple: members are seldom encouraged and equipped to achieve the high goals Christ has for his church!

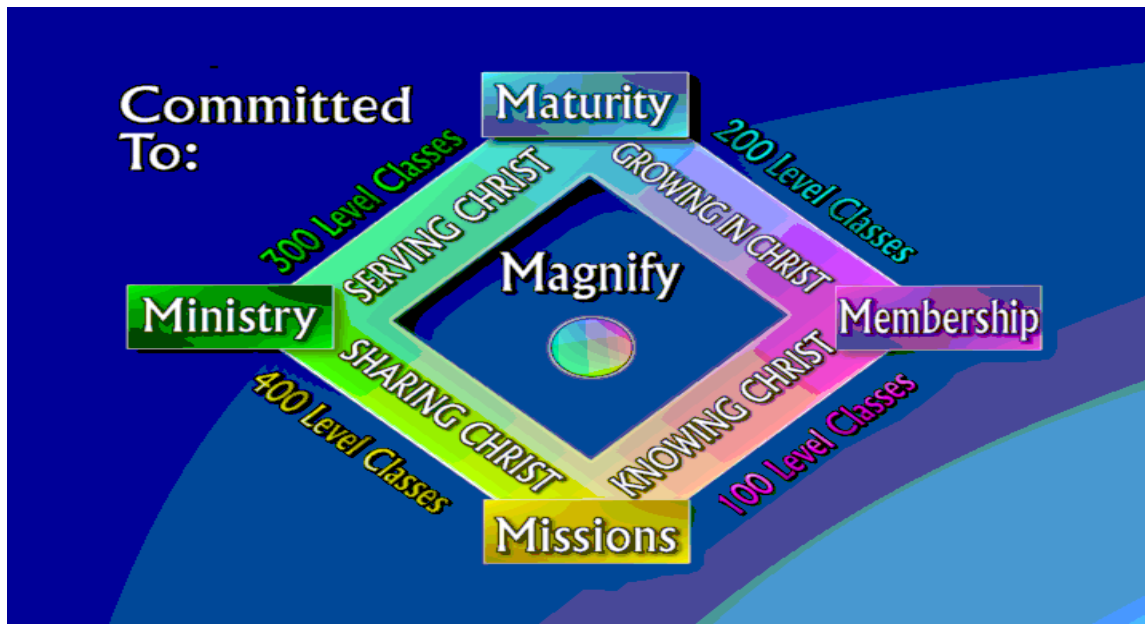
The difference between attenders and members can be summed up in one word: commitment. It's like the difference between couples who just "live together" and those who get married. While becoming a Christian means to commit yourself to Christ, becoming a church member means to commit yourself to other Christians. It is a commitment to a specific group of believers - to practice the "one anothers" of the New Testament. Paul mentions two different types of commitment in 2 Corinthians 8:5: "First they gave themselves to the Lord; and then, by God's will, they gave themselves to us as well" (GN). What is obvious is "You commit yourself to Christ for salvation!" and then you commit yourself to the Church to worship, study, grow, and give service together for the sake of building up the Kingdom of God.

The phrase "one another" or "each other" is used more than 50 times in the New Testament. We are commanded to love each other, pray for each other, encourage each other, admonish each other, greet each other, serve each other, teach each other, accept each other, honor each other, bear each other's burdens, forgive each other, sing to each other, submit to each other and be devoted to each other. All of these high standards that every Christian must work toward within the fellowship and service of the church! The church must encourage all members to be "doers of the Word and not hearers only."

For the church to adequately prepare a person for heaven, it should be known that each person's salvation is based on God's Plan of Redemption! Every one of us must privately include the recognition of God's grace, faith in the gospel truths, repentance of sin, and following with a person's public confession of Christ as Lord and Savior, and then Baptism by immersion!

If the church is to adequately prepare a person help us build the Kingdom of God, then every able-bodied member at River Valley Christian Church should also be encouraged to go deeper in their relationship to God and to one another in the church. We will strongly urge all members to:

- 1) Complete of the entire set of Foundations Classes of Faith, Maturity, Service, and Leadership.
- 2) Participate regularly in the ministry of River Valley Christian Church by giving three hours weekly for worship, bible study, and an area of service! (No one will track your hours, but the Lord will bless you for your surrender of self to His Kingdom's sake!)



Should a membership challenge like this be given! It can revolutionize your church. Some may worry, "If we push too hard with a membership challenge, there will be some who leave our church over it." You're right. There will be some. But here is the fact of reality: People are going to leave your church no matter what you do. Don't be afraid of people leaving. People even walked away from Jesus. When your congregation challenges it's people to be "doers of the Word and not hearers only" at least you're choosing the kind of people who stay!

“Membership Challenge”

Having believed in Christ as my Lord and Savior, with repentance of my sin, plus after I have publicly confessed Christ and was baptized, it is now my desire to follow the teaching from God’s Word, “to be doers of the Word and not hearers only,” I commit myself to God and to the other members of RVCC to do the following:

1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By acting in love toward other members
- ...By refusing to gossip
- ...By following the leaders

"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together." Rom. 15:19 (Ph)

"Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts." 1 Peter 1:22 (TEV)

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." Eph. 4:29

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you." Heb. 13:17

2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By praying for its growth
- ...By inviting the unchurched to attend
- ...By warmly welcoming those who visit

"To the church ... we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly." 1 Thess. 1:2

"The Master said to the servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes, and urge the people there to come so my house will be full.'" Luke 14:23 (NCV)

"So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified." Rom. 15:7 (LB)

3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By discovering my gifts and talents
- ...By being equipped to serve by my pastors
- ...By developing a servant’s heart

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you..." 1 Peter 4:10(Ph)

"God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." Eph. 4:11-12

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant..." Phil. 2:3-4,7

4. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By attending faithfully
- ...By living a godly life
- ...By giving regularly

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another." Heb. 10:25

"But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ." Phil. 1:27 (Ph)

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering." 1 Cor. 16:2

"A tenth of all your produce is the Lord's, and it is holy." Lev. 27:30

5. I WILL TRY MY BEST TO GIVE THREE HOURS WEEKLY for worship, bible study, and service to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through my church, for the purpose of building up the kingdom of God!

“WHATEVER YOU DO, DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD!”
-- I Corinthians 10:31