



NEW LIFE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)

Vol. 15 No. 36

LORD’S DAY 04 SEPTEMBER 2011

ORDER OF WORSHIP

| | <i>Morning Service – 11am</i> | <i>Evening Service – 4pm</i> |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Prelude</i> | <i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i> | |
| <i>Call to Worship</i> | Psalm 145:1-3 | Psalm 46:10-11 |
| <i>Opening Hymn *</i> | RHC 2 – “O Worship the King” | RHC 346 – “Be Still, My Soul” |
| <i>Opening Prayer *</i> | John Poh | John Poh |
| <i>Gloria Patri *</i> | <i>Glory Be to the Father</i> | |
| <i>Responsive Reading</i> | Psalm 86 | Hebrews 11:1-16 |
| <i>Second Hymn *</i> | <i>Psalm 86 verses 1-4, 11-12</i> (to the tune of St Anne, RHC 21) | RHC 382 – “I Would Be True” |
| <i>Announcements & Memory Verse</i> | John Poh | John Poh |
| <i>Tithes & Offerings & Doxology *</i> | RHC 26 – “Come, Thou Fount” | --- |
| <i>Scriptural Text</i> | 1 Samuel 8 | Luke 18:1-8 |
| <i>Pastoral Prayer</i> | Rev John Sherwood | Rev John Sherwood |
| <i>Sermon Message</i> | <i>The People’s Choice</i> | <i>Importunate Faith</i> |
| <i>Closing Hymn *</i> | RHC 226 – “The Lord Is King!” | RHC 379 – “O for a Faith That Will Not Shrink” |
| <i>Benediction / 3-Fold Amen *</i> | Rev John Sherwood | Rev John Sherwood |
| <i>Postlude</i> | <i>The Lord Bless You</i> | <i>Lord Dismiss Us (stanzas 1 & 4)</i> |

* Congregation Stands

THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE

The Lord is in His holy temple,
The Lord is in His holy temple:
Let all the earth keep silence,
Let all the earth keep silence before Him -
Keep silence, keep silence before Him. Amen.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, Amen.

THE LORD BLESS YOU

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord lift His countenance upon you,
and give you peace, and give you peace;
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you, be gracious,
The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen.

Church Theme 2011 – “Continue in the Word” – 2 Timothy 3:14

MARKS OF A FAITHFUL CHURCH MEMBER – PART 1

By Dr. Joel Beeke... Adapted from Banner of Truth dated 10 December 2010

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:10–16)

For an annual fee, you can be a member of your community recreational centre, where you have access to its exercise equipment and swimming pool. If you choose never to visit the building, it's no problem. You can sit at home and eat ice cream all day and never get your membership revoked. So long as you pay your dues, you are a member.

Similarly, you can be a member of a book club or a music club that offers great deals on books or CDs. Club mailings say you are under no obligation to buy anything; you can return a book or CD at any time and cancel your membership.

In such a cultural setting, it is not surprising that membership in a local church has also become non-demanding. One congregation discovered that, on average, only 70 of its 233 members attended church worship. The church leadership is partly responsible for this easy membership by not upholding biblical standards and discipline. So are people's views of the church. Some people treat the church like a museum that preserves memories and artifacts from the past, to be revisited from time to time. Others go to church as if it were a shopping mall, where you can find programmes and services that meet the needs of you or your family.

Perhaps in reaction to this shopping-mall image, some people have redefined the church as a community outreach programme. Some groups occasionally cancel Sunday worship services to rake leaves, wash cars, distribute food to needy people, or have a picnic in a nearby park. Worshipping God on the Lord's Day is replaced by social service programmes, missionary outreach, or recreation and entertainment.

