

Sovereign Way Christian Church

Membership Application

Name _____ Male ____ Female ____

Date of Birth _____ Email _____

Address _____

Marital Status _____ Spouse's Name _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Text (Y/N) ____

Name(s) / Age(s) of any children

Previous Church: _____

Were you baptized? – Y / N – Date _____

Sovereign Way Christian Church

Is Church Membership Biblical?

While there are denominations that do not have church membership, we see in the Scriptures that God's people have always been an *inclusive* group, in which sanctification occurs. And God has charged pastors with the responsibility to teach, care for, admonish, correct, and remove (if need be) those who are part of it.

While the New Testament contains the most explicit teaching on church membership, it has its roots in the Old Testament:

- The Garden of Eden had an inside and an outside (Gen. 2:8, 3:24).
- Noah's ark had an inside and an outside (Gen. 7:16).
- The people of God in the wilderness had to be ceremonially clean to remain inside the camp and not to be cast outside (Lev. 13:46, Num. 5:3).
- The nation of Israel was to have an inside and an outside, as represented by food laws, festivals, political boundaries, places of worship, and even strong provisions against inter-marriage (Lev. 11, Lev. 23, Josh. 14-21, 1 Kings 8, Deut. 7:3).¹

In the New Testament, these key passages that pertain to church discipline, holiness, accountability, and the responsibilities given to pastors/elders/overseers can only be rightfully applied in a local-church setting:

- Matthew 18:15-17: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."
- 1 Corinthians 5:12-13: "For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. 'Purge the evil person from among you.'"
- Hebrews 13:17: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."
- 1 Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching."

- Acts 20:28: “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”
- 1 Peter 5:2-3: “Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”
- See 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

So, yes, church membership is biblical. And the more specific purposes we see in submitting to a local church are:

1. Identifies us with Christ. (Matt. 16:18-19; 18:15-20; 1 Pet. 2:9)
2. Distinguishes us from the world (John 15:19; Eph. 1:4-6; 1 Pet. 2:9)
3. Guides us into the righteousness of Christ by presenting a standard of personal and corporate righteousness. (Acts 9:31; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Pet. 2:9)
4. Acts as a witness to non-Christians. (John 17:21,23; Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 2:9)
5. Glorifies God and enables us to enjoy His glory. (John 13:34-35; Eph. 3:21)
6. Identifies us with Christ’s people. (Eph. 5:24-32; Col. 1:18; cf. John 15:19)
7. Assists us in living the Christian life through the accountability of brothers and sisters in the faith. (Matt. 18:15-20; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13)
8. Makes us responsible for specific believers. (1 Cor. 5:12-13; Acts 2:44-45; 4:34)
9. Protects us from the world, the flesh and the Devil. (Matt. 16:18-19; John 17:15)

The Church, the Bride of Christ, is a specific group of people whom God in his sovereign grace has called out from the world, paid for by the blood of Christ, and set apart unto holiness and righteousness for his purposes.

We expect members of Sovereign Way Christian Church to:

1. Attend services regularly
2. Attend communion regularly (3rd Sunday of every month)
3. Attend membership meetings consistently (4 per year/1 per quarter)
4. Pray regularly

5. Give regularly
6. Build relationships with other members
7. Submit to the church's leaders
8. Serve as God gives opportunity

¹ From <http://9marks.org/answer/church-membership-biblical/>

Sovereign Way Christian Church Covenant

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Print: _____ Sign: _____ Date: _____

I have received and affirm the Sovereign Way CC Statement of Faith Print:

Print: _____ Sign: _____ Date: _____

I have received and agree to abide by the Sovereign Way CC By-laws Print:

Print: _____ Sign: _____ Date: _____