

Meaningful Membership

at



NORTH COAST CHURCH

Jesus · People · Eternity



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This booklet explains the purpose of membership, and what membership looks like, at North Coast Church (NCC). It aims to be faithful to what the Bible teaches about belonging to a church. It then applies Biblical principles to our local setting.

This booklet describes many practical activities that membership involves. It is our desire to show that practical works are always an outworking of the Holy Spirit within us. Thus, the activities of “Meaningful Membership” are not to be seen as legalistic requirements for church members, but as the natural outflowing of a thankful heart for what Jesus has done for us.

This booklet describes six key aspects of membership. They are presented in pairs under three main headings (Encourage, Serve and Pray) which are a universal pattern for Christians.

Meaningful Membership: Introduction

Christians are called to partnership (fellowship) with God and with one another

We believe that God gathers Christians together in local churches so they can work together to fulfil Jesus’ Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Christians are to bring the gospel to all the world.

The apostle Paul was particularly joyful about the Philippians when he wrote his letter to them, because they had been such a great help to him in spreading the gospel. He wrote from prison,

“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, *because of your partnership in the gospel* from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:3-6, my emphasis).

Paul is speaking to them about their “partnership in the gospel.” Here are a few points about this partnership:

- It causes Paul to be thankful to God, and brings him great joy;
- It has been continuous with Paul;
- Paul considers that it has come from them all as if they were one person;
- It is a good work in them from God;

- It is something that God is going to keep doing within them.

Plainly, this partnership for the spread of the gospel is a divine work within the Philippians. What did it actually look like?

- Epaphroditus went out from Philippi to send aid to Paul in his imprisonment (2:25). In fact, he risked his life to supply this aid (2:30);
- Some of the women had laboured side by side with Paul in the gospel together with other fellow workers (4:3);
- The Philippians had revived their concern for Paul in some form of provision, probably the gift Epaphroditus brought (4:10);
- They had shared in Paul's trouble (4:14);
- Paul praises them that in the beginning when he left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with him in giving and receiving, except them only. Even when Paul was in Thessalonica the Philippians constantly sent him help (4:15-16).

Clearly, the Philippians had provided much comfort to the apostle as they acted practically to support him in his mission to carry the gospel to the gentiles.

Why does this partnership bring Paul such joy? He explains, "Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit" (4:17). That is, Paul is joyful that he had been provided for, but not for his own sake. He is joyful that the Spirit is richly at work in the Philippians producing fruit of righteousness. Their gifts were a fragrant offering to the Lord (4:18).

Truly this partnership is a divine work that God creates between Christians. It is a wonderful blessing that Christians can share together as they labour for the gospel.

The foundation of partnership with one another is divine because we see perfect partnership (or fellowship) demonstrated in the Trinity. This is why Paul can also say that they have a partnership in the Spirit (2:1). He also says in 1 Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." And, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Thus, a healthy fellowship with God results in healthy fellowship with one another.

God calls Christians to unity in purpose: for the gospel

Paul rejoices that his healthy relationship with the Philippians is a result of their healthy relationship with God. And their support for him is helping his mission as apostle to the gentiles. Thus Paul and the church share a unified purpose.

Paul desires that the church maintains this unity for a purpose:

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side *for the faith of the gospel*, and not frightened in anything by your opponents” (1:27-28, my emphasis).

Whatever the circumstances, the church should remain unified in purpose. And the passage shows that unity is *for the purpose of advancing the gospel*. This is the point of working together. Each member of the church is to work with the rest in unity so that the gospel mission can be advanced. Indeed, advancing the gospel is something God has given every church. This is no earthly purpose, but the very specific purpose of growing the kingdom of God.

If Christians are not in unity, then their witness will be hindered. But in having the shared purpose of seeing Jesus’ name exalted, their efforts are harmonised and strengthened to be an effective witness to the world.

The exaltation of Jesus is just what we are aiming for at NCC. Our Vision statement is:

“We see Jesus Christ standing,
with crowds of people from Perth and beyond,
made alive by the Holy Spirit through the gospel
and delighting in Him for all eternity
to the glory of God the Father.”

This vision is taken from Revelation chapters 5 and 7. We want to see people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ so they can delight in Him for all eternity. This is our common goal. As we strive side by side to achieve this as a church, we are working together for the faith of the gospel.

What is Membership?

