

# **“We Are Members Of God’s Family”**

## **Ephesians 2:11-22 \* 11/11/07**

### *I. Grace’s Foundational “Covenant” Documents*

A. *What’s a Vision Statement for?*

**It describes what you hope to \_\_\_\_\_.**

B. *What’s a Mission Statement for?*

**It describes what you’re going to \_\_\_\_\_.**

C. *What’s a Core Values Statement for?*

**It describes your key \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.**

D. *What’s a Statement of Faith for?*

**It describes what we \_\_\_\_\_ doctrinally.**

### **Grace’s Mission Statement**

*We are members of God’s family, dedicated to the teachings of Jesus and committed to seeking God’s will. In our church we:*

**Glorify God through worship,**

**Reach others through evangelism,**

**Assist our community through service,**

**Care for each other through fellowship,**

**Equip our members through Biblical instruction.**

### *II. Our Need For The Local Church*

A. *What do many people think about the ‘Church’ today?*

B. *Did Jesus intend for the ‘Church’ to exist?*

C. *In Ephesians 2:11-22, what does Jesus do with us once we become his followers?*

D. *What do you say to someone who says, “I don’t need to become a member of a local church; I’m already a member of the ‘Universal’ church!”*

### *E. Truths About The Local Church In Scripture*

1. *Most of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the New Testament were written to local congregations.*

2. *There are more than 30 \_\_\_\_\_ in the NT which can only be obeyed in the local church. Like what?*

### *III. The Concept of Membership Here At Grace*

A. *For Paul, to be a ‘member’ of God’s Building, or a ‘member’ of Christ’s Body meant what?*

B. *Why then do we still have a formal, membership process?*

1. *It follows the model of the \_\_\_\_\_.*  
a. *What ‘hoops’ did people have to go through in the early church?*

2. *It reinforces the covenant of \_\_\_\_\_ which Christ asks of us in church life.*  
a. *Church membership is like what?*

b. *What does ‘marriage’ do for a relationship?*

3. *It gives \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for significant relationships to develop.*

4. *It provides \_\_\_\_\_, protection, and \_\_\_\_\_.*

## **“We Are Members Of God’s Family”**

### **Ephesians 2:11-22 \* 11/11/07**

#### *I. Grace’s Foundational “Covenant” Documents*

A. *What’s a Vision Statement for?*

**It describes what you hope to become.**

B. *What’s a Mission Statement for?*

**It describes what you’re going to do.**

C. *What’s a Core Values Statement for?*

**It describes your key ideas & convictions.**

D. *What’s a Statement of Faith for?*

**It describes what we believe doctrinally.**

#### **Grace’s Mission Statement**

*We are members of God’s family, dedicated to the teachings of Jesus and committed to seeking God’s will. In our church we:*

*Glorify God through worship,*

*Reach others through evangelism,*

*Assist our community through service,*

*Care for each other through fellowship,*

*Equip our members through Biblical instruction.*

#### *II. Our Need For The Local Church*

A. *What do many people think about the ‘Church’ today?*

**I can’t tell you how many people I’ve talked to over the years who claim to believe in God, but they do not believe in the church. And they’ll say stuff like, “I can worship God in my own way. I don’t need to go into some stuffy building with a bunch of stuffy people to experience God. I’m not into that organized religion thing.”**

B. *Did Jesus intend for the ‘Church’ to exist?*

**Absolutely. He said to Peter and the other disciples, “I will build my church.” He said, “Where two or more are gathered in my name, there am I with them.” (Matt.16:20). He told his apostles in the Great Commission to “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptize them, and teach them everything I have commanded you.” Those very words contain within them the understanding that**

**some type of order, some type of organization, some type of structure, of community, must exist. Ephesians tells us that Jesus ‘loved the church and gave himself for her’ (Eph.5:25)**

C. *In Ephesians 2:11-22, what does Jesus do with us once we become his followers?*

**We come to Jesus individually, we’re like stones, bricks. But does God leave us as solitary stones? No. He takes us living stones and builds us into a spiritual house, he fits us together with other Christians, other living stones to create this place, this community where God is experienced through Jesus Christ. I am saved to become a member of a new and dynamic family.**

