

# Joining the COG

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## Membership Questions

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We just had six PPT sermons about local church greatness.  
Membership is a congregational ordinance of agreement.  
For many years we used 15 questions to qualify members.  
To follow scripture, we sampled and summarized NT rules.  
They are only a sample of duties, for learning is afterward.

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## Membership Questions

We have been slow to take members for them to know us.  
Our 15 questions worked perfectly well for their purpose.  
But since they seem hard to grasp for some, let us review.  
We do not want to complicate this simple process to join.  
But if we need one or two more or clarification, let's do it.

Recent sermons about the local church  
provide a foundation for simple points here:

<https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/what-is-a-church-1/>

<https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/what-is-a-great-church/>

<https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/great-church-members/>

<https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church-due-process-1/>

# A Church Is a Tight Group of Believers!

- **Church = Congregation** ... comparing Psalm 22:22 to Hebrews 2:12.
- They are all baptized believers by water immersion to Jesus Christ.
- They all believe the same thing ... or they would go elsewhere.
- They have committed to follow the Bible's N.T. church rules.
- They have committed to forgive, love, and serve one another.
- They meet to worship, learn the Bible, and encourage each other.

# A Church Looks Like This



**New Providence Predestinarian Baptist Church, DeWitt County, Illinois about 1908**

# What Is a Church?

God's Temple	Truth Defender	Personal Equalizer
Spirit's House	Salvation Source	Heaven's Magistrate
Christ's Body	Worship Center	Living Organism
Christ's Bride	Reality Check	Freedom Central
Potentate's Property	Chosen Overseers	Support Group
Scripture Repository	Protective Warning	Special Supper
Treasure Chest	God's Seminary	Fellowship Door
Christ's Prophecy	Small Claims Court	Praise Band
God's Israel	Welfare Agency	United Nations
Angelic Wonder	Competent Counselors	Living Epistles
Heavenly Connection	Synergistic Leverage	Secret Society
Inner Circle	Prayer Band	Mega Church
Royal Commission	Replacement Family	Hidden Wisdom
Priest Ordination	Best Friends	World Evangelism



# What Is a Great Church?

Christ-Centric	Self-Correcting	Hospitable & Entertain	No Pagan Holidays
First Love – Hot	Disciplining	Internal Welfare	Marriage Only in Lord
Regenerate Members	Covers Sins	Work Ethic	Children Trained
Spirit-Filled	Holiness	Scrupulously Honest	Five Authority Spheres
Doctrinal Dogmatism	Reverent Worship	Liberal	No Cremation
Preaching Emphasis	Zeal	Tithing / Giving	Passionate Marriages
Church Independence	Attendance	Pastoral Support	Traditional Marriages
Due-Order Details	Every Joint	Female Modesty	Patriarchal
A Capella Singing	Thanksgiving	Hair Length	Historicists
Perilous Times	Evangelism	Closed Communion	Burning Hell
Praying	Commission Fulfilled	Gifts – Cessationists	Ministerial Succession
Brotherly Love	Civil Obedience	Communion Elements	Christian Ethics
Forgiving	Christian Liberty	RCC is Antichrist	No Love Fallacies
Peaceful	Passionate	No Secret Societies	Bible by Four F's
Unity	Joyful	Women Silent	Full-Time Pastors

A local church like the Bible describes, with its features and duties all working as intended, does not happen with members floating in and floating out whenever they feel like it, as most churches practice, especially RCC & SBC.

## Local Church Membership

1. Began by 3000 “added unto” them at Jerusalem.
2. God “added” to that church those to be saved.
3. “Added” terminology is often in Acts (5:14; 11:24).
4. Each church identifies who is in and who is out.
5. This is clear by judgment to put out (I Cor 5:1-13).
6. Each church has a very distinct list of members.
7. The universal church has nothing to do with this.
8. Beyond one church is “churches,” never church.

And the Lord added to the church daily  
such as should be saved.

Acts 2:47b

But now hath God set the members  
every one of them in the body,  
as it hath pleased him.

I Corinthians 12:18

For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?

do not ye judge them that are within?

But them that are without God judgeth.

Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

I Corinthians 5:12-13

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind  
on earth shall be bound in heaven: and  
whatsoever ye shall loose on earth  
shall be loosed in heaven.

Matthew 18:18

We believe by these and other verses that a local church is the creation of God, and He adds or takes away providentially and by church due process, making it a very special group of specific persons by His divine order.



## Joining a Local Church

1. Began by 3000 being baptized Day of Pentecost.
2. They were baptized with a ministerial ordinance.
3. They began and continued in apostolic doctrine.
4. They would have cursed out any contrary gospel.
5. Jerusalem refused Paul due to doubts (Acts 9:26).
6. Barnabas confirmed his salvation to the apostles.
7. We do this by public testimony and 15 questions.
8. These are the “aids” to keep Christ’s N.T. rules.

