

Goodwood Evangelical Church

Church membership

All who come to the Services and activities at Goodwood Evangelical Church are warmly welcome. Taking the step of becoming a church member is a way of saying that you feel you belong here and that you want to wholeheartedly commit to the life and work of the church. Being committed to a church – a local body of believers - is a key way that the New Testament envisages we show our commitment to Christ.

Who can become a member?

Membership is for you if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and declare him to be your Lord and Saviour. Your life will therefore show evidence of the change which repentance and faith in God bring. We expect you to agree with the doctrines set out overleaf. In addition, we normally expect you to have witnessed to your faith by being baptised as a believer.

Why commit to being a church member?

There are great benefits to becoming a member. The commitment is mutual because when you commit yourself to the church the other church members commit themselves to you in Christian love. The church specifically commits to your pastoral care, to helping you grow spiritually and to fostering your gifts for the building up of the church. The church leaders have a particular responsibility towards you in this. It is also possible to be more fully involved in the life of the church since leadership positions in church activities are normally limited to members. Being a member also means that you can be consulted in the decision making of the church.

What do church members commit themselves to?

Commitment brings responsibilities as well as benefits. In becoming a member, you commit to the life and witness of the church. Below is a summary list of some of the things that we, as far as we are practically able and with the Holy Spirit's help, commit ourselves to. They are the kind of things you are probably already doing as a Christian with God's help.

- Coming regularly to church services and meetings, and sharing in communion, so that we encourage one another in our faith and in the Christian life (Hebrews 3:13, 10:25).
- Praying for one another and the life of the church (Ephesians 6:18-20; 1 Timothy 2:1-8).
- Caring for others in the church – thereby showing Christ's love for one another (Galatians 6:10; 1 Peter 4:8).
- Striving to live our day to day lives in the way the Bible teaches and when we fail repenting (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 John 1:8-2:6).
- Using our gifts, abilities and time to serve God in the church and beyond to our mutual benefit (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-30).
- Respecting the leadership of the church. The elders hold pastoral responsibility and seek to help the church to grow spiritually, not least by their example (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
- Having good relationships with other church members ("making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace") and resolving things when they go wrong in the way the Bible teaches us (Ephesians 4:2-3; Matthew 18:15-17).
- Giving regular financial support to the church in proportion to our personal resources and circumstances (1 Timothy 6:17-18; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11).

- Attending and participating in church members' meetings where the work and direction of the church is discussed under God and where there is opportunity for the elders to consult the wisdom of the church membership

How do I become a church member?

We would like to encourage all Christians who attend the church to join us in membership. If you are interested in becoming a member then an elder will meet with you to discuss how you became a Christian and your subsequent experience, what part you might play in the life of the church and answer any questions you may have. If the elders agree to welcome you into membership, then this is put to the church membership as a whole at a Church Meeting. You will then be welcomed into fellowship at one of the church services. There is a directory of members, with their contact details, which each member receives.

What happens if I am unable to meet these commitments?

We appreciate that people's circumstances might change so that they are not able to meet all of these commitments. For instance, for understandable reasons such as failing health or old age, a member may not be able to come to church services regularly or not at all. In these circumstances membership would obviously continue. In other circumstances the elders will try to meet with the member, if this is feasible, to discuss the matter as sensitively as possible and to try and resolve it. If the member is nevertheless unable to meet these commitments, then their membership may cease and the rest of the church members will be informed. It will always be open for membership to be re-established if the commitments can be met.

Many sins such as stealing, assault, cheating, etc. would be considered by most in society to be wrong – Christian or not. If a Christian were to sin in this way, they would no doubt see the need for repentance. However, we live in a society in which sexual ethics are seriously at odds with the Bible's teaching. Much of the Bible's teaching is counter to the current norms of our society. We therefore feel it right to explain the Bible's ideals for sexual ethics and the need for church members to strive to follow the Bible's teaching.

The Bible clearly teaches that marriage is between a man and a woman and that the proper place for sex (the 'one-flesh' relationship) is within marriage (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6). The Bible also teaches that sex outside of marriage whether this be adultery or pre-marital sex is wrong (Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 18-19; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; Hebrews 13:4). If a member sins sexually then we would expect them to repent and to show that repentance by living a life that is in line with what the Bible teaches (John 8:11). If a member continues in sexual sin, then this will be of pastoral concern and, following discussion where this is possible, may lead to membership ceasing until repentance is clearly demonstrated.

Any questions?

Please have a word with one of the elders if you have questions about membership or anything else in this paper.

Goodwood Evangelical Church
A Statement of Doctrine - What we believe

- The Divine Inspiration Authority and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.
2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 19:7-11
- The unity of Godhead with the distinction of Persons in that Unity, namely the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to whom equal honour is due.
Deuteronomy 6:4; Genesis 1:2, 26; Luke 3:22; John 1:1, 2; 5:17, 22-23; 14:25-26; 16:7, 27-28; Philippians 2:6; Hebrews 1:1-3, 8
- That the Son of God truly became man being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
John 1:14; Romans 8:3 Galatians 4:4; Matthew 1:20-25; Luke 1:35
- That His death was a sacrifice of atonement for the forgiveness of sins.
Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:24-28; Hebrews 10:12-14
- That He was raised from the dead; His body saw no decay and was raised on the third day from among the dead.
Matthew 28:6-7; 1 Corinthians 15:4, 20
- That He ascended in bodily form to the right hand of God and is now the all-sufficient High Priest of His people.
Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9; Ephesians 4:8-10; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25
- That He will come again to receive His people to Himself and that He will afterwards come with them to set up His kingdom.
John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Luke 1:32-33; Psalm 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44-45; 7:13-14
- That in consequence of the fall of Adam man became "lost", and at "enmity with God", that he is also "powerless" to do the will of God.
Psalm 53:2-3; Luke 19:10; Romans 3:19; 5:6, 12-19; 8:5-7
- The need of the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration and sanctification.
John 3:5-8; 16:8-11; Titus 3:4-7; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2
- That the justification of the sinner before God is by faith alone.
Romans 3:21-26; 4:4-5; 5:1; Galatians 2:16
- That every justified one is also born of God.
John 1:12-13; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23
- That such new birth results in and is made evident by holiness of life and good works.
Ephesians 2:10; 4:24; Titus 3:4-8
- That at death the spirit of man does not cease to exist or become unconscious.
Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 16:19-31; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8
- That the dead will be raised either to life or to condemnation; and that the blessedness of the righteous and the punishment of the unrighteous will be alike eternal.
1 Corinthians 15:51-57; Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 14:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Daniel 12:2; Acts 17:31; Revelation 20:11-15