To correct a faulty view of the church, we must go back to the biblical concept of the church. The Bible tells us the church is the body of Christ. A Christian, then, is a living part of a larger body of people. That is the essence of Ephesians 4:10–16, which says the church is a living organism. It is a spiritual and relational body; each Christian is a member much as a hand or foot is a body part. Christ is the head of this body. He and all his members are bound together by the Holy Spirit and the bond of true faith. That is amazing because Christ is the Son of God, and we are fallen human beings. It is also amazing because Christians in the church are so different from each other; they are Jews and Gentiles, men and women of all countries and ethnicities, old and young, rich and poor. These diverse people are nonetheless bound together all over the world as a living organism of which Christ is the head.

This truth has profound implications for what it means to be a member of the church of Jesus Christ. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4:10–16 that his person, his people, his cause, and his image. We will examine what it means to be a faithful member of the body of Christ in each of these areas in the (1) personal, (2) public, and (3) practical dimensions of our lives. Thus, we will take a look at fifteen characteristics of a faithful church member.

Mark One: Receiving Christ's Word

Ephesians 4:11–13 tells us that Christ gives pastors and teachers to the church to the end that *'we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'* Christ has ascended far above the heavens to give gifts to the church so that his glory will fill the earth. In his glorified state, Christ extends his kingdom by giving servants of the Word to his church. His goal is to bring his elect together in Christ-centred faith and knowledge.

The primary tool the Carpenter-King uses to build the House of God is his Word, first of all as taught by the pastors and teachers of his church. Therefore, the first mark of a faithful church member is receiving Christ's Word — not merely as an individual reading his Bible at home but also as a church member listening to the Word proclaimed by the pastors and teachers of a local church and applying it to his life. Specifically, receiving Christ's Word involves the following:

1. Personal hunger for the Word. In 1 Peter 2:2, the Apostle Peter urges all Christians to thirst for the sincere milk of the Word, *'that ye may grow thereby.'* If you are sick and have no appetite, you only feel nausea when served a delicious meal. The longer supper lasts, the more restless you become. Some people experience the preaching of the Word like that; a sermon makes them uncomfortable. They blame a minister for preaching too long, but the problem is that they have no hunger for the Word. How different is the person who comes to the table with a full appetite! Even a simple meal of meat and potatoes is a feast to someone who is hungry. So it is with a person who has a healthy appetite for the preaching of the Word.

2. Faithful attendance at corporate worship. Hunger for the Word in church is expressed publicly by faithful attendance at church worship services. Hebrews 10:25 says we must not forsake assembling ourselves in corporate worship. Christian worship fills us with the Word. Colossians 3:16 says, *'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.'* Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892) wrote, 'There is no worship of God that is better than hearing of a sermon . . . it stirs all the coals of fire in your spirit, and makes them burn with a brighter flame.'

3. Active listening to the Word. Jesus describes four kinds of listeners to the Word in the Parable of the Soils, only one of which receives the Word, perseveres in faith, and goes on to bear abundant fruit. In Luke 8:18a, Jesus says, 'Take heed therefore how ye hear.' On Saturday, prepare for Sabbath worship by asking God to open his Word to you and to open your heart to his Word. As you come to church, remind yourself that you are going to the throne of God to hear him speak. John Calvin (1509–1564) wrote, 'Whenever the gospel is preached, it is as if God himself came into the midst of us.' What an awesome thought! When you sit before a preacher, stir up your mind to listen actively, as one who hears the living voice of God.

A grown man or woman would be ashamed of being spoon-fed from a jar of baby food, yet how many Christians expect a minister to spoon-feed them the Word! Cut your food and chew it for yourself. Think about what the preacher is saying. Train your soul like an athlete who disciplines his body by hard exercise to be stronger, faster, and more skilful. Take notes on the sermon, giving special attention to the main points, Scripture references, and personal applications. Listen with humble self-examination. Listen with delight at the words of life.

Thomas Watson (c.1620–1686) offered numerous directives on how to actively listen to the preaching of the Word, such as: come to the Word with a holy appetite and a teachable heart. Sit attentively under the Word, receive it with meekness, and mingle it with faith. Retain the Word by praying over it, practicing it, and speaking to others about it. 'Dreadful is the case of those who go loaded with sermons to hell,' Watson said.