Philippians 1:27-28 is our key passage for explaining the purpose of membership. Membership is an expression of obedience to it. This is our definition:

Membership is a public commitment to partner at NCC for the growth of the gospel.

Let's briefly explore each of the three parts to this:

1: A public commitment: To become a member at NCC means that you are unashamedly declaring to everyone else that you want to be part of the common goal. To be meaningful, membership cannot be hidden. Otherwise, how would the rest of the church know that you are committed to work alongside them to advance the gospel? And how would they know they should be working with you?

A practical consequence of this is having an agreement to sign your name on. It is simply an instrument to express your desire to be in unity. The action of signing it is also helpful for you as a decision-making step.

2: To partner at NCC: God puts people together in local churches. In choosing membership, you are choosing this specific local fellowship (NCC), to be the place that your service will go out from. You are recognising the others at this church as your spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ, and choosing to strive side by side with them. Of course, all Christians belong to the universal church, past, present and future, and one day we will be united in the kingdom together. And there are plenty of other churches in Perth full of Christians who are our brothers and sisters in Christ too. Yet in membership, you are saying that you want to contribute specifically at *this* local church. In other words, for now, NCC is your church home. It expresses a heavenly reality.

God raises up leaders to set vision and implement direction for our church. Membership is also submitting yourself under their guidance and oversight. You are therefore putting yourself under the direction that they are appointed to lead for, and their authority as shepherding leaders.

3: For the growth of the gospel: as discussed above, this is our common goal.

NCC as a rescue ship

Consequently, membership is not something that feeds self-interest. We serve a cause greater than ourselves. NCC identifies as a 'rescue ship' as opposed to a 'cruise ship.' On a cruise ship, each of the people on board are merely enjoying their own comfort. Their service is limited to paying for a ticket which entitles them to any enjoyments they wish. The staff are there to serve them. The ship sails out on calm waters in sunny weather. It is all designed for the indulgence of paying passengers. But a rescue ship

demands much more. Each person is part of a crew that work together to save people on rough, stormy seas. Provisions on board are relatively basic. The crew are invested not in their own interests but serving the common cause. Membership is like this.

Making this commitment to be a member is biblical and healthy, but it can also be uncomfortable, because it is all about giving up your own interests. It is about putting Jesus' mission first, and letting this eclipse everything else. Yet it is this service to Jesus which is the pathway to joy!

With this foundation of the meaning of membership, we shall now explore practically what membership looks like. We call it Meaningful Membership, and we have six aspects to it. Membership is an active thing—it is only meaningful when you are making your own contribution.

Encourage One Another

Being ready for Jesus' return

The writer to the Hebrews was concerned that Christians in his day were neglecting their fellowship with one another. He writes:

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:23-25).

These verses are an encouragement to keep meeting together. It is apparent that neglecting to meet for fellowship was a temptation for Christians in the first century, and so it must still be the case today. Indeed, it is easy to let other interests occupy us, but we end up neglecting our church family. We do this at our own peril!

Neglecting church is a great risk for us because the end of all things is at hand (“the Day drawing near”). When Jesus comes back, he is going to save those who belong to Him, and judge those who are against Him. So the writer is reminding us that we need to be ready for his return.

And his advice is very practical for keeping prepared. He says there is a very real purpose for gathering together—to encourage one another. Thus, we have a *responsibility to one another* as Christians to meet together. It is to help one another be ready for Jesus' return. We need to keep checking with one another that we are laying off any weight and casting off any sin which hinder our walk, and enduring to the final goal.¹

Opposition

One of the luxuries Christians have in Perth is a relative lack of opposition to the gospel. But this is an exception in our world. It is easy to forget in our comfort that fundamentally our world is opposed to Jesus.² However, even in the once "Christian" western world, opposition to the gospel is increasing. This reality puts us more in common with our brethren around the world and the churches of the New Testament. Whilst it is not desirable it is a reality. Belonging to Jesus, sooner or later, will bring us real suffering. Realistically, as Christians we are social pariahs in the eyes of the world. And so we need endurance. God has given us one another to help. The more opposition we would face, the more we would value the comfort and encouragement given by our brothers and sisters at church.

