

Church Membership in the New Testament

Acts 2:37-47

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

(Acts 2:37-47)

Church Membership in the New Testament

1. The Church Affirms an Individual's Faith Through Baptism (v.38)

The Church Seems Compelled to Baptize Believers

And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?"
(Acts 8:36)

"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"
(Acts 10:47)

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1. The Church Affirms an Individual's Faith Through Baptism (v.38)
2. The Church is a Clearly Defined Group (v.41, 47)

The Church Was Keeping Records of Believers

In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120)...
(Acts 1:15)

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
(Acts 2:41)

But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.
(Acts 4:4)

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2. The Church is a Clearly Defined Group (v.41, 47)
3. Members Submit to the Church's Teaching and Oversight (v.42)
4. Members Gather Regularly with the Whole Church (v.44, 46)
5. Members Meet with Other Members Outside of the Main Gathering (v.46)

Church Membership in the New Testament

The Basis of the Church's Authority Is the Gospel (v.14-36)

- If the church loses the gospel, it loses its authority
- The church is not infallible, only the Bible is