# Joining the COG

## Membership Questions

If we get lax with membership, what about communion?  
We must then compromise to *close* or *open* communion.  
If we defend one, we must defend both to be consistent.  
The RCC's abominations are pervasive ... but not with us.  
Let them reduce local parish duties to registration or less.

## Commitment of Membership

1. Paul wrote local churches with rules for members.
2. Many of these were *one another* member rules.
3. Kind honesty demands we inform all applicants.
4. We receive members slowly to hear and tell us.
5. We want to know their conversion matches Paul.
6. They are added to us by congregational action.
7. They can only leave scripturally the same way.
8. They cannot withdraw or join us by attendance.

## Our 15 Questions

1. They summarize only a few church member duties.
2. They are broad and detailed enough for a bond.
3. The intent has been full disclosure to applicants.
4. The intent is also to confirm commitment to us.
5. It can be called a compact, contract, or covenant.
6. The questions apply in both directions to us all.
7. No one is forced or pressured to join or promise.
8. Church due process is the only scriptural way out.

# Joining the COG

## Membership Questions

Rather than fuss about the questions, thank God for them.  
They reflect greater knowledge of church life God gave us.  
Without them, what is the nature of church membership?  
We could alter the questions or add many more, but why?  
They were designed by scripture and need little alteration.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers,  
ye have need that one teach you again which  
be the first principles of the oracles of God;  
and are become such as have need of  
milk, and not of strong meat.

Hebrews 5:12

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,  
let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the  
foundation of repentance from dead works,  
and of faith toward God,  
Of the doctrine of baptisms,  
and of laying on of hands,  
and of resurrection of the dead,  
and of eternal judgment.  
And this will we do, if God permit.

Hebrews 6:1-3

Church membership and due process are basic principles short of the perfection of learning more about our Lord, loving Him more, and obeying His commandments.  
In Paul's case, he went on to Melchisedec!



# The Introduction to the Questions

Church membership is a mutual commitment, compact, or covenant between the members of a church to stand united in the doctrine of Jesus Christ and serve one another by the duties described in the New Testament. These example questions are to be reviewed in private with the pastor or those he appoints, and they are to be asked and answered in front of the congregation as part of the public commitment to be church members.

## Joining the Church of Greenville

Church membership is a mutual commitment, compact, or covenant between the members of a church to stand united in the doctrine of Jesus Christ and serve one another in the duties described in the New Testament. These example questions are to be reviewed in private with the pastor, and they are to be asked in front of the congregation as part of the public commitment to be church members.

1. Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God?
2. Have you been baptized by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ by an ordained Baptist minister after believing the gospel?
3. Do you believe Jesus Christ is the only Savior from sin and your only hope of eternal life?
4. Do you believe the gift of eternal life is only by the sovereign grace and choice of God through the life, death, and life of Jesus Christ?
5. Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ and want to spend the rest of your life following Him, serving Him, and obeying Him zealously?
6. As far as you know, from what you have heard and observed, do you agree with the doctrine taught and practiced by this church?
7. Does this include the doctrines of election and predestination, and that regeneration precedes belief of the gospel and conversion?
8. Will you love these people, serve them, forgive them, forbear them, and allow them their Christian liberties as you have opportunity?

9. Will you submit to them in matters of personal judgment, if a case ever arises, as found in Matt 18:15-17 and I Corinthians 6:1-8?
10. Will you submit to the pastor in areas where he must rule, such as defining gray areas, liberties, and ruling in subjective situations?
11. Will you work to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as peacemakers, rejecting bitterness and strife, and not sowing discord?
12. Will you faithfully assemble with us every time you can and strive to perfect this church for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ?
13. Will you support the church, the pastor, our evangelistic efforts, and the poor through your financial giving according to God's word?
14. Will you seek to walk close to the Lord and away from the world to maintain a godly and holy life to be a spiritual asset to this church?
15. Will you remember that the church is where you love and serve others much more than where you are loved and served by others?

## #1 ... Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

- We are a local church of Jesus Christ, so we first ask this important question.
- This is the glorious question Philip asked the eunuch before his baptism.
- This is the faith that overcomes the world and great mystery of godliness.
- Our church is built on Jesus Christ, and we want Him preeminent always.
- The words are simple, but our doctrine of sonship is drastically different.
- The great bond in a local church is Jesus Christ ... think about communion!

#2 ... Have you been baptized by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ by an ordained Baptist minister after believing the gospel?

- As we saw at Pentecost in Acts 2, baptism is a prerequisite to membership.
- Only Baptist baptism has authority by virtue of an administrator from Christ.
- Bible baptism, or Baptist baptism, is baptism of believers of the gospel only.
- What about a Presby sprinkling or Charismatic immersion? God forbid!
- A website article proves Baptist authority for ministerial ordinances ... [here](#).
- Since Baptist baptism requires a Baptist preacher, a church does indirectly.