But there is more. As we spur one another on, we are not allowing the world to victimise us. Rather, we are given greater strength to face opposition and present the world with the life-giving hope of the gospel. We shall not be fearful of Jesus' opponents, but instead shall shine like the stars against the dark night sky as we hold out the gospel of hope.³

Do you keep hearing news of more anti-Christian laws being passed? Does this cause you to lose hope? Do the opposing voices tempt you to give up? God's answer is to go to church! And by the help of the Holy Spirit, we shall be strengthened to persevere to the end.

This exhortation to encourage one another applies in two main ways at NCC.

¹ Hebrews 12:1.

² Jesus said, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:18-19).

³ Philippians 1:28 and 2:14-16.

1. Commit to a Sunday gathering

At NCC we run multiple services each weekend. This is simply because we cannot all fit in one place at one time. Each service is designed to be a complete church gathering on its own, so most people do not need to attend more than once each week. As a member, it is most meaningful for your encouragement of others to remain committed to a particular time each week, because you will be able to build and keep relationships more easily.

Sunday church is a significant event

Sunday church is a very significant event. In the sermon, the primary word ministry occurs. As we are fed with the gospel which enlivenes our souls, we respond in worship, and we are built up together into Christ. Preaching is the gift that empowers all the other gifts. We are given grace which motivates all Christian living.

Isaiah paints a vivid picture of the effect of God's word:

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10-11).

There is a universal principal involved when God's word is spoken: life sprouts forth from ground which is watered. The proclamation of God's word does this. His word is living and active and achieves his purpose. It is powerful to germinate life. Isaiah continues:

"Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle" (verse 13).

It is picture language describing the new life that God's word brings. A new creation is made. People who receive God's word are taken from a state of death into a new lease on life. Where once there was transience, weakness, barrenness and uselessness there becomes permanence, strength, fruitfulness and purpose. This is God's power at work—don't we want to put ourselves there? We have this opportunity each week when we gather for church!

How to walk into church

Every new golfer needs to learn how to swing his club—it's basic to playing golf. And it's the same for coming to church, despite that sounding silly. In fact, just walking into church has got some "basics" associated with it.

We don't need to get deep here⁴, but a good starting place is arriving with the right default settings: *"Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God"* (Romans 15:7). Jesus has welcomed us to his family, and his grace compels us to welcome others too. Here are some practical tips. In fact, you can be welcoming without even saying anything:

- Park somewhere thoughtful. Parking is often limited and distant from the entry, so leave closer bays for people who need them more than you.
- Sit somewhere helpful. Imagine you are a newcomer who has never attended before. (Think of the last time you entered a church as a visitor, and what that was like for you). Where do you prefer to sit? Ordinarily, newcomers prefer to sit at the back. There are less eyes on them, and it's closer to the door in case they feel like leaving. And if there is an aisle seat, it's a particularly desirable spot! So it makes sense for us regular attenders to fill up the seats from the front first, and from the centre of each row. Newcomers don't want to walk all the way to the front to get a seat. And it's awkward for them to push past others to get to one. So let's leave the back rows and aisle seats for them if we can. That's a simple and effective way to be welcoming. And it means we will all fit into limited space better too.
- Reach out. There is no harm in stopping, smiling and giving a simple greeting to someone that is not being spoken to. Of course, the social fit must be right, so approach people who you think will connect with you naturally. Some helpful starter questions are, "Hi, I don't think we have been introduced," and "Do you know many people here?"

Jesus said, "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). Something as simple as welcoming well at church speaks to the watching world that we truly belong to Jesus. Isn't that the sort of place you would like to invite your non-Christian friend to?

⁴ An excellent and detailed resource for this is "How to Walk Into Church" by Tony Payne, Matthias Media, 2015.

2. Belong to a Growth Group

Discipleship in community

Another key way we can encourage one another is meeting in small groups. Whilst the Sunday sermon is a general message for all, small group discussions apply God's word to our specific circumstances. We call these groups "Growth Groups" because we grow together by applying the Bible directly to our lives. They meet weekly during school terms.

Growth Groups (GGs) are also the primary locus of pastoral care at NCC. The gospel is the beginning of all Christian care because it enlivens our souls. Additionally, GGs also provide the friendships where practical care can be effectively provided. So, GG is where you can best be involved in a caring community. You won't feel lonely at North Coast if you belong to one.

Leadership development

Growth Groups are limited in size to about 6-20 people. So, as NCC grows, we need to continuously start new groups. In their nature, GGs are a good environment for new leaders to be nurtured. GG leaders are always looking for potential new leaders from within their group who can start another group.

