



Lake Effect Church

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## Covenant Membership: What is Covenant Membership?

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Life is better with people. Life is fun with people. God created us to thrive in community. That's why at Lake Effect Church, we value community. We believe the best expression of true community is covenant membership, which is a mutually-committed community of Christ followers. While you can remain our guest or even regular attendee of our services and events without it, the real value of what Lake Effect Church has to offer begins with covenant membership.

So what does "covenant membership," mean? To answer that question, we need to look at both what it is, and what it is not. "Membership" is not the card you carry that entitles you to show up when you please, consume only what you desire, and live however you wish on any day other than Sunday. The concept of "membership" has too often been associated with power, privilege, and an approach to the Christian life that grants a person all the "perks" of being thought of as a "believer" but with few or no responsibilities.

Through covenant membership, we at Lake Effect Church desire to call Christian men and

women to a more genuine, authentic, heartfelt, and holistic relationship with other Christians that entails commitment and discipleship, and provides us with a more effective means to display the glory of Christ.

As such the church is not a club we join in order to reap certain benefits at our leisure, whenever we please, but is rather a complex of relationships of mutual encouragement and spiritual accountability in which we partner with one another for the advancement of the gospel in the earth.

We are not asking that you affiliate with an organization or an institution. We are asking you to join yourself to other Christian men and women. We are asking you to commit yourself to pursue godliness together and to live in relationships of mutual accountability and encouragement. We are asking you to identify yourself as a vital, contributing partner in this community of faith. This isn't about someone's control over you, but your commitment to others. It is less about authority and more about accountability. It isn't about walking through life beneath someone, but next to them.

What, then, do we mean by the words “covenant membership” when it comes to the local church? To be a covenant member means that an individual is identified with, is accountable to, and is a contributing participant to this local expression of the body of Christ, in this case, Lake Effect Church. With covenant membership there are certain commitments that are made, responsibilities that are embraced, and relationships that are acknowledged.

“Covenant Membership” in a local church, therefore, is the way in which the individual is known to be intentionally committed to every other member of the congregation, and the congregation is known to be committed to the individual. Covenant membership means, “I now put myself under the care of the Elders (which includes the Lead Pastor) and I invite them to hold me accountable as a constituent member of this body.” That is the meaning of covenant membership.

In covenant membership there are three expressions of commitment:

- the commitment of all Christians in a local church one to another;
- the commitment of all Christians in a local church to leadership of the Elders whom God has raised up to lead them and shepherd them;

- the commitment of the Elders to the people whom they are to know, lead, feed, and protect.