#3 ... Do you believe Jesus Christ is the only Savior from sin and your only hope of eternal life?

- Salvation by Jesus Christ is foundational truth clearly stated at Pentecost.
- This question is for personal faith in Jesus Christ as your very own Saviour.
- This question is comparable to the jailor's question and answer he heard.
- This question is comparable to what Peter explained to Cornelius in Acts 10.
- We reject any other form of doctrine involving man in the gift of eternal life.

#4 ... Do you believe the gift of eternal life is only by the sovereign grace and choice of God through the life, death, and life of Jesus Christ?

- The previous question was more personal and this question more doctrinal.
- As Baptists, we publicly declare against pope, Mary, and sacramentalism.
- Our doctrine of unconditional eternal life is very different from all others.
- We do not want even the smell or suspicion of trust in any other means.
- We are Calvinists in general for classification, but actually hyper-Calvinists.
- We hold strictly to monergistic salvation by the second Adam's obedience.

#5 ... Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ and want to spend the rest of your life following Him, serving Him, and obeying Him zealously?

- Beyond faith, we want those joining us to love, serve, and obey our Lord.
- The devils believe and tremble, but God's elect love, serve, and obey Jesus.
- Our commitment to Christ is not an alter call but rather a life of discipleship.
- We must have more than an intellectual change – we want a committed life.

#6 ... As far as you know, from what you have heard and seen, do you agree with the doctrine taught and practiced by this church?

- There is only one faith – the faith once delivered to churches by apostles.
- If you do not believe all that we do, then convert or find another church.
- If you do not trust our approach to the Bible for all else, then start a church.
- We are very reasonable in this question, allowing conditional differences.
- No discussion of differences (discord) and Berean-like reception to teaching.



#7 ... Does this include the doctrines of election and predestination, and that regeneration precedes belief of the gospel and conversion?

- Truth about Jesus and salvation has been identified but specifically here.
- Distinguishing doctrine we hold is election, predestination, and monergism.
- Not only are we monergistic, but we are hyper-Calvinistic about quickening.
- While God has saved us from preaching these all the time, we do love them.

#8 ... Will you love these people, serve them, forgive them, forbear them, and allow them their Christian liberties as you have opportunity?

- Jesus taught the identifying mark of His disciples to be brotherly love.
- Love is the greatest as we have taught carefully and with detailed evidence.
- This is a huge commitment members make to treat the body as Paul taught.
- You cannot get upset and stop performing these duties you owe each man.
- God's providence created the members that should loyally serve each other.

#9 ... Will you submit to them in matters of personal judgment, if a case ever arises, as found in Matthew 18:15-17 and I Corinthians 6:1-8?

- This is the due process clearly taught by Jesus and Paul for small offences.
- New member classes go through this due process plainly and repeatedly.
- This passage and its application have been taught many times recently.
- There is nothing complicated, difficult, or obscure about this simple remedy.
- Paul said we should choose to be defrauded rather than disrupt church unity.

#10 ... Will you submit to the pastor in areas where he must rule, such as defining gray areas, liberties, and judging in subjective situations?

- This simple part of N.T. churches is clearly written (Heb 13:7,17; I Tim 5:17; etc.).
- This is no different or more difficult to grasp than husbands or fathers ruling.
- Someone must decide at times ... Jesus prepared and assigned men to do it.
- There is nothing complicated, difficult, or obscure about this simple remedy.
- Churches and pastors have liberty like individuals and families in the church.

#11 ... Will you work to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as peacemakers, rejecting bitterness and strife, and not sowing discord?

- Church peace and unity takes the work of each to get along with each other.
- God hates bitterness and strife that spring up in churches to destroy many.
- Bitterness is an offence not flushed ... strife is by only one cause – pride.
- God hates those that sow discord, no matter intentions or gentle questions.
- It is our mutual job toward each other to make peace ... keep it ... enforce it.

#12 ... Will you faithfully assemble with us every time you can and strive to perfect this church for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ?

- Church attendance is no matter of liberty, but includes *one another* duties.
- Wednesdays are assemblies just like Sundays, chosen by pastor and church.
- Perfecting the church for God's glory requires saving each other member.
- There is absolutely no room for members only attending without this work.
- Any withdrawal without Bible due process obviously violates this command.

#13 ... Will you support the church, the pastor, our evangelistic efforts, and the poor through your financial giving according to God's word?

- Giving is not an option, but rather God's commandment in both testaments.
- It does not matter if heretics now reject tithing, it is a principle of the Bible.
- What does it mean "according to God's word"? ... *Liberally and cheerfully!*
- There is absolutely no room for members only attending without this duty.
- After your promise in this matter, we trust the honor system (God's honor).

