

Emmanuel Free Church

Membership Class

Session 3

Why would you obligate yourself to a local church?

ONE: MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As with most local churches, becoming a member of Emmanuel Free Church has certain prerequisites. These requirements are presented for several reasons: 1) to help maintain the spiritual health of EFC's membership, 2) perform due diligence and help confirm a potential member's salvation, 3) avoid certain practical and theological conflicts within EFC's membership, 4) help the inquirer to make an informed decision whether or not to join membership. With these in mind the following are requirements that all must be met in order to be considered for membership (As found in Section V of EFC's Constitution).

- 1) Must be a genuine believer in Jesus Christ
 - a) Ability to articulate what the Gospel message is.
 - b) Articulate your personal testimony of coming to faith in Jesus Christ.
- 2) Describe your Christian walk since becoming a born-again Christian and especially recently (past year).
- 3) Not a member of another church or under the discipline of another church.
- 4) Not a member of a secret society.
- 5) Do not adhere in convictions or practice to the LGBTQ lifestyles.

TWO: EXPECTATIONS OF LEADERS

What are you getting into when you join EFC? To answer that we start with the church's leadership. While there are expectations of incoming members, there are also certain expectations members can have of church leaders when they become a member. These leadership commitments are to be verbally re-affirmed by the leaders to the congregation at the beginning of each fiscal

year. Sermons at the website can be found that will explain each of these in more detail. Go to "www.efcspringlake.org" and search for "What Pastors Must Be" from the series in Titus.

- 1) Members can expect the leaders will be examples of Christian character and lifestyles that are worthy of imitating (*Heb. 13:7; Php. 4:9; 1 Tim. 3:1-13*)
- 2) Members can expect leaders to make a sacrificial commitment to their Biblical responsibilities. Leaders will do whatever is necessary to promote the spiritual growth and well-being of each member in the local church (*1 Pet. 5:2; John 21:15-17; 1 Tim. 5:19*).
 - a) Describe the typical week of the Pastor.
 - i) Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays focus on Study and Prayer. Tuesdays and Thursdays are Administrative and People. Fridays Off.
 - b) Describe some Deacon duties and what a Deacon Meeting looks like.
 - i) Deacons assist with various administrative duties, serving Communion, preparing and presenting business meetings, occasional teaching in Sunday School and addressing concerns within the church body.
 - ii) Deacon Meetings begin with reading and discussing Scripture and detailed prayer for the ministry and people of EFC. Then various items are addressed on the agenda.
- 3) Members can be confident that the leaders are spiritually capable to handle the trust of local church leadership in a Biblically responsible, mature, and faithful manner (*2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12*).
- 4) Members can expect leaders to have firm convictions relating to the doctrines of God's Word, defending the faith, and the importance of spiritually mature local church leadership (*1 Tim. 3:6, 9; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 2:15; Titus 1:9*).
- 5) Members can expect leaders to actively pray for them (*Acts 6:4; Php. 1:4; 1 Thess. 1:2-3; 1 Tim. 2:1*)

THREE: EXPECTATION OF MEMBERS

Becoming a member of EFC means you are making a commitment to the work, growth and health of this local church. The specific ways that commitment is carried out involves the following:

- 1) Regular attendance to the weekly gatherings (*Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 11:17-18*)
 - a) A guideline for “regular” is 50% attendance. Considerations for sports seasons, snow-birds, and vacations are factored in. Micro-managing people is not the goal but attentiveness to members who may be drifting because of some spiritual problems is. A commitment to a local church starts with a commitment to attend.
- 2) Participation in the governing of the affairs of EFC through keeping informed on issues and faithful attendance to business meetings – especially where voting is required.
 - a) Describe Congregational Polity; the rights and responsibility of membership.
- 3) Commitment to love and serve your brothers and sisters at this local fellowship (*Php. 2:4; 1 Cor. 10:24; Gal 5:13; 1 Pet. 4:10; 1 John 3:17-18*)
 - a) SERVE, ENCOURAGE, AFFECTIONS/ATTITUDE, SPEAK WELL OF, even ADMONISH
- 4) Recognize and submit to the spiritual authority and leadership that God has placed over the congregation at EFC (*1 Pet. 5:1-3; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13*).
 - a) What is the general attitude towards authority today that you see in society?
 - b) What is a proper attitude God expects for Christians to have towards church leadership’s authority? (*1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17*)

