

**Outside of a personal testimony of salvation and baptism,
are there requirements for active church membership?**

Presented to the Southwestern District Missionary Baptist Association
October 11, 2019

When an individual receives Salvation by Grace and presents themselves for membership, they are often asked by the pastor, “Do you promise to support this church with your prayers, presence and means?” Answering that question in the affirmative takes a brief moment to pledge a lifetime of duty. The whole duty of a child of God is contained within the sixty-six books of the Bible. The Church Covenant also serves as a brief summary of a member’s duties and responsibilities. A lifetime of study and patient attention to the leadership of the Holy Spirit should be anyone’s reasonable effort. We will condense those responsibilities for the purpose of this report to discuss the requirements for active church membership after a personal testimony of salvation and scriptural baptism.

First, the active church member should pray. Prayer is communicating with our Lord and Savior. No one is saved without prayer and no one can serve the Lord or the church very well without regular and sincere prayer. You should pray for your church as a whole and the individual members as the need arises. Significant prayer can be devoted to the leadership of the church in earnest expectation for the Lord to send strength, wisdom and guidance for the blessings of all. When there are sick and hurting among the members, an extra effort for prayer should be given with compassion and faith. Jesus set an incredible example with His prayer life. The fourth paragraph of the Church Covenant admonishes us, “...to remember each other in prayer”. (Luke 18:1; Luke 21:36; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Second, it really goes without saying, but an active member is required to be present. This would seem like the easiest requirement. Yet, it is sometimes the most difficult for some to accomplish. Members should be more than just a name on a roll. It is shameful to attend so infrequently people question whether you are a member or a visitor. The active church member should maintain a habit of regular attendance. This helps increase the bond of love among the members; advances the knowledge and doctrinal understanding of the member and promotes prosperity and spirituality within the church. You can’t serve very well if you’re not there. It lifts the Spirit of the service to see as many members as possible in attendance. Sunday morning services aren’t the only times attendance is a blessing. Every meeting of the church should be devotedly supported. In particular, business meetings of the church are best served by a full representation of the members of the body. It is difficult for a small group within the church to make decisions that represent the whole. Revivals bless more of the church if they are there to be revived. Vacation Bible School, Bible Study and Prayer Meetings all excel in blessings the more members make it a point to be there and show their support. (Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:25)

The next requirement is the most difficult to discuss but no less necessary to fulfill. The Bible speaks directly about the need and purpose of tithes and offerings in the Old and New Testament. An active member should provide their means to the work of the church with a cheerful heart and for the right reasons. Finances are required to take care of regular maintenance and utilities for the building. However, the church should be equipped to look beyond its own

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walls. A church well supported financially can consider the special needs of the community, such as families in need and special situations. The second paragraph of the Church Covenant compels us, "...to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel through all nations." (Leviticus 27:30; 2 Chronicles 31:5-10; Malachi 3:8; Luke 11:42; Acts 4:34-35)

Another requirement of an active church member is a singular command of our Lord and Savior. There are two ordinances within the church. The first ordinance, baptism, is only to be administered once. The second is to be participated in regularly for the remainder of the believer's life. The Lord's Supper is a powerful, spiritual experience of whom only baptized believers can participate. It is a time of deep reflection on the sacrifice of Jesus. It should be used as a time of sacred worship and self examination of the believer's relationship with the Lord. Churches vary in their frequency of administration. The member should be devoted to attend whenever their church provides the opportunity. Devotion to this ordinance will promote greater spiritual health for the believer and a healthier church body as a whole. (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:26-28)

Lastly, the active church member is required to be "active". In order for you to be considered an active member, you must take an active role in the church assembly. You are not there just to fill a seat. You should be an active participant wherever the Holy Spirit leads. An active member must be ready and willing to serve when called upon by your church body. This applies to any job, no matter the size of said position. This active Christian service will overflow from the church into your family and public life. As Paul addressed the church in Rome, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1 KJV)"

Respectfully Submitted,
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