

Why do we have a 'Membership' system at Gateway?

Lot's of churches address membership in different ways; here we aim to explain why we chose to have a more structured 'Membership' arrangement at Gateway.

If you've not attended a membership course and become a 'member' of Gateway. We warmly encourage you to email office@gatewayleeds.net and book onto the next course!

Saved and added – the biblical view of church

One of the characteristics of church, as recorded by Luke in the Book of Acts, is that people were "saved and added" to them.

Acts 2:42 - 47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 5:14b

more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

'Added' to a church that was devoted to God's word, to prayer & worship and to what the apostle Paul would later describe in his letters (e.g. 1 Cor Ch 12) as "Body life" - a vibrant sense of family and community characterised by mutual generosity and care.

This is what we as Gateway Church mean by 'Membership': A freewill and considered choice, in response to God's love and grace in our lives and His vision for His church, to be "joined" (see Eph 4 v 15 & 16), as parts of a body; to be committed to one another; to look out for one another; to passionately work together to advance God's

kingdom and spread the magnificent Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We take the promise of Eph Ch 4 v 16 very seriously; that the church will grow "and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work". Each part valued, each part held together by a passionate love for Christ, a love for one another and a common vision. Each part/member fulfilling the personal call of God on their own life and the corporate call of God on the church!

Why do we have a membership course?

A 'formal' membership system isn't the only way to run a church, but we have found this to be a really helpful and practical way to work out what the bible means by being "added". Here are a few reasons why we find it so helpful:

- 1.** Through attending a Membership course we ensure that you are given a chance to hear about and discuss the vision, core values and practices of Gateway Church. It gives new people quality time with the leaders of the church which they may not have had the opportunity to get beforehand. It gives you the opportunity to meet with others considering the same step. And creates the space in a no pressure environment for you to make a prayerful and informed decision about whether or not this is the right church for you. We want to give time to make sure that you understand what the church is all about, what membership involves and to ask all the questions you like!
- 2.** Because being 'joined' to the 'body' is important to us we want to take the opportunity to publicly welcome into membership every new person who wants to become a member. This also gives the opportunity for existing members to see who has chosen to join and stand with them in pursuing God's call on Gateway. It is not always easy in a growing church to know just who are carrying the vision with you as a member and who are visitors or well meaning spectators. Our more formalised membership system, although always voluntary, enables every member to know who all the other members are. Everyone is welcome at Gateway but we are committed to building a warship and not a cruise liner!
- 3.** It also enables the eldership to know who their first pastoral and leadership responsibility is to, namely the 'members' of the church.

Can I still be part of the church if I'm not a member?

You are very welcome to attend any of our meetings without being a member, however if you really want to get involved in Gateway you need to let us know; being part of a church is much more than simply

attending meetings. The Bible teaches that the church is a community and that every Christian has been given gifts and abilities by God (1 Corinthians 12), to serve Him and for the health and strengthening of the whole church. We want to help you find your place in the church where you can grow personally, build excellent friendships, help others and take hold of the calling of God on your life. To help us to help you, we invite you to attend a membership course.

What exactly am I committing to?

Don't worry, there's nothing legally binding or manipulative about membership! In becoming a member you are simply making a statement that you want to be part of the church and in partnership you want to actively pursue our exciting vision and values. You can leave at any time, no obligation. And when God calls you to move on we will miss you but we will be thrilled to support in following God's will

I'm already a member of another church, can I join Gateway as well?

In certain circumstances you can be part of two churches e.g. students who still attend their home church during their holidays, but in general we encourage you to fully commit to a single church. We assess this on a case by case basis, so please speak to us if this is an issue for you.