

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once they came to Christ by faith, identified and committed themselves to a particular local body. The New Testament does not explicitly teach formal membership by precept or example. However, West Evangelical Free Church (WEFC) recognizes the advantages of formal membership in order to implement the New Testament principles of *belonging*, *commitment*, *accountability*, and *stewardship* in the local body of Christ (a specific church).

The Church in Our Present Culture

We live in a culture that shies away from the values and lifestyles marked by the New Testament principles above. Isolation and depersonalization mark our modern society, even while we are surrounded by masses of people. Terms like “couch potato” and “cocooning” describe this sadly prevalent reality. Friendships going beyond surface relationships are increasingly rare.

In the midst of this, the church, Christ’s body of believers, is to be a community running counter to these trends.

Belonging: In a world full of people, we are looking for a place to belong. The church is a community of people who have come to faith in Christ, are forgiven of their sin, and have received new life in Christ forever (John 3:3, 16; Eph 1:7). As such, each and every Christian has found the most significant sense of *belonging* possible—he or she is a child of God (John 1:13) and a spiritual member of the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:12-13).

Commitment/Accountability: Our society is often described as a “consumer society.” People tend to approach things with a “what’s in it for me” mentality. Related to this is a general discomfort with the very idea of *commitment*. On the positive side, people are increasingly more careful about the commitments they make.

The local church is God’s provision of a community where true, biblical *commitment* is to be practiced. When individuals have received Christ as their personal Savior, they are called into a relationship not only with Christ, but with other Christians. Believers have the greatest opportunity to flourish spiritually when they are committed to a specific body of Christians and are in active fellowship with them. In this context of acceptance, the principles of *commitment* and *accountability* are best practiced.

Stewardship: Finally, Scripture reveals the Holy Spirit graciously gives spiritual gifts to every believer for the purpose of serving the body of Christ. Every Christian is vitally important to the local body (I Cor. 12:1-27). Furthermore, each of us is created in God’s image and uniquely endowed with natural talents. As Christians, we are indebted to God for His wonderful grace and love demonstrated to us in Christ. It is only appropriate that Christians view themselves as stewards of all God has given.

WEFC upholds the biblical principles of *belonging*, *commitment*, *accountability*, and *stewardship*. For all who have entered into a personal relationship with Christ and who consider WEFC their church home, we extend an opportunity to formalize this relationship by becoming a member.

The Responsibilities of Membership

When one becomes a member of WEFC, he or she is in effect saying, “I want to be a part of this spiritual family and I desire to serve in its ministries as led by my Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. Not only do I want to thrive spiritually myself, but I want to help WEFC and its ministries thrive.” Specifically, we encourage members and all regular attendees to express their *commitment* to WEFC in three crucial areas of their lives:

Our Time: Consistent fellowship with other believers is vital to one’s Christian walk. When the body of Christ is corporately assembled, believers should be willing to reasonably adjust their schedule to give priority to being with each other (Heb 10:24-25). We must be willing to give of our time to build His kingdom and to pursue those things of eternal significance (I Cor. 10:31; II Cor. 14-15).

Our Talents: The body of Christ is composed of many interdependent members, each uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the body. Therefore, each member should seek to identify, develop, and utilize his spiritual gifts and abilities and to seek a place of service within the body with the support and affirmation of the body (Rom 12:4-6, I Cor. 12).

Our Treasures: Everything is owned by God. We’ve been bought by Christ’s blood (I Cor. 6:20; Eph 1:7; I Pet 1:17-19). We are His, and His Kingdom should become the treasure we pursue (Matt 6:19-21). *Stewardship* is the act of placing all our personal resources at Christ’s disposal. Our giving is in response to Christ’s giving up of Himself for us. Faithful stewardship is using all our resources to bring glory to God (I Cor. 4:2, 10:31).

We recognize the New Testament principle of proportional giving as the standard for Christians. This principle is operative when an individual Christian gives as God has prospered him under the direction of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 9).

Becoming a Member

An opportunity for membership is extended to those persons who: 1) have received Jesus Christ, by faith, as their personal Savior and Lord; 2) identify with this church; and 3) desire membership in this church. Those persons are encouraged to express their *commitment* to Christ, primarily, and WEFC, secondarily, by becoming members. Steps for membership are as follows:

1. Pick up a "Membership Packet" from the Ministry Information Wall outside the gym or at westefc.org/membership and read through the material.
2. Complete the membership application form and return it to the church office.
3. Two individuals from the elder board will set up an interview with the applicant. The purpose is to allow the prospective member to ask questions and give the opportunity to share his/her personal testimony of how he/she came to Christ.
4. Eligibility for membership is based on a genuine faith in Christ. If this is evident during the interview, elders will vote to approve membership and the congregation will receive the prospective member into membership at the next Quarterly Business Meeting.



SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

Worship Services	9:30 & 11AM
Adult Sunday School	9:30 & 10:45 AM
Student Sunday School	9:30AM
WESTKids programming	9:30 AM

Ken Cooper
Lead Pastor

Greg Smith
Pastor of Student Ministries & Missions

Adam Leichner
Pastor of Worship & Young Adults

Leslie Holeman
Director of Kids Ministries

Joe Hutchinson
Pastor of Evangelism and Discipleship

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MEMBERSHIP

ITS PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE

**WEST
EVANGELICAL
FREE CHURCH**

