

# Why Membership?

At EPC Longview, *we are a faith family walking together to know Christ and to make him known by engaging in dynamic worship, pursuing spiritual wisdom, investing in deep relationships and affecting social renewal.* We are committed to helping everyone who attends our church in this wonderful journey of knowing Christ and growing as His disciples. Therefore, we shepherd, value, and care for everyone who attends our church - members and non-members- with equal passion and diligence. Yet, though we shepherd all who attend indiscriminately, we believe that individuals and families becoming formal members of the church is an important part of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

For us, membership is far more than having your name written on a role. It isn't an administrative designation, but a formal and valued public commitment between family members. Church membership is not a barometer of spiritual health, nor does membership convey spiritual merit, grace, or holiness to the member. Rather through membership we say to one another "I am at your disposal. I will be with you through the ups and downs, I will work to submit my interests, my ambitions, to the greater need of my faith family. Why? Because I believe this is the place Jesus Christ has called me to be with him. The place I am to learn to love my enemies, bear with each other in love, use my spiritual gifts, learn to speak with one another in love, receive training in godliness, share in the joys and sorrows of one another."

Likewise we believe Scripture teaches role responsibility and accountability for church leaders and their people (e.g. Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:2-5). Membership provides clarity as to whom we, as Christians, are specifically responsible or accountable. It enables one to participate in the life of the church more abundantly through the ability to vote and serve in leadership capacities. Finally, it clarifies the difference of accountability between all Christians for whom we are to love and pray and encourage and rebuke and support, and accountability for those into whom we are to pour most directly and fully.

So, though we recognizing that church membership is not a true test of one's commitment to Christ or his church, we do value the membership process as an important part of the journey of a follower of Jesus Christ.