- c) Describe scope and nature of local church leadership's authority. What does it extend to and what does it not extend to?
- i) **Doctrine:** unorthodox doctrine, "majors", fundamentals, purposeful and defiant undermining of EFC's doctrinal positions.
 - ii) **Open unrepentant sin:** someone who is committing serious sin publicly. Even serious sin that is private may be addressed publicly further down in the restoration process if the person is causing much damage and stubbornly refuses to stop.
- d) Degrees of authority:
- i) **COMMANDS:** non-negotiable directives given to stop open sin
 - ii) **COUNSEL:** strong pastoral advice that should be seriously considered and would be foolish to ignore
 - iii) **COFFEE:** pastoral advice on a non-serious matter.
 - iv) This in no way suggests that church leaders micro-manage people's lives. Nor do they put everyone's life under a microscope everyday. Some things are to be admonished and rebuked whereas other things are to be patiently "put up with" in people.
- 5) Commitment to pursue and uphold the character, lifestyle, and reputation which exceeds the moral standards of the world, exemplifies Christ-likeness to other local believers, and exalts the name of Christ (*Titus 2:7; 1 Pet. 4:3-4; 1 Thess. 1:7; Php. 3:17; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Tim. 4:12*).
- 6) When necessary, be ready to lovingly participate in the process of Biblical church discipline as led by the Pastor(s) and Deacons (*Math. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:6; 2 Thess. 3:14-15*).
- a) See article "Church Discipline" at www.efcspringlake.org/discipleship/reading/
- 7) When necessary submit to church discipline if you are confronted about open sin in your life (*Pvb. 5:11-14; 9:8b; 12:1; 13:18; 15:12, 31-32; 17:10; 27:5; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:12*). Keep in mind that the motivation of your church leaders and family is that you would repent and be restored. Also

keep in mind how difficult a task it is for them to rebuke someone and that they have spent many hours in prayer confessing planks in their own eyes and asking God to give them the right heart long before ever actually speaking to you.

- a) See sermon "How To Take A Punch" at:
<https://efcpringlake.org/2016/09/25/how-to-take-a-punch-psalm-1415b/>
 - b) Explain the desire for a policy where members who are under discipline will not be allowed to terminate their membership and short-circuit the discipline process.
- 8) Commitment to personal growth through personal and public efforts. Church members are expected to engage intentionally in personal and public discipleship for their progress in sanctification, and for helping others in their progress towards maturity (*1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; 3:18; Heb. 5:11-14; Eph. 4:13-16; 1 Timothy 4:15; Hebrews 5:11-14; Eph. 4:13-16; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 10:24; 12:7, 21; 14:12; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:11*).
 - 9) Commitment to regular prayer for personal growth, family, and the ministry and witness of this local fellowship (*1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18; Php. 4:6; Luke 18:1*).
 - 10) Commitment to give financially to this local ministry for the purposes of worshiping God, seeing the work of the word carried on, supporting those who minister the word, and to bring relief to other believers here in need (*Php. 4:18; 2 Cor. 8:12; 9:11-15; 1 Corinthians 9:14; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Acts 20:35; Eph. 4:28*)

Pastoral Declaration of Commitment

Annual Business Meeting, June __, 20__

Chairman: As the Pastor of Emmanuel Free Church, do you re-commit yourself to willingly and eagerly^{vi} serve this church with the love^{vii}, humility^{viii}, faithfulness^{ix}, and dignity becoming the office of Pastor?

Pastor: I do.

Chairman: Acknowledging that pastoral leadership is a noble calling^x and is not to be taken lightly^{xi}, do you commit yourself to exemplary^{xii} Christ-like character and service worthy for us to follow^{xiii}?

Pastor: I do.

Chairman: And do you commit to teach sound doctrine^{xiv}, to actively pray for the people under your charge^{xv}, to keep watch over their well-being^{xvi}, and to work at building them up in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Pastor: I do.