D. *What do you say to someone who says, “I don’t need to become a member of a local church; I’m already a member of the ‘Universal’ church!”*

**Like Rick Warren says: when you get sick and are in the hospital, who’s going to come and visit you? The universal pastor? When you’re going through tough times in your life, who are you going to lean on? The universal small group? And what youth group will you send your children to? The universal youth group? Yes, we are part of a global family, and it’s wonderful, but when it comes to growing in my faith, and sharing my gifts in ministry, and giving and receiving the love of Christ, I need to be a member of a local church.**

E. *Truths About The Local Church In Scripture*

1. *Most of the letters in the New Testament were written to local congregations.*

2. *There are more than 30 commands in the NT which can only be obeyed in the local church.*

*Like what?*

**Love one another. Forgive one another. Bear with one another. Honor one another. Submit to one another...**

### III. The Concept of Membership Here At Grace

#### A. For Paul, to be a 'member' of God's Building, or a 'member' of Christ's Body meant what?

In Ephesians 2, Paul compares to the church to a building, and you and I are stones which God lays in to that building. So if you are a 'member of God's household', you are a vital, integral, connected part of the whole structure. If you're not physically present, you're not doing your part to hold up the rest of the building, then you're not a member.

Paul uses the word member again in 1 Corinthians 12:12 when he compares the church this time to a human body. "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts (or *members*), and though all its *parts/members* are many, they form one body." Though the metaphor is different, the idea is still the same. My arm cannot be a member of my body, unless it is connected in a living, breathing, physical, functional manner. Likewise, you cannot be a member of the local church, the local expression of Christ's body, unless you are connected in a living, breathing, physical, functional manner.

#### B. Why then do we still have a formal, membership process?

##### 1. It follows the model of the early Church.

##### a. What 'hoops' did people have to go through in the early church?

Paul says in Ephesians 2:20 that the church, God's building, is 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.' To become a member of the church, there were hoops to go through, if you want to call it that. There was a process. You first had to be a Christian – you had to have taken Jesus as the chief cornerstone of your life. And you would have had to have given evidence of that fact to the leaders of the congregation, even back in the first century, before they would have recognized you as a full and functioning member. And secondly, you would have had to submit to the authority and teachings of the apostles and prophets, Paul said. There was a body of instruction, a catechism, you would have had to receive. Maybe they didn't call it the "Mem-Sem", but they offered formal teaching and discipleship to new converts before they were recognized as full and functioning members of the church.

##### 2. It reinforces the covenant of commitment which Christ asks of us in church life.

##### a. Church membership is like what?

We often use the analogy of marriage here, when we talk about church membership. By formally joining Grace Baptist as a member, you are marrying us. If that's true, then those of you who are just regular attenders, there's one of two things we can say about you: you are either dating us, trying to figure out if you should take that step toward a deeper commitment, or you are shacking up with us: you like the church, but...for whatever reason you just want to keep your options open. You wanna sleep around.

##### b. What does 'marriage' do for a relationship?

When a man and a woman declare their love to each other through marriage, they are adding a powerful layer of commitment to their relationship which they never had before. Marriage is a covenant you make with each other. It's a holy promise you make to stand by that person for richer or poor, for better or worse, in sickness and in health. They won't just abandon each other at the first sign of trouble. They won't have one foot in the door and one foot out. And when that covenant is in place, their whole relationship changes, and joys and pleasures open for them that never opened before. It's the same with church membership.

##### 3. It gives time and space for significant relationships to develop.

##### 4. It provides ownership, protection, and accountability.

*From our Mem-Sem materials:*

Membership is about you getting to know others, and letting others know you. Pray together. Study together. Struggle together. Guess what? You'll get hurt along the way. And you will inflict hurt along the way. You'll be misunderstood, just as you will misunderstand. You'll laugh. You'll cry. You'll need to

**forgive. And you'll need to be forgiven. And through it all you will grow in Christ-like character and love, and at times you'll think that heaven has come to earth. But you will never experience this until you unpack your suitcase and call one local church body home. It doesn't mean you can't enjoy fellowship with other believers and churches. But relationships will be birthed and will grow only in a local church fellowship.**