Ephesians 4:10–14 says the exalted Christ builds up his church through his Word. The risen Christ gave the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, all servants of the Word, to the church. Therefore we as members of that church must be faithful in receiving and seeking to profit by their ministry of the Word.

Mark Two: Union with Christ's Person

Christ gives his Word to call us into union with Him (Rom. 1:6; 2 Thess. 2:14). In Ephesians 4:15–16a, Paul commands the saints of God to grow into Christ in all things. Christ is the head of his body; all our growth, which lifts us into closer communion with him, comes from him. Therefore, one must be a member of Christ to be a member of the body of Christ. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:15a, 17, *'Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? . . . he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.'* A faithful relationship with the church grows out of a faithful relationship with the Lord Jesus. The mark of a true member of the church is not merely what he or she does for the church. It is a faithful response to Paul's challenge in 2 Corinthians 13:5: *'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?'* You are not truly in the church until Christ is truly in you.

4. Personally trusting in Christ. Colossians 2:6–7 says, *'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.'* True church members receive Christ personally as Prophet, Priest, and King (for that is what 'Christ' means). We receive Christ by Spirit-given faith (John 1:12). This faith is active trust; it rests upon God in Christ for salvation. William Ames (1576–1633) wrote, *'Faith is the resting of the heart on God . . . We believe through Christ in God.'* Paul tells us that we must continue as we have begun; we must go on trusting in, resting on, and looking to Christ.

A church member would be disturbed if he discovered his name was missing in the church membership directory. How much more should we be concerned that our names are written in the Book of the Lamb! Do not assume you are a believer because of a response you made or something you experienced years ago. Ask yourself, 'Am I trusting in Jesus Christ alone to make me right with God? Is he my only hope for eternal life, or am I trusting that the sincerity of my heart or my good works will open heaven's gates for me?'

5. Making diligent use of the sacraments. I am not suggesting that baptism and Lord's Supper have the inherent power to save. Trusting in the sacraments for your salvation is idolatry. In its historic Reformed usage, sacrament means a public sign and seal of the covenant between God and man. Sacraments are also called 'ordinances,' for Christ ordained their use for the worship of his people. They are a means of grace, the Word made visible.

We neglect the sacraments to our spiritual harm. Some people in evangelical churches view the sacraments only as empty rituals because God's people have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But are we more spiritual than Jesus, who gives us the Holy Spirit? Christ commands us in the Great Commission to baptize (Matt. 28:18–20). He also tells us to celebrate the Lord's Supper in remembrance of him (Luke 22:19). So sacraments are not meaningless rituals. They express our faith in Christ and are used by the Spirit to confirm and deepen our faith. They publicly bind believers together as one church (1 Cor. 10:17; Eph. 4:5). Membership in Christ's church demands that we publicly receive holy baptism and partake of the Lord's Supper, trusting that, as Christ's ordinances, they are means by which he works in our hearts and lives.

6. Practical obedience to Christ. In John 14:15, Jesus says, *'If ye love me, keep my commandments.'* He later adds, *'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them . . . loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him'* (v. 21). Obedience is the best expression of love for Christ. Loving obedience to Christ is also the way to experience more of the love of Christ. According to his promise, he will show us more of himself. Obedience is not mere rule-keeping; it is the expression or fruit of a faith relationship with Christ, as *'faith worketh by love.'*

Thomas Boston (1676–1732) was a champion for the gospel of free grace among the people of Scotland. Yet he reminded us that if Christ is our Head, we will want to keep his commandments. Speaking of the relationship between Christ and his people, Boston said:

Jesus Christ, the head of the covenant, is their head with their own consent. With heart and good-will they have taken him for their head, for all the purposes of the covenant . . . And they have taken him as their head for government, as well as their head for nourishment and support. They have delivered up themselves unto him, to be ruled by him, as well as to be saved by him; to be governed by his laws, and not by their own lusts, as well as to be saved by his grace, and not by their own works.