Chairman: Your service to the Lord Jesus Christ as the shepherd of His flock here at EFC is of great worth. A promise is made to you for worthy service in 1 Peter 5:4 when it says, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." May you serve well to gain your reward, for our spiritual strengthening here at EFC, and for the honor of our glorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Deacon Declaration of Commitment

Pastor: As this year's elected Deacons of Emmanuel Free Church, do you commit to serve this church with love, integrity, dedication, a good conscience, and be worthy of respect, which is befitting of those who hold the office of Deacon?

Deacons: We do.

Pastor: Acknowledging that church leadership is a high calling and is not to be taken lightly, do you accept this office with the intention of devoting yourselves to being worthy examples of Christ-like character and service?

Deacons: We do.

Pastor: And will you actively pray for the people in your care, give attention to their well-being, and work to build them up in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Deacons: We do.

Pastor: The leadership you exercise as Deacons is invaluable to the spiritual vitality of this local church and deserves the honor spoken of in Scripture. Furthermore, the Scripture promises in 1 Timothy 3:13 that "Deacons who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Jesus Christ." May you serve well for your reward, for the benefit of us here at EFC, and for the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Expectations of Members

Submit to leadership authority

give \$

Attendance

Character

Love & Serve

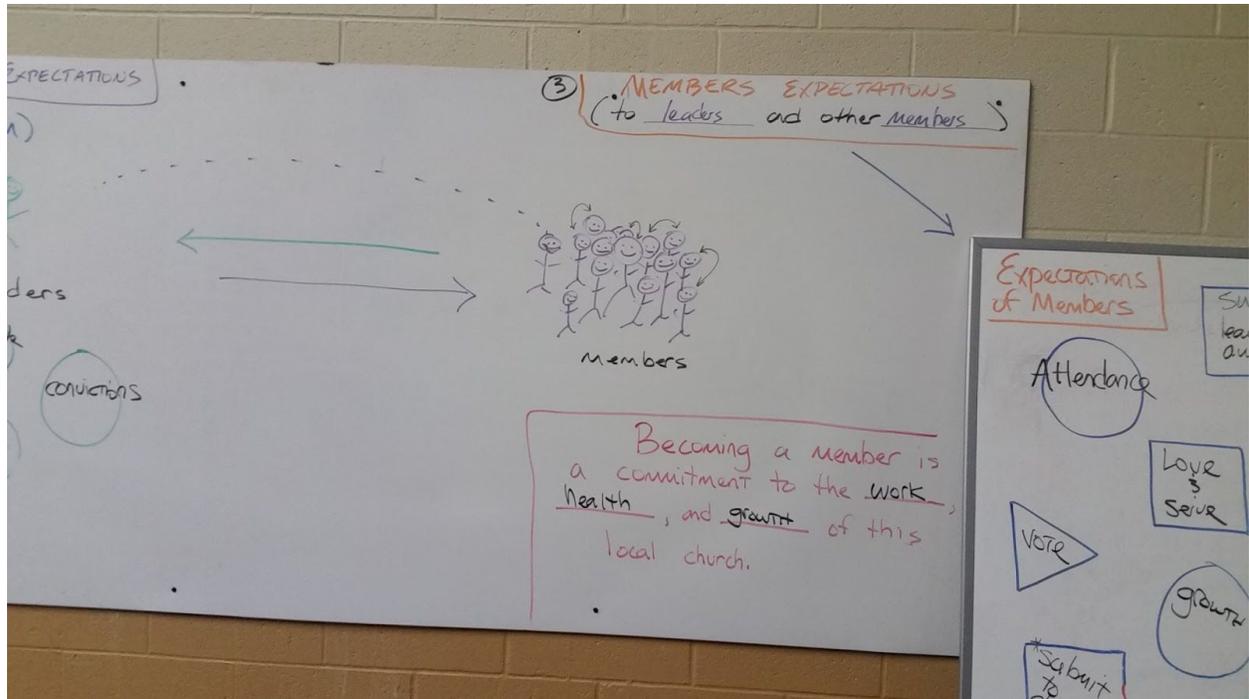
Vote

Church discipline

growth

pray

*Submit to Church discipline



Degrees of Authority

Commands — non-negotiable directives from God's Word

Course — strong advice that should be seriously weighed

Opinion — casual opinion (if asked)