Leadership of a GG is an important task at NCC because it is for teaching the gospel in truth and love. It also involves setting a godly example. Therefore, GG leadership carries with it a significant amount of responsibility. It is shepherding a flock. We even call our GG leaders "Congregational Elders" because of this responsibility. It is not a role to be taken lightly.

What if work stops me joining a Growth Group?

WA has a large 'Fly-In-Fly-Out' workforce. FIFO work makes it hard for many people to attend things regularly. But we don't want this to be a discouragement from pursuing deeper, discipling relationships at church. So, if you work FIFO, we suggest you join a GG anyway—many groups keep in touch using online group chats. Or, if joining a group is impractical, you can pair with someone for a 'One-to-One' study.

There are more aspects of Meaningful Membership to discuss (below). However, regularly attending church and being in a GG are the most important because they keep us grounded in the gospel. Therefore, we consider church and GG attendance a reasonable time expectation for the majority of members. We don't want to burden people with more weekly commitments than these.

Serve One Another

Christian service is stewardship of grace

Christianity is more than feeding on God's word inwardly. Jesus also calls us to serve others. But this is not something we do to earn favour with God or others. Service is simply an expression of thanksgiving for what Jesus has done for us:

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1Peter 4:10-11, emphasis mine).

Observe how Christian service starts: "As each has received a gift..." This is what keeps work from being legalism. All Christians are recipients of gifts. God the Father has forgiven us through Jesus who willingly gave up his life for us. So we no longer live with the guilt of unforgiven sin. God has also adopted us into a new family—the church, making us heirs of his riches. And we have each been equipped by the Spirit to uniquely serve in that family. Shouldn't all of this give us great joy!

Therefore, having genuine thankfulness in our hearts, we joyfully serve one another with our best efforts. This is what it means to be good stewards of grace. We are only showing back the grace which we have first received from God. Importantly, serving is therefore not under force or compulsion. It does not need to seek God's approval because the approval has already been given. Grace is our only motivator. This is genuine *Christian* service.

In this way the New Testament has the expectation that Christians will serve one another. It comes from the natural outworking of the Spirit at work. There are two ways this applies for Meaningful Membership.

3. Serve on a Team

Gifted by the Holy Spirit

"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7). God orders things in his church so that it functions as a unified body through a diversity of people. God intentionally fuses us into the church, each of us having our own Spirit-given function, for building up others. At NCC we want to help people to serve in the ways that Jesus has naturally equipped them. At the same time, we have

structure so that our service is orderly. This means gathering people into teams, as necessary, and equipping people to lead those teams.

How can I start serving?

At Essentials you will be provided an overview of our serving structures. Do you have a talent? You can turn it into a *gift* by using it to benefit others. To begin with, don't be afraid to simply give some things a try that seem a general fit for you. The staff are there to help you integrate into serving.

Unity of purpose

Christian service is always “for the common good.” This comes with an important implication: it's not genuine service if you only serve ‘on your own terms’. Ultimately, the leaders must decide if people's efforts are working in harmony for advancing the gospel. Our goal as a church is mission, and so we must remain faithful to Jesus' Great Commission. We are not saying that everyone must be a great evangelist, for example—but we are saying that all roles must contribute towards growing the gospel (or help remove barriers to the gospel being heard). This is our common purpose. All serving must harmonise with this. See the appendix for other principles for serving teams.

4. Set up a regular deposit

Giving regularly, just like serving, is also a stewardship of grace. Here is a verse that highlights this:

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

In Christ we are recipients of every spiritual blessing. As adopted children, we inherit all the riches of the kingdom that the first-born, Jesus, has earned for us. As recipients of such rich blessing, it flows naturally that we give back some of the richness he has given us. Giving is a sign of your love for Jesus—it is a fruit that comes from thanksgiving.

See the appendix for an excellent synopsis of financial giving to the church. It expresses why giving is so important, both for the advancement of the gospel and also for ourselves.

Good habits

In 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 Paul instructs the church to be ready for a collection he is making for the Jerusalem church. He sets forth two principles:

- (1) Each person should set apart an amount weekly so that no last-minute collection needs to be made when he arrives. The point for us today is that giving should be regular because God is a God of order. Giving is not to be random, but reliable.
- (2) Giving should be in accordance with what each household has been blessed with. In the New Testament, Christians are not expected to give 10% of their earnings. Rather, Christians give from thankfulness which looks different in every situation. Give joyfully, according to the measure you have been blessed with.

