

membership





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why do we have membership?

As a local church we prefer to think of ourselves as a faith community rather than an institution or organisation. If you choose to participate in the Windsor Park faith community we take seriously our responsibility to nurture you and encourage your participation, whether you formally become a member or not. But as a Baptist church we have a rich tradition (since 1609!) of people covenanting to each other in formal church membership. We still participate in this wonderful history.

Becoming a member flies in the face of the consumerist nature of our time; membership says we're committed to each other no matter what, that we're better together, that deep individual and

Members work together to discern what Jesus is saying to our community

corporate growth happens when we intentionally choose to hang in there with each other and allow Jesus to grow our character and deepen our relationships.

Members work together to discern what Jesus is saying to our community and how we should respond together to the challenges in front of us; we depend on each other and are committed to living our lives in a way that makes people take notice.



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membership in the Bible

Membership as we describe it today doesn't overtly appear in the Bible because we're not exactly sure how New Testament churches formally organised themselves. What we can see though is that early Christians were strongly committed to each other.

Acts 2 sets the tone: 'They devoted themselves to . . . fellowship.' We can see that they shared their property, their

possessions, their homes and their lives. Whether we look in 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 1 or Acts 8 we see a community of Christians being formed around commitment to one another—and the wider New Testament gives us 59 different verses, the 'one-another's', of how this was to actually work out in their relationships.

The whole community of the early church was formed around a commitment to relationship rather than autocratic leadership. This has been the pattern that Baptist churches have adopted for over 400 years—we operate under congregational government; our members are those who discern the mind and will of God and participate collectively in seeing His purposes worked out through the local church.

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membership at windsor park

The foundations of Windsor Park go back to 1948 when a small group of people started a Sunday School in Murrays Bay. On 5th September 1951 the church was formally constituted with 23 members—people who were committed to each other and to the growth of a local church in our area.

Since this time many other people have committed themselves to this community of faith, working through the challenges of relationships, growing

effective ministries into our community, making bold decisions to allow the Spirit of God to bring growth to our church, giving generously of their time, abilities and money to allow Windsor Park to be everything that it is today.

We won't push you to become a member, it's entirely your choice. However, only members can be part of our formal voting processes for appointing Elders and the Senior Pastor, and making major property and finance decisions.

so why become a member?

We see membership as being a personal decision to become part of a community of faith who believe working together is more effective than working alone.

We encourage you to think about becoming a member because it's an invitation to be part of the work of the Spirit amongst God's people at Windsor Park.

As a member you're agreeing to our Members Pledge that you'll see at the end of this booklet; it's a pledge to keep growing and to keep participating in the local church that we believe is the hope of the world. It says that you're willing to give yourself to others and are open to seeing the transformative work of God expressed in your life and in the faith community that we're part of.



do I have to become a baptist?

No. Becoming a member of Windsor Park doesn't mean you have to refer to yourself as a Baptist or tick 'Baptist' in the census, although you can do that if you want! It just makes you a member of a local Christian church which happens to belong to the Baptist Union of NZ denomination. We don't think that Baptists have a monopoly on truth, nor that we are better than any other denomination. We prefer to see ourselves as being in partnership with all our brothers and sisters in Christ, and not in competition.

While Baptists do not have a monopoly on the truth, we do believe that God has entrusted to the Baptist movement important insights and resources for the sake of the wider church.

Having said that, we make no apology for being a Baptist church, or for belonging to the Baptist Union of NZ. While Baptists do not have a monopoly on the truth, we do believe that God has entrusted to the Baptist movement important insights and resources for the sake of the wider church (contact us for an article that talks more about Baptist distinctives). We believe we can achieve Kingdom of God tasks more effectively by working together as opposed to operating alone. Each Baptist church is totally free when it comes to its life and witness; the denomination does not operate under a hierarchy and all denominational staff operate to serve local churches, providing such things as:

- Pastoral care of pastors & other leaders.
- Training & equipping of pastors, missionaries, marketplace leaders and those interested in studying applied theology.
- Administrative & general advice.
- Facilitation of our combined ventures as a denomination.

You can read more about the history and 'pillars' of Baptist churches by looking at the Baptist Union of NZ website, www.baptist.org.nz.



windsor park's beliefs

Our document of doctrine and church practice is the Scriptures. We're an evangelical church with a strong commitment to building stronger communities by putting our faith into action. The Word of God is our basis in theology and church practice.

We do encourage you to scan our official Constitution which outlines our core beliefs and sets guidelines for decision making and forming of church policy.

Our Constitution is to be viewed as our summary of New Testament principles of church life and administration and includes our two key ordinances:

- Believers' baptism by immersion (see our Baptism brochure for more discussion on this).
- Communion (the Lord's Supper) which is normally held on the first Sunday of each month and is open to all believers.

what if I choose to not become a member?

It's entirely your decision to apply for membership and we in no way preclude folk from being part of our faith community simply because they haven't become formal members. We've always had people who, for various reasons, haven't felt led to make that commitment; we respect their right and freedom of choice and will always regard such people as part of our faith community.

However, those who hold leadership positions in the church must be members. In other words, we entrust leadership and ministry responsibility on behalf of the church only to those who have a clear conviction from God that they should commit themselves to us and the work He has called us to do.



how do I become a member?

We have a relational way of progressing membership applications. After reading this booklet and agreeing to our Members Pledge and after deciding that this is something you'd like to talk more about, make yourself known to us—email the office, contact a pastor, tick a box on our connect cards, see someone at the Information Desk, send a courier pigeon, you get the idea.

When you've made yourself known to us, a pastor or an elder will chat with you to hear some of your faith journey and to

generally get to know you and see how we can serve you more and how you can participate in the life of Windsor Park—remember, we're better together.

The decision to accept new members rests with the pastors and elders working together, and you'll be kept in the loop of progress. Following acceptance, new members are offered the opportunity to be welcomed as part of a Sunday gathering, or if you're not an 'upfront' person, we can meet informally for a coffee and a handshake.



member's pledge

1

I will **live my life in a way** that reflects
my faith as a follower of Jesus
and a member of His Church.

2

I will **take an active part** in the life and ministry
of Windsor Park Baptist Church,
regularly attending services of worship
and being willing to help and volunteer
in whatever way I can.

3

I will **pray for the Church** and its ministry
in the community.

4

I will **generously contribute** financially
to Windsor Park Baptist Church,
according to my means.

5

I will do everything I can to **deepen and enrich the spirit of fellowship** in the Church, making myself known to others and getting to know others, living out the New Testament imperative to love one another as Christ has first loved us.

6

I will do everything I can to **witness and share** the saving, keeping power of Jesus Christ our Lord.

7

I will **allow the Spirit of God** to grow His character within me, by practicing spiritual disciplines that help me grow deeper and wider in His love and grace.



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