Receiving Christ's Word is the first mark of a faithful church member. Union with Christ's Person is the second mark, for Christ is the Head of the body. From our living Head comes all our spiritual life, and to him rise all our hopes and desires. Let us cling to him in personal faith, celebrate him in the public sacraments of the church, and follow him in practical obedience.

Mark Three: Connected to Christ's People

The third mark of a faithful church member, according to Ephesians 4:16, is being *'fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth.'* This may also be translated, 'joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped' (ESV). Joint here refers to a ligament or tendon that holds together the bones and parts of the body. It indicates the strong connections God expects within the body of Christ. Tendons are not just glued to bones; they contain strong collagen fibres that penetrate into muscle and bone tissue to join them together. Muscle and bone cannot be separated without damaging both of them.

When God makes us part of Christ's body, we are joined together with the other members of his body. Romans 12:5 says, '*So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*' A mysterious, wonderful bond holds the Christian church together so that we affect each other in many unseen ways. If one member suffers, all suffer. If one member is flourishing in Christ's Spirit, those around him are blessed.

Connectedness in the body of Christ is more than formal association. My shoe is associated with my body. It is attached to my foot for many hours a day. But it is not a member of my body; I can take it off and I won't be hurt. If you try to take off my foot, however, I would strongly object because my foot is organically joined to other members of my body. It shares the same life-blood and the same nervous system. So when the Lord tells us that we are one body and are members of one another, he is saying that the church is more than a voluntary association. Its members are interconnected and interdependent, as well as mutually responsible for and accountable to one another.

7. We are personally connected by love. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:9–10, '*But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more.*' Each member of Christ's body should love his brothers and sisters in the Lord, and each member should grow in love for the church.

In *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye asks his wife, Golde, 'Do you love me?' Golde is startled by the question, saying, 'For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes, cooked your meals, cleaned your house, given you children, milked the cow. After twenty-five years, why talk about love?'

But Tevye persists, asking, 'Do you love me?'

When we think about being faithful church members, we often think of lists of things to do, such as set up tables and chairs, teach Bible lessons, prepare meals, play music, and attend meetings. But after completing such to-do lists, the church of Jesus Christ still asks, '*Do you love me?*' This love demands a personal connection between us and Christ, and between all members in Christ. Such love, like faith, will of course still show itself in real terms (James 2:15–16).

8. We publicly confess our faith. Jesus asks his disciples, '*Who say ye that I am?*' Peter responds, '*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*' (Matt. 16:15–16). Jesus then warns us that if we do not confess him to other people, he will refuse to acknowledge us on Judgment Day (Matt. 10:32–33). The identity of the church and the identity of the Christian are both closely tied to confessing Christ openly before the world.

Immediately after Peter's confession, Jesus declares, '*I will build my church*' (Matt. 16:18). Earl Blackburn writes,

The first responsibility of church membership is loyalty to the church. By loyalty to the church, I mean fidelity to the teachings of the church so far as they are loyal to the Word of God . . . It is only right, then, for a church to ask someone who desires to be a member to be loyal to its doctrinal position as defined in its statement or confession of faith.

Blackburn concludes that a personal confession of faith is required for church membership.

9. We practice hospitality. Personal love and public confession become practical in hospitality. First Peter 4:9 counsels, *'Use hospitality one to another without grudging.'* The church aims to be a family, and nothing characterizes a family as much as maintaining fellowship and eating meals together. Extending hospitality to others in the church, however, is far more than sharing food; it is sharing love and life, especially with those who may otherwise be deprived of it. The church in the United States desperately needs to practice such hospitality.

Alexander Strauch writes about a woman who attended a church more than an hour's walk from her home. Every Sunday after morning worship, she would eat a lunch by herself, then go to a park or library until it was time to go to the evening service. She did this for four years. Not one family in the church invited her to their home. On her last Sunday at that church, an elderly woman invited her to her house.

