



HOPE
PRESBYTERIAN

Becoming A Member

When we become Christians and are baptised, the scriptures tell us we are “baptised into the body of Christ”. We take this to mean baptised into the world-wide body of Christ. This means that we become “positional” members of the Church at large - members of the world-wide family of God. However, it is also clear in scripture that positional members are to become participating members in local expressions of the body of Christ.

For example:

- Positional members are told not to “neglect meeting together” Heb 10:25; an obvious referral to a local manifestation of the world-wide Church.
- Positional members are to identify and use their spiritual gift in local expressions of the world-wide Church (Rom 12:6f, Eph 4:7-11, 1 Cor 12:7f, 1 Peter 4:9f)
- Positional members should become participating members in local Churches through the giving of their financial resources consistently (1 Cor 16:1f).

Members of One Another

The scriptures refer to this local expression of membership as being “**Members of one another**”.

For example: 1 Cor 12:24, Eph 3:6, 4:25, 5:30, Col 3:15 etc.

Why is Church Membership Necessary?

- It is Biblical - see references on previous page
- We as a body need to know who we are pastorally responsible for - who are the “sheep” God calls us to care for and tend e.g. Jer 31:10, Ezekiel 34:1, 1 Peter 5:2-3
- We as a body need to know who we can look to for commitment in service, the exercise of spiritual gifts, ministries and responsible giving.
- We as a body need to know who has constitutional rights when it comes to voting on constitutional matters.
- We as a body need to know who we are accountable to as we steward ministries and finances.
- It counteracts the unbiblical attitude of some in the wider body of Christ who float around congregations at their whim. In membership we are committing ourselves to each other under the Lord.

How do we Define a Member?

“Someone with a heart commitment to God as Father, Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, on-going growth in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and a commitment to the fellowship of this congregation expressed practically by:

- Public acknowledgement
- Faithfully joining in the body life of this congregation in worship, service, giving and prayer.
- Being relationally joined to others preferably expressed in participation of a cell group or interest/affinity group etc.
- Evidence of love and loyalty to the body and the fostering of truth and unity (not precluding disagreement, challenge or constructive criticism)”.

The Benefits of Membership

- It identifies a person as a genuine believer. Eph 2:19, Rom 12:5.
- It provides a spiritual family to support and encourage them in their walk with Christ. Gal 6.1-2, Heb 10:24-25.
- It gives them a place to discover and use their spiritual gifts in ministry. 1 Cor 12:4-27.
- It places them under the spiritual protection of godly leaders. Heb 13:17, Acts 20:28-29.
- It gives them the accountability they need to grow. Eph 5:21

There are Two Options for Membership;

- **Full Membership (full PCANZ)** is for people who have publicly professed their faith in Jesus Christ and publicly expressed their intention to live their discipleship as part of the congregation at Hope Presbyterian. Such people are able to vote at congregational meetings regarding expenditure, calling of a new minister, National Church issues and are eligible to be Elders.
- **Associate Membership (non PCANZ)** – these people are similar to the above but *differ in one aspect*: they do not wish their membership to extend to the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ. They identify with the local and international mission of Hope Presbyterian only. Such people would **not be able to vote** as full members on issues affecting the national Church, but they can vote on matters relating to calling a new minister, expenditure and local Church issues. They are unable to be Elders.

Where does Membership Place me as far as the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is Concerned?

As we are a member of the PCANZ then people who are members also have membership rights according to the Presbyterian Book of Order. You may ask for a copy to look at from the Church Office.

Public Commitment made by Members on Membership Sunday

- Do you confess your faith in God as your Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord and the Holy Spirit as your helper and guide?
- Do you promise, with God's help, to serve the Lord and to walk in His ways?
- In committing yourself to the body of Christ that worships here at Hope Presbyterian, do you promise to:
 - i. Foster unity and fellowship in the Holy Spirit
 - ii. And give due respect to the leadership in the church
 - iii. To work for the extension of the Kingdom of God
 - iv. To exercise your ministry under the leading of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the body of Christ?

How do I Become a Member?

Through the year we have opportunities for membership and once a year we give current members the opportunity to renew their membership vows. We ask those who would like to become members to attend a membership evening and fulfil the criteria.

If you would like to become a member or have some questions then please contact the Hope Hornby office on 980 2296 or info@hopechurch.net.nz