



Trinity
BAPTIST CHURCH

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Trinity Baptist Church
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CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

There is a HUGE difference between a *church* and a club...a charity...a civic organization. Unfortunately, a majority have adopted the “take-it-or-leave-it” mentality when it comes to the church. If they become unhappy for some reason, they will simply move on to another one.

Let us be clear at the outset of this lesson: the Bible never describes a universal, invisible church. In every instance found in the New Testament, the word *church* always refers to a local, visible, identifiable church body (the church at Corinth, the church at Ephesus, etc.). After the rapture, when the saints have been gathered together in Heaven, the church will then be universal...but it will not be invisible!

1. The **QUALIFICATIONS** For Church Membership

- a. **SALVATION.** The Bible tells us that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (Ephesians 5:25). It only stands to reason, then, that a person who desires to join a church is saved by the blood of Jesus Christ (see Acts 2:41; Ephesians 2:8-9).
- b. **BAPTISM.** This is not a part of salvation; it is the first step of obedience following salvation. This ordinance pictures the death, burial, and the resurrection of Christ. By participating, a person is publically identifying himself with that finished work of Christ on the cross (see Acts 8:36-38).
- c. It has been the historical practice of Baptist churches to add the believer to membership at the time he is baptized. One should understand and be in full agreement with the church’s doctrinal statement before being baptized.

NOTE: While baptism is not a part of one’s salvation, it is essential for service and spiritual growth. If one is not obedient in this first matter, he cannot be obedient in other matters.

2. The **MEANS** Of Church Membership

A person can join the church in one of several ways:

- A. **By baptism.** If a person has never been scripturally baptized, they may candidate for such. Upon the acceptance by the church membership, the person is then added to the membership roll.
- B. **By letter.** Any believer who has been scripturally baptized in another church of like faith may request to have his letter of membership transferred. The request for a membership letter is formally done by the church secretary.
- C. **By statement.** On rare occasions, it is necessary to receive a person into membership based upon their personal testimony of salvation and baptism. This is usually done when a former church no longer exists; if the former church refuses to forward a letter; or, if the person seeking membership has not been a church member for an extended period.

What so many fail to understand is that church membership has its **privileges** and **responsibilities**. Unlike a club membership, where one pays dues and expects to be served, the church is a body that only functions when every member plays their part (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-18).

PRIVILEGES

- a family setting: friends, loved ones, etc.
- a teaching environment, where others of like faith learn together
- social functions with others who share in common goals
- buildings in which to get married and buried
- comfort in times of need
- counseling and spiritual assistance

RESPONSIBILITIES

- a body only functions when every member is doing what they were designed to do
- while it is nice when people show up for functions, it is imperative that members serve in those functions as well: teaching, organizing, visiting, praying, giving financially, etc.

Our church believes Bible to be our only source of instruction and doctrine (2 Timothy 3:16). From this stand, we have adopted our *Articles of Faith* and *By-Laws*, documents that outline the responsibilities of every member.

The Solemn and Sacred Covenant of Trinity Baptist Church

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully, and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children in the things of Christ; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courteous in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay. We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.