

# Membership in a Local Church

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Is it necessary, and what's involved in doing so?

But, before we do that...

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Let's talk about what happens  
when we **first** become a Christian

# When we are baptized into Christ...

- God forgives or remits our sins; He “washes” them away—Acts 2:38; 22:16; Colossians 2:12–13.
- And what is our relationship to **Jesus Christ**?
  - We “marry” **Christ**; put on **Christ**; belong to Christ; we are joined to **Christ**; we are added to **Christ**—Mark 9:41; Rom. 7:4; Gal. 3:26–29; 1 Cor. 6:17; Acts 5:14; 11:24.
  - To use the language of Ephesians 2:5–6, God makes us alive **together with Christ**, raises us up **together with Christ**, makes us sit **together with Christ** in the heavenly places.

# When we are baptized into Christ...

- We therefore become members of the body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:13.
  - Because we're joined to Christ, we're joined together with everyone else who is joined to Christ.
- This body is also called the church—Eph. 1:22–23.
  - Includes all the saved—Ephesians 5:23.
  - Includes all the saved from all ages, living and dead—Hebrews 12:22–24.
- It's what we often refer to as the **universal church**.

# Here's an example...

- Crispus—Acts 18:7–8.
  - And so, Crispus was married to Christ, put on Christ, was joined to or added to Christ. He became a member of the body of Christ.
- But, he was also a member of something else—the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2, 14).
  - A church that met together to eat the Lord's supper (11:17–34), and engage in other forms of worship (ch. 14).
  - A church with a common treasury (16:1–3).

# So, how does that work?



## How do you become a member of a local church?



# Membership in a Local Church

- Attendance alone does not make one a functioning, faithful member of a local church—1 Corinthians 5.
  - How do we know for sure you're not just "visiting around"—unless you indicate your intentions?
- In the N.T. individual Christians **joined** a local church (Acts 9:26), and each church had a recognizable membership (1 Cor. 14:23).
  - Hard for elders to oversee the flock if they don't know for sure who's in the flock—1 Peter 5:2.

# Membership in a Local Church

- When you indicate to the elders you want to be a part of a local church, they now know they can count on you for much more—Eph. 4:16.
  - Suppose some brethren were starting a new local church in another location? How would we know who intends to a part of it?
- Stating one's intentions gives the elders/brethren the opportunity to decide whether or not to “receive” you—Acts 9:26; 18:27–28.