In practical terms, we encourage giving to NCC by regular direct debit. Not only is this obedient and shows good discipline, it is also helpful for the finance administrators to make and apply the annual budget. Anonymity is best, but any private details are treated very securely. Cash is also perfectly acceptable, and is also treated securely.

Earthly realities

NCC is entirely self-funded. We do not receive external grants, which helps us keep our independence to advance the gospel without encumbrance. Members are relied on for making budget. It is normal reality that we need money to keep the rescue ship floating week by week. And there is a joy in relying on one another in this way, and seeing how God provides through ordinary people for great things to be done. Ultimately, gospel work is the only thing that is going to last into eternity. If this is not worthy of our joyful sacrifice, then what is?

Pray For One Another

Finally, let us not forget the crucial role of prayer for the Christian life, the church and the growth of the gospel.

Pray for the mission

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak” (Colossians 4:2-4).

There is so much that could be said about prayer. But crucially, prayer aligns us with the will of God. It keeps us walking humbly before God and one another, and keeps reminding us to be stewards of grace. It helps us remain watchful for the pitfalls of sin

that abound wherever we turn. Prayer is the engine-room of remaining faithful. It will help us stay at peace with our brothers and sisters whom we are called to live in unity with.

Paul asks for the Colossians to pray for his gospel work. Therefore, prayer is also the first step in all evangelism. Do you feel ill-equipped for evangelism? Not at all! You make a powerful contribution in prayer. Prayer for the work of the gospel is promoting the gospel, because you are seeking people's salvation.⁵

Again, there are two points of application.

5. Stay informed

Newsfeed

As you stay informed, you can pray informed, so be sure to read the weekly email newsfeed. This puts forward all the relevant matters of the church. Outside of Sunday, it is the main form of communication for NCC. Usually it adds detail to any Sunday announcements, for which time is limited, so it's an important aspect of keeping informed. As you read it, you can pray about who to invite to things. In the newsfeed you will also find other prayer points, weekly rosters for teams, other notices, etc.

6. Pray for the Vision

The significance of prayer has already been covered. Here are some ways to pray at NCC:

- Pre-service: there is a meeting for prayer before each Sunday service. All are welcome to take part.
- Revive Prayer: During school term there is a weekly prayer meeting (check the newsfeed for time and place). Again, all are welcome. Our prayers are mainly focused on growing the gospel in our church, our city and beyond.
- Prayer is a key aspect in Growth Group meetings. Many GGs also have online chats where prayer points can be shared.

⁵ "The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission: Promoting the Gospel with More Than Our Lips" by John Dickson, Zondervan, 2013. This book shows how evangelism is a natural outworking of every-day faithful Christian living.

Become a Member

We hope you will become a member at NCC because you want to partner with us to advance the gospel. Remember the definition:

Membership is a public commitment to partner at NCC for the growth of the gospel.

Membership is a public step of affiliation. Signing the membership form is rather like wearing a wedding ring: it is a sign of making the partnership.

Be encouraged that becoming a member is not declaring that you are a perfect Christian. It's simply saying you are joining with everyone else on the journey. You are just committing to be a growing Christian in a church on mission. Also, it's not saying that you are any less of a Christian if you are not a member.

Good reasons why you should not become a member

Another way of understanding membership is to grasp what it is not about. The following points provide good circumstances when membership would not be appropriate:

- (a) If you are not a Christian. Membership does not save you; only Jesus can do that. You must be united to Jesus before you are united to his people. So, membership is only meaningful for Christians. Speak to someone first if you need to work this one through.
- (b) If NCC is not your regular church. This is because membership involves a partnership with this specific local church.
- (c) If you think membership entitles you to 'get stuff'. The word 'membership' can have the wrong connotations associated with it. At NCC, we mean it as service to others for the common good (the gospel). A worldly concept of membership associates it merely with earning benefits, for example, a motor insurance membership may entitle you to discounts, etc. Remember we are a rescue ship! Belonging is not about entitlements. It's about sharing ourselves with others.
- (d) If you have a disagreement over a significant doctrinal matter (see p. 19-20). It is important that we stand with unity of mind. Again, speak to someone first if you need to work this one through.