Friendly handshakes at the church door can only go so far; true relationships require spending time together. What blessings hospitality offers, not only to single people who are drawn into a circle of love, but also to your children, who have the opportunity to interact with missionaries, visiting preachers, and other adults in the church. When you extend hospitality, unbelievers will see firsthand real godliness in a Christian home. Young believers will learn from mature Christians. Needs will surface, and prayers can be lifted up for God's help in meeting those needs. Make your love for the church practical by practicing hospitality.

In addition to hospitality, we have the further duty to promote the good of our fellow believers by putting our gifts and resources to work on their behalf, assisting them in things that pertain both to this life and the next. Help someone find a job or make repairs on his house or car; offer encouragement and accountability to those who struggle with temptation or are just beginning to find their way in Bible study or personal prayer.

The third mark of a faithful church member is connecting with Christ's people. The stronger the tendons and ligaments which hold together a body are, the stronger the body will be. Likewise, the strength of the church depends upon the strength of our friendships.

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

| APPOINTMENTS FOR THE WEEK | | | WELCOME | |
|---|---|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Fri 09 Sept | No Young Adults Fellowship | | We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Joey Chiok, Wachirathon Diosurin and Siew to our worship services last Lord's Day. | |
| Sat 10 Sept 4:00pm | Prayer Meeting & Bible Study | | | |
| <i>Next Lord's Day</i> | <i>Morning Service</i> | <i>Evening Service</i> | | |
| Preacher | Dr David Allen | Dr David Allen | LORD'S DAY DUTIES | |
| Message | TBC | TBC | | |
| Text | TBC | TBC | | |
| NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS | | | <u>TODAY: 04/09/2011</u> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Sunday Pre-Lunch Bible Study Today: Alan Blaney will be given a short talk on Church Offering and Gift Aid. • Saturday Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Come and join us to pray and to study God's Word. • Ladies Fellowship will be meeting today after lunch. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas, Barbara, Prema, Eld Ford, Lydia, Margaret, May Chew, Brian, Mrs Ki, Constance, Deborah Sherwood, Jonathan's father, Linda Teo, Lorena. • Pray for those who are/will be on travel: Jia Yun, Justin, Waiyee, Matthew, Pastor Ki • Pray for those seeking employment: Yetta. • Pilgrim Tabernacle 24th Anniversary: Saturday 10th September, 2:30pm. Guest Speaker - Rev Maurice Roberts. For more information please see Jonathan. | | | Chairman: John Organist: Anthony Pianist: Joy Ushers: Daniel / Evelyn Sunday School: No Sunday School Lunch: Mrs Ki Washing Up: Volunteers PA Crew: Brian | |
| | | | <u>NEXT WEEK: 11/09/2011</u> | |
| | | | Chairman: Jonathan Organist: Joy Pianist: Anthony Ushers: Daniel / Constance Sunday School: Jonathan / Joy Lunch: Maureen Washing Up: Volunteers PA Crew: John | |
| | | | Worship Service Collections - Last Sunday: £1065, Lunch: £47 Attendance - Morning: 30 (A) 1 (C), Evening: 16 (A) 1 (C) | MEMORY VERSE |
| | | | SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 88 | Last Week |
| <p>Q: What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of Redemption?</p> <p><i>A: The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of Redemption, are HIS ORDINANCES; especially the <u>Word</u>, <u>Sacraments</u>, and <u>Prayer</u>, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.</i></p> <p><u>Comments:</u> In order that we may be saved, God demands of us not only faith and repentance, but the diligent use of the outward means of grace as well. These outward means are here called <i>ordinances</i>, or things which God has <i>ordained</i>. They consist mainly in: 1. The study of the Bible; 2. The observance of the Sacraments; 3. The use of Prayer.</p> <p><u>Proofs:</u> Acts 2:42, 2 Timothy 3:15</p> | <p><i>“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ephesians 1:22</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This Week</p> <p><i>“Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ephesians 1:23</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Next Week</p> <p><i>“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 Timothy 3:14</p> | | | |