

WHY BOTHER JOINING?

Why bother with all that formality and red tape? Can't we just come to church and worship God and let that be enough? Why should I need to "become a member" when I'm already part of God's family?

Actually, we have a lot of sympathy with this point of view. The Bible teaches very clearly that if you have made a firm decision to follow Jesus with everything you are, then you already *are* adopted into God's family so you already *are* a part of the Church. No CV or application form needed—you're already in, it's a done deal!

Following Jesus is not a solo activity, it's a joint one!

However, church is also about community. It's about a group of people choosing to commit to each other and to work out their faith together. If you read the New Testament there are dozens of commands that include the phrase "one another" (love one another, bear one another's burdens, forgive one another, spur one another on towards love and good deeds, and so on) which you simply cannot follow *unless* you are part of a community with other Christians. Following Jesus is not a solo activity, it's a joint one!

To be community, you've got to know who is in the community—you can't commit to a group of people if you don't know who they are. And so we encourage everyone that would call TBC "my church" to become a member—it's not a hoop to jump through so much as a celebration of the fact that God has made you a part of this particular little corner of his worldwide family.

WAY IN COURSE

Coming along to the course doesn't commit you to anything. Talk to Paul if you are interested.



CHAT TO US...

About anything in this leaflet.



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MEMBERSHIP

at Thornhill Baptist Church

Church is like a family. It's a place to belong, a place where you know you fit and are valued and have a part to play. It's a place where you know others and are known.

Membership is simply our way of recording who is part of the family. If TBC is your church, if you feel like your spiritual home is here, then membership is probably for you... Read on!

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THORNHILL
Baptist Church

MEMBERSHIP IN DETAIL

What would I be committing to?

The vision of this church says “Ordinary people, making an extraordinary God known. Come as you are. Join in. Be transformed.” Pick up a copy of our “Welcome to Thornhill Baptist Church” leaflet which unpacks this in more detail.

Being a member simply means saying “Yes, I want to be part of that!”

Being a member simply means saying “Yes, I want to be part of that!” We would say there are two vital questions that you need to be able to answer “yes” to if you are becoming a member of TBC...

- **Are you a Christian?** If you’re not sure or if you know that you haven’t yet made that decision then you are still absolutely included and welcome in the TBC family, but membership is probably not for you just yet. If you are a Christian we strongly encourage (but don’t insist) that you celebrate this by being baptised.
- **Are you joining in?** To the extent that you are able, with the gifts God has given you, are you willing to play a part at TBC? Not everyone has an up-front role, not everyone is able to be here every single week, not everyone has the same amount of time or energy to give, but everyone has a unique and important part to play. Our “Joining In at TBC” leaflet would tell you a bit more about this.

That’s it for requirements. There are lots of other things we would strongly *encourage* members to consider doing: joining a small group, giving to the church financially, taking part in church meetings and so on, but those are all optional. Good things to do but not requirements.

What are church meetings about?

We believe that God speaks to his church and that everyone in the church should be involved with listening to him and working out together what we think He is saying. So when we have decisions to make we get together to pray and discuss what we think God might be saying. Then we make decisions together on that basis. Occasionally we vote on what we think is the right decision.

We believe that God speaks to His church...

Anyone who is part of the church family is welcome to come to and take part in these meetings but if we put something to the vote it is only members who are allowed to vote.



You’ve convinced me, how do I join?

There are a few stages to the process but it’s really very simple...

- We run a course every few months called the “Way In Course” for anyone interested in getting baptised or becoming a member. It’s completely optional but a great way to find out whether membership is for you.
- Once you’ve decided you would like to be a member, let us know. The easiest way is to chat to one of the ministers.
- We’ll arrange for someone to meet with you and chat it through. This isn’t a grilling! It’s just an opportunity to talk through the stuff in this leaflet and for us to find out a bit more about you and for you to find out a bit more about us too.
- Then comes the formal bit... At the next church meeting we give a brief pen portrait about you and say “Fred Bloggs wants to be a member and we’ve chatted to him and we think it’s a great idea” (obviously we’ll use your name...). Then the church meeting all vote and say “Yes”. The vote thing might sound odd—think of it a bit like that part of a wedding where they say “Does anyone know of any reason why these two may not...”, nobody ever says no but it’s just the way we do things.
- Soon after that at a Sunday service, normally a communion service, we will welcome you as a member of the church and pray for you.

That’s all there is to it. If this is your spiritual home and you are serious about following Jesus and being part of his family here then we sincerely hope that you will say “yes, I want to be part of that” and become a member.