(e) If you don't support or trust the leaders. Church leaders organise things for the good of the gospel, which is also for the good of your soul.⁶ You must be willing to submit to their authority and the common direction the church is steered in.

(f) If you don't support the NCC Vision: because this the end-goal of working together.

By the way, don't worry if you don't know how long you will stay at NCC. Membership is a commitment to others like a marriage, however, unlike a marriage it can be broken with a minimum of fuss and no loss of trust. Or, you could even keep your membership if you are venturing away on mission. Be sure to chat with the Membership Pastor.

There may be reasons to close your membership. Have a chat with us if you need help with your decision. Don't be hasty to leave if you are upset about something. It's better to try working things through so we can all be strengthened. If you do leave, be sure to have closure in the important relationships you have formed. Be sure to leave well. And you will go with our blessing.

Becoming a member: the process

1. Be sure you have read all of this booklet including the appendix and the "Membership Agreement" (p. 19-20). Ask questions if you don't understand anything.
2. Once you are satisfied, cut off and fill out the "Membership Application Form."
3. Hand the completed Form to the Membership Pastor, or put it in the slot at the Info Point.
4. The Membership Pastor processes all the applications. Each application is assessed, and then applicants are contacted. Usually the flow to membership occurs very smoothly, and takes a few weeks. You will be informed once your membership is opened.



Thank you for reading this booklet. We believe that laying firm foundations for membership is important for nurturing the unity of Jesus' church. It is a joyful thing to be united in spirit and in mind, so that we can strive side by side for the gospel.

David Stephenson, North Coast Church, December 2019.

All Scripture references are from the *English Standard Version*.

⁶ See Hebrews 13:17.

Appendix

1. Principles for serving teams

- We will only let Christians serve on, or lead, a serving team. Those who profess faith but won't repent of sin will be asked to step down.
- Under normal circumstances we expect all our members to be serving.
- Anyone who wants to start serving to will be strongly encouraged to join a Growth Group, if they aren't in one already. We want to make sure that our volunteers are being discipled and cared for.
- We will empower people and give them real responsibility, so that they are serving in a real and meaningful way.
- We will remind new volunteers that the first 3 months is an experiment. If it's not working out they can serve in other places. People don't always have to serve in the same spot.
- We accept that it's OK for volunteers to take a break from a particular ministry to serve somewhere else.
- We will warn unreliable people, who are at risk of being removed from a team.
- We seek to love, appreciate, encourage and support our volunteers, not so we can get the best out of them, but because this is a good and right thing to do.

2. Why Give?

In the Bible we are given good reasons to give. Here are some (amongst other) good reasons to give.

Everything belongs to God. The fact of the matter is that your money belongs to God anyway. He can at any time that pleases Him, take it all away. By giving we acknowledge his rightful claim to be the Sovereign Ruler and Owner of everything. To refrain from giving is tantamount to rejecting his Lordship.

Giving is truly a privilege. To be able to serve God in this way is a privilege that only people to whom God has given can share in. There are many Christians who do not have anything. They are not able to give even if they wanted to. We, who are able to give are in a privileged position.

Giving shows a true grasp of the gospel. The person who truly comprehends the amazing fact that Christ gave up the riches of heaven and became poor for our sakes in order to make us spiritually rich beyond our imagination will never be slack in giving.

Giving shows that we are grateful. After all that God has done for us, to not give shows such ingratitude that borders on rebellion.

Giving weans us off selfishness and promotes godliness. The truth of the matter is that we waste so much on our pleasures and frivolous pursuits. Giving is an act of self-discipline that curbs our natural bent towards self-gratification.

Giving causes others to praise God. In Corinthians Paul explains that just as Christ's sacrifice gives people reason to praise God, so people will praise God for the Corinthian's giving. This is because your giving enables the preaching and teaching of the word to take place. How else will people praise God unless they are saved? And how else will they be saved unless they are evangelised and the gospel is preached? And that can only happen through giving.

Giving makes us partners with Jesus! God's aim on earth is to bring all things under the headship of Jesus Christ. By giving to the local church we partner Jesus in his mission to grow his people both in numbers (evangelism) and in maturity (godliness) through the preaching of the word.