#14 ... Will you seek to walk close to the Lord and away from the world to maintain a godly and holy life to be a spiritual asset to this church?

- GOD Jehovah is holy, and there is no way to please Him without holiness.
- It is a terrible shame that Paul wept about belly worshippers at Philippi.
- If you are not committed to holy living, most churches will not require it.
- This is work you must do in private and at home to not grieve God's Spirit.
- A church will only be holy and truly please Christ by its members' holiness.
- Remember Achan and 36 dead. We must discourage or exclude Achans.



#15 ... Will you remember that the church is where you love and serve others much more than where you are loved and served by others?

- JFK said it well about America ... *Ask not what your country can do for you ...*
- You join this church for God's glory and to serve Christ by serving others.
- Paul taught from Jesus that it is more blessed to give than to receive.
- It is sinful selfishness and pride that expects others to love and serve you.
- The greatest in the kingdom of Jesus Christ are the servants just like Him.
- This is the end of the 15 questions we have used for decades to join us.

#16 ... Do you understand the 15 questions, promise again to keep these N.T. rules you agreed to, and are joining voluntarily without any duress?

- We have not pressed you to join, and you seek it voluntarily by your choice.
- We never present any for membership without explaining these questions.
- You have reviewed these questions in private and now promised in public.
- These are only a sample of Bible duties the apostles required of members.
- You further agree that you will learn and obey any new things God reveals.

#17 ... Do you understand the only way you can end membership with our approval (not exclusion) and God's approval is by N.T. due process?

- We have not pressed you to join, and you seek it voluntarily by your choice.
- It is a voluntary choice, but similar to marriage, it includes promised actions.
- We have detailed membership commitment in our church due process #21.
- You can only end your promises here by a Bible process or church approval.
- If the church is in sin error, there are clear, kind ways to pursue saving us.
- If the church is in error and will not repent, you must withdraw to be right.

We will use these questions in a couple weeks to recommit to apostolic faith and practice God has taught us, like couples may renew wedding vows to restate love and loyalty.

# What Will You Do for Your Church?

- Will you pray for it ... with all prayer, supplication, and watching?
- Will you prepare for its assemblies ... to honor God like a governor?
- Will you participate in assemblies ... to help congregational worship?
- Will you protect its doctrine, practice, peace, unity, and communion?
- Will you provide for it every way you are able with effort, time, money?
- Will you promote it passionately as others do things far inferior to it?

**To work the way it should by God's Spirit,  
a church must love Christ passionately.  
There can be no shortcut to this key  
goal and purpose of each local  
church and each member.**

# For Further Study of Local N.T. Churches

**What Is a Church?** ... Four PPT Sermons (2024) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/what-is-a-church-1/>

**What Is a Great Church?** ... PPT Sermon (2024) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/what-is-a-great-church/>

**Two Mountains** ... Sermons & Outline (2024) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/two-mountains-1/>

**Real Insider Information** ... Sermons & Outline (2022) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/index/year-2022/real-insider-information/>

**Pillar and Ground of Truth** ... Sermon & Outline (2006) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/index/year-2006/pillar-and-ground-of-the-truth/>

**Day of Pentecost** ... Sermons & Outline (2017) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/index/year-2017/the-day-of-pentecost/>

**Furniture & Fixtures** ... PPT Sermon (2020) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/index/year-2020/furniture-feasts-sacrifices/>

**A Preaching Service** ... Sermon Outline (2012) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/index/year-2012/a-preaching-service/>

**Every Joint** ... Sermon & Outline (2005) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/index/year-2005/every-joint/>

**Perilous Times** ... Sermons & Outline (2000) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/index/year-2000/perilous-times/>

**Ancient Landmarks** ... Sermons & Outline (2006) ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/index/year-2006/ancient-landmarks/>

**More CHURCH Sermons** ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/index/church/>

**More CHURCH Documents** ... <https://letgodbettrue.com/bible-topics/index/church/>

# For Further Study of Duties of Members

- **Great Church Members ...** <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/great-church-members/>
- **Victorious Christian Living ...** <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2023/victorious-christian-living-1/>
- **Higher Ground ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/higher-ground.pdf>
- **Ancient Landmarks ...** <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2006/ancient-landmarks/>
- **One Another Duties ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/one-another.pdf>
- **Lesson of the Locust ...** <https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/index/year-2006/lesson-of-the-locust/>
- **Purpose of the Church ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/purpose-of-the-church.pdf>
- **Which Every Joint Supplies ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/every-joint.pdf>
- **Building Up Yourselves ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/building-up-yourselves.pdf>
- **Life of the Church ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/life-of-the-church.pdf>
- **Pillar and Ground ...** <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/pillar-and-ground-of-the-truth/sermon.php>

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