

Error! Reference source not found.

Are You Asking Enough of Your Members?

Challenge your members to love God and each other as the Bible commands.

Philippians 3:13–14

Church membership is a sign of Christian discipleship and the means by which it grows. Ask a lot of your members; they are called, after all, to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind, and to love their neighbors as themselves. Rate yourself in each category as proficient, mediocre, or needing work.

	proficient	mediocre	needs work
Time in Attendance			
Members are required to attend worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach the importance of Christian fellowship and gathering as a community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach members the importance of preparing their hearts for worship before they arrive for a service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy in Ministry			
We require members to serve in some capacity of ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We help members discern their calling to serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach members the importance of prioritizing their schedules so that time is made for ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attention in Prayer			
Our members are expected to pray faithfully for the church and its ministries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach our members spiritual disciplines that will help build them up in prayer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Members are expected to attend church prayer meetings and to pray when they meet in committees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money in Support			
We require members to support the church with their money—just as we teach them to serve the church with their talents and abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We teach our members to give regularly and generously.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unity in Diversity			
We teach our members the responsibility of Christians to build up the whole church .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Members are taught that differences in views, understandings, and perspectives are part of community life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Witness			
Members are expected to share the gospel as a corporate body as well as individually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accountability			
We teach the importance of Christians participating in groups or friendships that hold them to their Christian commitments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Periodically, we allow members to renew or cancel their membership—thereby highlighting the importance of membership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—JAN G. LINN; Adapted from *Rocking the Church Membership Boat* by Linn, Jan G. Copyright © 2001 by the Christian Board of Publication. Reproduced with permission of Christian Board of Publication in the format “other book” via Copyright Clearance Center.

Discuss

1. How can high standards for membership help someone fulfill their calling to love God and their neighbour?
2. In which area do we need the most work? How can we begin strengthening that area?
3. What are some practical ways leaders can be seen modeling these commitments?

Error! Reference source not found.

Teaching Authentic Church Membership

It's time to raise the bar and ask for a serious commitment from your members.

Ephesians 4:3–6

Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries believes the church should be less like a cruise ship and more like a battleship. Rather than emphasizing a casual atmosphere and fun activities, churches need to raise the bar, to focus on a serious mission, and ensure that every person aboard serves a function. Recapturing membership is a vital first step.

How well do you teach about membership? After each statement, rank your teaching as poor, good, fair, or excellent.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
➤ We teach the importance of making a public commitment to a specific church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We teach the benefits of membership for mutual accountability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We emphasize the importance of membership for growing Christians.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We teach the interdependence of all members of the body of Christ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We teach church membership using the biblical language of family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We inform members of our church's discipline and seek informed consent to give our church leaders the authority to publicly confront a member caught in sin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ In our new members class, we ensure our members are believers and understand the gospel, our church's theology, our vision, how we address conflict, and our discipline process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We teach our members the church's expectations for giving, respecting leadership, and serving in the church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ We support the seriousness of membership by periodically focusing on it—perhaps on a new members' Sunday.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—KEN SANDE

Discuss

4. How would our church be different if we ranked “excellent” in each category?
5. What are some ways that church leaders, other than pastors, help “raise the bar” of membership?
6. What would it signify if we dedicated one Sunday to the importance of membership? What could we highlight on a day like this?