



Church Membership

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Emmanuel Baptist Church Swanage

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Renewing lives and making them new
emmanuel baptist church

EBC



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Church Membership

One of the things that has marked Baptists out from other church denominations, right from our beginnings in the seventeenth century, has been our understanding of Church Membership. Membership in the local church should be one of the most fulfilling aspects of your Christian walk.

Why Bother with Church Membership...?

Belonging to the church has historically been a priority for Christians. At Emmanuel Baptist Church (EBC), that belonging is expressed through Church Membership which is a covenant (or commitment) to be in relationship with other believers, in which we agree to walk together as disciples of Jesus, grow together, mature one another, worship, and serve together in mission.

Church Membership should never be viewed as joining a club or organisation. Properly understood, Church Membership tangibly signifies our commitment to Christ, our commitment to other believers and also their commitment to us.

Who Is Church Membership For...?

Church Membership is for those who are firstly, committed to Christ, and secondly, committed to EBC for the forthcoming 'season' of their faith journey. To become and remain a Member of Emmanuel Baptist Church you must:

- have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and have a personal relationship with Him.
- baptism by immersion or infusion is not a pre-requisite, but it is encouraged.
- with God's help, be seeking to live in a way which honours Christ and the Bible.
- seek to serve Christ within the Church and beyond.
- be willing to live under the authority of Christ as also expressed through his body, the church.

What we believe is formally defined in our Articles of Faith see our web-site, www.emmanuelbc.org.uk/.

Benefits & Responsibilities...

To be a part of the Body of Christ as expressed through Membership is a high privilege, which carries equally high responsibility.

Benefits include fellowship; encouragement; prayer; pastoral support; love; worship; discipleship; the ability to identify and exercise your spiritual gifts. While our Church Meetings are open to all, the important decisions like the appointment of Ministers

and staff, stewardship of finances, and the organisation of our mission and ministry are decided by our members only.

Responsibilities include regularly attending church services, prayer meetings and Church Meetings; seeking the mind of Christ; supporting the vision of the church; to love, to pray for and to encourage others; giving financially supporting the maintenance and mission of the church; serving where possible and living in a way which is honouring to God.

Understanding Church Members' Meetings

It's part of Baptist conviction that each local church is free to seek and respond to the will of God as they understand it. Although EBC is a church under the Lordship of Christ with no external authority of bishops or councils, we are part of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) and the Old Baptist Union (OBU). Both organisations provide valuable ministry resources, support, and assistance, especially when we need an external reference point. As such, EBC is also financially self-supporting under God.

So, the final responsibility in discerning the mind of Christ rests not with the BUGB or OBU, but with the Church Members facilitated by our leaders at our quarterly members meetings (normally January, March, June, and September). These are occasions when we seek the will of God through prayer and mutual listening. At these gatherings, we consider important ministry and mission decisions which need to be made. We

acknowledge that Jesus is present in our meetings, making his mind known to those who come seeking to know and do his will. This desire to seek a consensus of what Jesus wants us to do as a church, is the reason why we do not use a postal vote system.

Spiritual leaders are God's gift to the church. Their wisdom, maturity, judgement, and Christlikeness should be recognised. However, the Church Meeting does not exist to simply 'rubber stamp' the wishes of the Leadership Team, but rather has a serious spiritual role in accountability.

This is defined in our Constitution, see our web-site www.emmanuelbc.org.uk/.

Would You Like to Consider Church Membership...?

If you would like to further consider Church Membership at EBC, just speak to one of the Leadership Team and they will be pleased to 'get the ball rolling'.

The process is very simple:

Firstly, a couple of Church Members will be asked to meet with you so that they can learn more about you; hear your spiritual story; share a little more detail about EBC and Church Membership and answer any questions that you might have.

Secondly, assuming both you and they are comfortable with proceeding further, your visitors will be left with the happy task of commending you for Membership at the next Church Members' Meeting. During the Members' Meeting they will share a thumbnail sketch of how you became a Christian, your current outworking of faith in Christ and commitment to EBC.

Finally, you will be publicly welcomed into Membership at Sunday morning Communion service.