

Ecclesia

The koinonia Greek word for 'church' is translated from 'ek'- 'out from' (similar to our word 'exit') and kaleo- 'called'. Together they mean 'called out' and 'assembled together'.

"Called Out To Belong"

- Ephesians 2:1-**As for you**, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
2- in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.
3- All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts, Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.
4- **But** because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,
5- made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.
6- And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
7- in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus
8- For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—
9- not by works, so that no one can boast.
10- For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
- 11- **Therefore**, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)—
12- remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.
13- **But now** in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.
14- For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,
15- by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,
16- and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.
17- He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.
18- For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.
- 19- **Consequently**, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,
20- built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone
21- In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.
22- And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Why Membership?

There are three God-given institutions on earth that have been specifically designed and endorsed by our Heavenly Father: Government, Family and the Church. We find many passages supporting the importance of the health of a Church body. In order to provide a healthy church environment, the leadership at Bethany has found that a call to membership is essential.

God places us in His family and calls us to live in committed, connected relationships. Church membership is an important way to live out this call. At Bethany, membership is an opportunity for someone to say, "I believe in this place and want to commit to making this my spiritual home."

Through Membership the Leadership at Bethany asks people to commit to these important areas:

Protect the unity of our church by our words and actions;

Share the responsibility of our church by reaching out to those who don't know Christ;

Serve the ministry of our church by discovering and using our gifts and talents;

Support the ministry of our church through prayer, faithful attendance and regular giving

Submit to the God-given authority of Bethany Church in matters of spiritual authority and discipline,

To commit to the core value of life-change knowing that God is able to transform us using His word, His spirit, and His people to become more and more like Christ to His glory.

In return the leadership of Bethany commits, by God's grace to:

Model Godliness, Humility and Character as an example for the Bethany Family

Provide Biblically-centered practical teaching, quality worship opportunities, and protection from false teaching.

Bring God's people into His presence through faithful intercession

Provide opportunities to equip His people to serve Christ through ministries of Bethany Church.

The membership process at Bethany provides the opportunity for an individual to hear the vision and values of our church while connecting with the Senior Pastor and church leadership in a personal way. Membership also allows a time to help identify areas of giftedness and possible service while bringing clarity of the need for a personal relationship with Christ. Through membership a person also places themselves in a position of spiritual health as they commit to the family of faith.

Additional Notes on the Church

The Church reflects God's Glory through several important expressions:

Public Worship: His people coming together to bring praise and glory to God.

Observation of Baptism and The Lord's Supper: Celebration of the regular practices of Baptism and The Lord's Supper instituted and modeled by Jesus.

Teaching: The Declaration of Doctrine/Truth: The Church is the pillar and foundation of the truth. Teaching is to move God's people to maturity.

Fellowship and Accountability: Emphasis on the Church gathered - joining together for mutual edification, encouragement, and strengthening. Elders are to be overseers of the Life of the Church.

Outreach: Local, regional and worldwide evangelism: Strategically carrying the mission of the Good News of Jesus to a broken and lost world.