Membership Agreement

1. What 'membership' means

Through the gospel of Jesus Christ, God is creating a new community that shares the common life of being God's children. Whenever someone truly turns to God in Jesus and becomes a follower of Jesus he/she receives the Holy Spirit and is included into this invisible universal body - irrespective of whether he/she belongs to any local church. One day we will all join with countless others who now see God face to face in heaven. But until that day we go to be with God, we are called to work hard at being members of a local church gathering which is a visible expression of the universal invisible Church.

2. Foundational Christian beliefs

I believe in the Evangelical Doctrines as set out below. I believe that...

1. There is only one God. God is One and exists eternally in three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three Persons are distinct from each other but are never separate from each other.
2. God has spoken fully, perfectly and finally in the Bible. The Bible, comprising the Old and New Testaments, alone contains God's reliable teaching and provides us with all we need for salvation and serving God. Jesus and the writings of His authorised spokesmen, who He specifically commissioned to write the New Testament, are God's full and final revelation to us, not in negation of the Old Testament but in fulfilment.
3. Jesus died and was physically raised to life again. God loved us so much that He sent Jesus Christ His only Son to die bearing the punishment we deserve. On the third day Jesus rose bodily and physically from the dead proving that God has fully accepted His sacrifice. Outside of Jesus there is no forgiveness for displeasing God.
4. Jesus Christ will physically return. Jesus will return to judge every human being that is alive or has ever lived. Only those who have lived under His Lordship will be rescued from the Judgement that is coming.
5. God the Holy Spirit is active in the world today. The Holy Spirit gives us new life and enables us to believe the Gospel and grow to be more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit speaks to us through the Bible. Without Him we cannot do anything to please God.
6. The Father calls us to worship Him in Spirit and Truth. We worship God with our lives in simple sincerity, not in ritual nor in emotionalism, but with our minds, bodies and emotions.

7. We must spread the good news of Jesus. Since there is only one God who loves people and only one Saviour who gave Himself for people we must introduce people from every race, culture and nation to Jesus.

3. My commitment as a member

I believe that a Christian is part of the Community of Christ's people and I recognise that I must commit myself to obey the Head of the Church by committing to His people in the following ways...

1. I will love and care for His people (Matthew 25:31-46). At the least this will mean that I will not miss Church meetings unnecessarily. I will pray for the people in this Church. I will be committed to a small group of the Church unless there are good reasons for not doing so.

2. I will support His Church financially in a cheerful and generous spirit (Philippians 4:10-20). I will plan my giving in accordance with what God has generously given me.

3. I will use the spiritual gifts God has given me for the building up of the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). I will find ways where I can contribute actively to the life of the Church and where possible serve in a team.

4. I will be committed to His glory through evangelism (Romans 10:14-15). I know that I have a part to play in the corporate task of Evangelism. I will at the least actively pray for the evangelistic events that the Church hosts as well as always be on the lookout to welcome visitors and invite people to Church.

5. I am committed to changing and becoming more like Jesus in accordance with the moral teachings of the New Testament that flow from the gospel (Titus 2:11-14). I want to stop sinning and I am committed to encouraging my brothers and sisters to do the same.

We hope and pray that you will be encouraged to join us in our walk with God as our Father, the Lord Jesus as our King, and the Spirit as our guide.



NORTHCOASTCHURCH

Jesus · People · Eternity

Membership Application Form

Full Name (1): _____

Full Name (2): _____

Address: _____, _____ P'code: _____

Ph. Home: _____ Mob. (1): _____ Mob. (2): _____

Email (1): _____

Email (2): _____

Declaration of Membership

To the Oversight Board of North Coast Church Inc.:

☐ I am at least 18 years old and I am a Christian.

☐ I have been coming to North Coast Church for at least 3 months.

☐ I have done the 'Essentials' course and affirm that I agree with what was said.

☐ I have read this membership booklet and affirm that I agree with it.

☐ I am not currently a member of another church.

☐ I am devoted to living a life of repentance from sin and am not currently living a lifestyle characterised by overt sin.

☐ I accept that by becoming a member I undertake to remain faithful and committed to what I have said in answer to the questions above.

☐ I acknowledge the authority of the Eldership at North Coast Church and agree that with good biblical reason the Eldership may revoke my membership.

☐ Please enter my name as a member at North Coast Church.

Signed (1): _____

Signed (2): _____

Date: _____