

Biblical Membership: Participation, Accountability, and Presence

Acts 2:36-47 NKJV

³⁶ “Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

A Vital Church Grows

⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,

⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

I have been in every service since September 7, 2025, at Foreman Memorial.

I am fascinated by the number of people who feel the need to communicate their displeasure at the changes that are taking place at Foreman Memorial. All of them have indicated that they are members of Foreman Memorial. Yet, I have not seen them or been introduced to them. Invincible and non-attending members with all the rights and privileges of membership is not a category that is in the bible. TIME TO PURGE THE ROLLS OF NON-ATTENDING MEMBERS.

Pastor Eddie

Here is a great question that I just received: What does the bible have to say about non-attending church members that have all the rights and privileges of church membership?

Here is my answer:

From a biblical and ecclesiological standpoint—particularly within historic Baptist and congregational polity—the idea of **non-attending members retaining full rights and privileges of church membership** is difficult to justify. Scripture consistently ties *membership* to *active participation, accountability, and submission to spiritual oversight*, not merely to one’s name on a roll.

Biblical Membership: Participation, Accountability, and Presence (2)

Here is a structured biblical analysis.

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Scripture consistently ties membership to active participation, accountability, and submission to spiritual oversight, not merely to one's name on a roll.

Acts 2:42 NKJV

⁴² **And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

Here is a **reverse version for clarity**, expressing the truth of Acts 2:42 (NKJV) by stating the opposite to sharpen understanding:

Reverse for Clarity — Acts 2:42

They did **not** drift casually from the teaching of Scripture, but remained **steadfast** in the apostles' doctrine.

They did **not** live in isolation or spiritual independence, but devoted themselves to **fellowship** within the body.

They did **not** neglect the Lord's Table or treat worship as optional, but were committed to the **breaking of bread**.

They did **not** rely on self-sufficiency or prayerlessness, but persevered together in **prayers**.

Clarifying Emphasis:

A church that abandons doctrine, fellowship, the ordinances, or prayer is not merely "less active"—it has reversed the very pattern of New Testament devotion.

1. Church Membership in Scripture Is Relational, Not Nominal**Biblical Truth:**

The New Testament never presents church membership as a passive or symbolic status.

Acts 2:42 NKJV

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Modern-Day Illustrations**1. Marriage Without Presence**

A husband who claims marital rights but never comes home, never speaks, never provides, and never participates is not practicing marriage—he is violating it. Marriage is relational, not contractual. So is church membership.

2. Team Roster vs. Team Participation

An athlete listed on a roster but never attends practice, never plays, and never shows up for games may be legally listed, but functionally irrelevant. The New Testament knows nothing of "**roster-only**" Christians.

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3. Family Name Without Family Life

Having the family surname does not make someone a functioning member of the household if they never sit at the table, never help carry responsibilities, and never engage relationally.

Additional Scriptures

Acts 4:32 NKJV

Sharing in All Things

³² Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

Romans 12:5 NKJV

⁵ So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

1 John 1:7 — Fellowship is lived, not merely claimed.

1 John 1:7 NKJV

⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

2. Scripture Commands Faithful Gathering

Biblical Truth:

Persistent non-attendance is treated as spiritually dangerous, not neutral.

Hebrews 10:25 NKJV

²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:25 — Reverse for Clarity

²⁵ Because the Day of Christ is drawing near, believers **must** actively gather together.

Instead of **withdrawing** from the fellowship of the church,

we are to **encourage**, **strengthen**, and **urge one another** on in faith.

Faithful assembly is **not optional** for the Christian life —

it is God's appointed means for mutual exhortation, perseverance, and spiritual readiness as we await the Lord's return.

Modern-Day Illustrations

1. Coal Removed From the Fire

A coal removed from the fire quickly cools and darkens. Separation does not preserve heat—it extinguishes it. Fellowship is God's ordained means of spiritual endurance.

2. Physical Therapy Without Attendance

A patient who skips therapy appointments but expects healing misunderstands the process. Growth requires showing up.

3. Online Fitness Membership

Paying for a gym membership without ever entering the gym does not produce health. Spiritual health follows the same principle.

Additional Scriptures

Psalms 122:1 NKJV

¹ I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD."

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John 20:19 NKJV

¹⁹ Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were ^[a]assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace *be* with you.”

John 20:26 NKJV

²⁶ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!”

Acts 20:7 NKJV

⁷ Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.