

Membership Matters

Answerbook




Newcraigs
Church Kirkcaldy



Membership

Here at Newcraigs we believe the bible clearly speaks of a body of believers who were committed to worshipping God together and serving one another. We see that God "added" to their number daily (Acts 2:47) and we recognise a consistent biblical metaphor for the church is that of a body - an intimate functioning body, not just a worldwide 'cyber' body. We believe that by committing to the local church, we truly get to build our lives together, reaching out to friends together and being sent as we make disciples as we go.,reaching the nations together.

What does church membership look like in the Bible?

Looking back to the first church in Acts gives us a model of what belonging to a church looks like in practice. Luke tells us they “devoted themselves” to the church in various ways.

“Devoted” is a strong word that involves our hearts and minds, our time, our energy and our passion. This devotion does not come from a decision to “do the right thing”, but rather from a life changing encounter with the living God through Jesus Christ.

1) We devote ourselves to the Word of God.

We have the apostles teaching in the Bible which is not just a book full of good advice; it is God’s revealed will for our lives. We therefore not only recognise the authority of the Bible as final in what we believe and how we should live but we are also committed to studying it that we may live to please our Father who loves us and has saved us.

We look at questions in small groups called Growth Groups during the week to apply the biblical teaching we have heard on Sundays and encourage personal study of the Bible for all our members.

‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common.

Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved'. Acts 2:42-47

2) We devote ourselves to one another.

Becoming a Christian is not an individual business just as playing football is not about individuals. With God as our Father we have been adopted into his family. With His love in our hearts we love one another thereby revealing to those who don't know Him who we belong to.

For members this will include a practical expression of:

- being committed to meeting together on Sundays
- getting involved in serving on a Sunday team
- meeting in a Growth Group regularly (see our Growth Groups Leaflet)

3) We devote ourselves to Christ.

The cross is central to our salvation and breaking bread together brings us back again and again to what Jesus has done for us: in the past the penalty is paid for our sin; in the present His victory sets us free from the enslaving power of sin, and in the future we will one day be free from the very presence of sin.

4) We devote ourselves to prayer.

Praying is an expression of the relationship we have with our heavenly Father. We are recognising He is in charge, that we are dependent on Him and we want to live His way. Reading through Acts we find that the church gathering together to pray was central to who they were.

We encourage every member to participate as they take opportunities to pray for individuals via a prayer diary. Growth groups and monthly prayer meetings are also places you will be able to get involved with ministry and pray for wider issues and initiatives.

5) An overflow of giving.

The image of throwing a few coppers into the plate at the end of a church service couldn't be further from the joy filled overflow of generous giving seen in the early church. With hearts on fire for God they recognised that everything they had belonged to Him and was motivated by a deep sense of devotion to Christ and commitment to the mission he had called them to. (See our information pack on giving)

6) An overflow of worship.

There was something infectious about these first Christians filled with the Spirit and overflowing with worship, each bringing something to God, or from God to encourage and strengthen the church. We encourage members therefore to participate wholeheartedly in our times together!

7) A growing church

Many are under the impression today that the church is boring and irrelevant whilst at the same time longing for community and purpose in their lives. Yet when God captivates hearts the results look like the growing church in Acts 2.

Good news travels fast and changed lives are an attractive reason for others to find out what has happened. Knowing God, you have the privilege of having a story worth sharing. The gospel literally means 'good news' and as Jesus was sent to bring it to us so He sends us to bring it to others. In Newcraigs we will regularly provide encouragement to help you grow in sharing your faith with others.

Becoming a member at Newcraigs is saying "count me in with all God is doing here!" So the first step is getting involved! Come to our Sunday meetings and our mid-week growth groups.

The second step is to find out more about membership at Newcraigs by reading through our 'Looking at Membership' booklet. Ask for a copy!