



# WHY MEMBERSHIP?

Becoming a part of Redemption Hill Church



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# Why Membership?

*Introduction: Why Membership Is Important*

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# Why Membership Is Important

Why is church membership important? After all, if we read our Bibles and pray regularly, if we have good friends who are Christians and attend church regularly, do we still need to go through the formal process of becoming members?

Yes. Church membership is not just a good idea, it is a crucial aspect of the Christian life that cannot be separated from core Christian beliefs.

Four reasons we strongly believe in church membership at Redemption Hill Church (RHC):

1. Church membership is an expression of something biblical
2. It is good for our spiritual well-being
3. It is good for other members of RHC
4. It must happen for the purpose of missions

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# 1. Church membership is an expression of something biblical

Church Membership is completely assumed throughout the Bible – the corporate identity of the people of God.

In the Old Testament, God set apart for himself a people, a nation, Israel. In the New Testament, this corporate identity as God's people is often completely assumed by Christians committing to be part of a local church.

For example, in Matthew 18:15-17,

*"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."*

Do you notice how the text completely assumes that there will be other members involved intimately in a Christian's life? It assumes that the individual is accountable to a larger body. It assumes that those in the local body are so intimately connected that there is a need to address sins and conflicts that would cause deep hurts.

What about key commands in the Bible that are simply impossible to obey by ourselves as individuals—such as baptism and communion? Scripture passages on the holy ordinances simply assume that believers do this as part of church life, together. We can only obey these commands most meaningfully when we are committed members of a

local church.

Thus, the idea of church membership is an expression of something biblical and crucial for every believer. At RHC, seeking to obey the Bible is the most important reason we have a membership process. Church membership expresses how Christ has saved us and identified us as part of God's people.

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## 2. It is good for our spiritual well-being

Hebrews 3:12-14 says,

*"Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today", that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end."*

Heed this warning—in is deceitful. (Suggest: Sin deceives!) It often starts from something small and subtle and then grows to become major issues. Often we are blind to our own sins, and risk falling away from God because of them. The good news is, God provides the means of grace to keep us faithful in Christ so that we do not fall away. Hebrews three tells us that this happens through meaningful fellowship, membership and accountability in the local church.

As members of RHC, we commit ourselves to be accountable to others in this church. We invite them to speak into our lives, especially into areas that we struggle to submit to God, so that we may persevere together as faithful Christians. We spell out clearly our willingness to

submit to the leadership and authority of the church. We give them permission to pursue us and call us back to repentance and faith when we stray away and find ourselves hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. We also commit ourselves to do this important charge for other brothers and sisters in RHC of being vigilant to exhort and guard one another, as long as it is called "today".

Thus, church membership is good for our spiritual well-being as individuals and as a church body. It is an expression of our dependence on God's grace to us through his people to live out the Christian life.

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### **3. It is good for other members of RHC**

Making membership commitment explicit gains clarity in our relationships and help us to relate with one another better. Without an expression of commitment, it can feel like casual dating without clearly defining the relationship. After a while, it gets awkward and difficult to continue.

As a visitor of RHC, we love and welcome you into our family as our guest. We want you to feel our warmth, love and hospitality every time you are with us. However although you are a guest and we serve you with joy, like guests at our home who are not expected to do the dishes and take out the trash, the implications of being a part of our family would be missing. And it mean that your experience with us is very limited. In fact, this lack of explicit commitment hinders the depth of our relationship.

The membership process is designed to help you decide if you want to be a part of the RHC family.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 12, that we are different parts of the

body of Christ. In our unity in the gospel, God marvellously gives a diversity of gifts and personalities to serve and build up the body. What are some of your gifts and talents that God can use to serve and strengthen the church? Steward them well and do not waste them. Exercise them by faith and in love to build up God's church.

Your commitment to membership with us is good for other members here as God blesses us with your presence, gifts and talents to build up this church together.

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## 4. Finally, membership must happen for the purpose of missions.

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus says,

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

This great commission is given to all Christians, not just a select few. It is a command given by our Lord, not merely a suggestion or good idea. We, as Christians in the body of Christ, are called to make disciples of nations. Without faithful commitment and proper organisation, it would be impossible for us to carry out this huge task of missions to the world.

That is why one of our values at RHC is "Community on Mission"—meaning we are both a family and an army. Yes, we love one another deeply as a community and family. We want deep fellowship and relationships with one another. However, all this can happen because

we share the same mission as an army devoted to God's mission for us to reach out to the nations. In the words of Christ,

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35)

Our vision is for Asia to be renewed by people, churches and cities transformed by the Gospel. To this end, we labour in the Lord. Join us as a member and be a part of the mission we share.

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## What to Do Next?

If you are unsure about making a commitment to RHC as a member, here are some practical steps to consider:

1. Get to know us well. Visit our services regularly for at least a couple of months. Listen to our sermons carefully to understand our gospel convictions and ministry philosophy. Visit our community groups to get to know other RHC members and ask them about the church. Go to our website to read our vision, mission, values and statement of faith.
2. Sign up and attend our membership class, where you will hear from our elders, who we are as a church and what we hold on to most importantly. Arrange for a meeting with an elder as part of the membership process to seek clarity and ask questions that you may have.
3. During the above two steps, if you see an area of belief or practice in



RHC that is of concern to you, we encourage you to engage with us too. Give us the benefit of the doubt and seek clarification. Chat with an elder of the church, so that we have an opportunity to receive your feedback and process with you on these matters.

4. If you have done all the above and decide not to become a member at RHC, we encourage you to go to another gospel-preaching church and commit yourself to another local body. The bottom-line is, we desire you to flourish in Christ as a faithful and committed disciple, whether at RHC or somewhere else.

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## A Closing Thought

As we continue in the tasks of the gospel ministry, we are trusting God to keep adding to our number those who are saved. Hebrews 13:7 says

*“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.”*

As elders of RHC, we take this responsibility to care for our members very seriously as men who will be called by God to give an account. Therefore, at almost every elders’ meeting, we look through our membership list for any persons in our congregations who are in need of special care or prayers. This is hard enough to do in a growing and diverse church like RHC where there is constant turnover, but it is even harder when we are unsure of who is, or is not a part of this flock.

Help us by taking the next step towards membership at RHC. Find out more details at [rhc.org.sg/membership](http://rhc.org.sg/membership).



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