

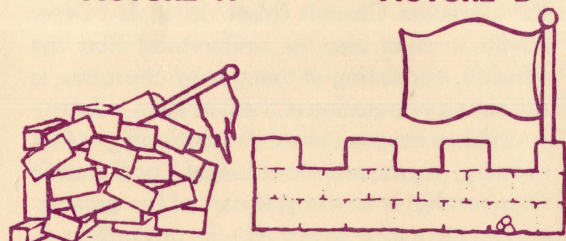
St. Paul, in writing to the Church at Corinth, taught them about the importance of local church organization. The Corinthian believers were very haphazard in their approach to worship and business. Paul reminded them that "God is not the author of confusion" (I Corinthians 14:33). Invariably where there is no organization, there is confusion. Every powerful and effective ministry submits to the sound principles of conscientious organization.

God is organized. You can see that by looking at the great precision at which the universe is operating. Jesus Himself organized crowds. David's men in the Old Testament were highly organized. Organization is necessary to the smooth functioning of any ministry.

St. Peter described Christians as "living stones" being built into a "spiritual house" (I Peter, Chapter 2). Little stones have to be formed, or cemented together in order to be useful and strong. Look at the pictures below. Picture "A" shows a pile of bricks. What use are they as merely an unorganized pile? Now take a look at Picture "B". You can see that the bricks which are organized and bound together can become very useful and strong as a team.

PICTURE "A"

PICTURE "B"



Local church membership is a way of becoming part of the team. You are a "living stone" that has joined itself with other "living stones" in the local assembly to build something beautiful, strong, and useful in the community.

So the first reason for local church membership is simply to become an integral team member in a well-balanced ministry.

SECONDLY, membership is one way of committing ourselves to one another in a bond of love. Love isn't really love if it doesn't involve a commitment.

For example, a young man who says he is in love with a young lady but refuses to commit himself to her in marriage. Does he really love her? Love includes committing oneself to the best interests of others.

The Bible instructs us to "love the brotherhood". If we really love the people of the local church, we should commit ourselves to them by joining them through church membership. Love is God's plan for success that is guaranteed to never fail (I Corinthians 13:8).

THIRD — Every believer has a desire to "belong." That desire is God given and is fully answered in proper commitment and relationships as members of the church.

FOURTH — It is apparent that the Early Church had some form of membership (Acts 5:13-14). Also, they kept a count of the people (Acts 1:15, 2:41, 4:4).

FIFTH — In order to have effective discipline there must be some expression of willingness to be disciplined, to be taught and held accountable. The scriptures are clear. The church is admonished to discipline itself (Titus 3:10, Romans 16:17-18, I Corinthians 5:1,2). Membership is a commitment to accept and exercise discipline.

SIXTH — For legal matters such as the sale or purchase of church property, there has to be a membership vote and details of that vote on legal documents. St. Paul told us to "be not slothful in business". From a business standpoint, it would be dangerously unwise and slothful of the local assembly to cease maintaining a membership roll.

SEVENTH — As member, you will have a voice in the church affairs. Being a member will give you the right to prayerfully help in planning the church's future by aiding in business decisions, pastoral selections, deacon selections, and other vitally important business.

EIGHTH — The military receives its chaplains based upon church membership rolls. The more members that a particular denomination has, the more military chaplains of that denomination are allowed to minister in the armed forces. In an effort to be fair and impartial, our government chose to do it this way. If you want more full gospel chaplains available for our servicement, your church membership helps assure the maximum number.

NINTH — It is of great value to identify — really identify — with a local body of believers. Those who remain on the periphery, the outward edges, are most vulnerable.

TENTH — It is good for you. A home church is really good for you. You will grow and learn together with other believers. You will experience the joy and excitement that comes from being in a growing church. As a member you will receive the satisfaction of knowing that you are being a great contribution to the health, growth, and stability of the church.