

Joining Our **TEAM**



BENDIGOBAPTISTCHURCH

PART ONE

*The Church and Membership
(Application)*

Welcome:

We're glad you have chosen to find out more about 'Joining our Team' at Bendigo Baptist Church (BBC). Since we have people from many different church backgrounds within our congregation, we put together this booklet to explain who we are and how we can make an impact together. Our desire is that you will not only commit yourself to Christ but also to the ministry at Bendigo Baptist Church.

What is a church?

As we reflect on the scriptures, we discover that the church is:

1. **A body** or a group of believers (followers of Jesus) who have differing roles but worked together in the mission of reaching our city, state, nation and globe for Jesus.

"Just as each of us has one body with many members and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (Romans 12:4-5 NIV)

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." (Ephesians 4:15-16 NIV)

2. **Family.**

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household." (Ephesians 2:19 NIV)

3. The church's purpose is to make **disciples** not converts.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'" (Matthew 28:18-19 NIV)

4. **God's idea.**

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." (Matthew 16:18 NIV)

Membership: What Does It Mean at BBC?

The difference between “Attendees” and “Members” can be summed up in one word: *Commitment!*

We ask people to commit to membership for the following reasons:

1. A Biblical Reason:

Christ is committed to the Church. The Apostle Paul tells us “...*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...*” (Ephesians 5:25). Membership allows a believer to show his/her commitment to the local church.

2. A Practical Reason:

The church is very much a team effort, and within the team each one is encouraged to use the gifts God has given them – to the building up the body of Christ in love. Membership demonstrates one’s willingness to join and work together as a team. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

3. A Personal Reason:

The New Testament places major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to one another for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to any specific church family. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

4. A Legal Reason:

At Bendigo Baptist we are required by law to keep proper records of finance, property, minutes, etc. Therefore, we need an acceptable legal framework by which we can transact business and interact with governing authorities. In our church, based as we are on a congregational form of government, it is the membership who constitutes the legal framework. This cannot be some invisible, mystical body.

We do not ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches them to do. These responsibilities and expectations are spelled out below:

1. I will **protect** the unity of my church by:

- Acting in love towards other members. (John 17:20-23)
- Seeking to resolve all issues with other believers according to God's Word. (Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:21-31)
- Refusing to gossip about others.
- Supporting our beliefs.
- Following the leaders of this church as they follow Christ.

2. I will **share** in the vision and mission of my church by:

- Praying for its growth.
- Inviting those outside the church to connect with our church community.
- Being a team player.
- Warmly welcoming those who visit. (Luke 14:23; Romans 15:7)

3. I will **serve** the ministry of my church by:

- Discovering my gifts and talents and using them in ministry to others. (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Peter 4:10))
- I will seek to care for others in my Life Group by ministering to them when they are down and in need of help. I will let my Life Group know when I need help.

4. I will **support** the testimony of my church by:

- Attending services faithfully and making sure that participating in a discipleship focused Life Group is a high priority in my life.
- Seeking to live a godly life as I represent Jesus and the BBC family.
- Giving regularly – I commit to tithe. (Leviticus 27:30; 1 Corinthians 16:2)

If there comes a time when I decide I no longer wish to be a part of BBC, I will call the church or send a letter informing them that I no longer wish to be a part of the church family.

PART TWO

What We Believe

What Unifies Us as a Team? Our Theological Beliefs!

We have made it our mission as a church to be unified in the following other **key beliefs**:

1. The Divine inspiration and supreme authority of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:19)
2. The existence of one God in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who by the act of Creation called all things, both material and spiritual, into existence out of non-existence. (Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 28:19, Romans 8:9-10)
3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ - His incarnation as the Son of God (John 1:14), His atoning death (1 Peter 3:18), His resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20), His exaltation to the right hand of God where He ever lives to make intercession for His people (Acts 2:32-33, Hebrews 7:25) and His coming again to receive His people to Himself. (John 14:3, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)
4. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of men, women and children and their sanctification. (John 3:3-8, Romans 15:15-16)
5. The sinfulness of man - his fallen and lost estate by nature. (Romans 5:12)
6. The necessity, for salvation, of repentance towards God, and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Mark 1:15, Acts 2:38, Acts 20:21)
7. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the saints to eternal righteousness, the judgement of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, and His final judgements upon all unbelievers. (John 3:36, 11:26, 1 Thessalonians 4:14, John 5:22 & 27, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)
8. The two ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are of perpetual obligation; Baptism being by immersion of believers upon profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a symbol of the fellowship of the regenerate in His death, burial and resurrection; The Lord's Supper being a memorial of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, until He comes. (Romans 6:4-5, Mark 1:10, Acts 2:38-41, 1 Corinthians 11:23-29)

As a church we also hold some other beliefs from God's Word on which other Christians may have differing views of opinions. We give **liberty** and **grace** to one another on these matters but as a point of unity and to make sure that we remain undivided, we ask key leaders and volunteers at BBC to align themselves with our stance on the following topics:

1. **Stewardship & Generosity:**

The Bible has a great deal to say about money and our stewardship of it. We believe that we should generously support the church, the body of Christ, as God's Word commands. Giving ten percent of our income was defined as a tithe in the Old Testament and we see this as the biblical starting point of giving to the local church. (Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:7-12) But we do not stop there. We believe that our whole lives are a response to God's grace and love for us. And so, we consider it our privilege and our challenge to live lives of extravagant generosity. We view our entire lives as an offering to the Lord, and so we live our lives in such a way that we are no longer asking the question, "God, how much are you asking me to give?" but rather, "God, how much are you asking me to keep?" In living this way, we seek to honour God through our time, gifts, and resources for the purposes of His Kingdom. (2 Sam 24:24a; Matthew 23:23; Mark 12:43; Luke 11:42; Acts 4:32-5:11; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15).

We encourage everyone at BBC to live obediently as it pertains to their finances, which includes tithing. We believe that the local church wherever you attend is the storehouse and you should give your tithe there. Like any other form of obedience, tithing is a matter of the heart.

2. **Spiritual Gifts:**

God has designed the local church like a physical body, with Jesus Christ as the head. God gifts each of His children in unique and special ways to serve and build up the body. Therefore, spiritual gifts are not for personal benefit or glory, but to bring glory to God, as well as encouraging and building up the church. (1 Corinthians 14:4) No one individual can have all the gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:17-30) and we are interdependent on each other as the body of Christ.

While we believe that spiritual gifts outlined in scripture are available for all followers of Jesus, at times some division has come with reference to the use of tongues. God gives guidelines in His word for its use in public settings. If someone

speaks in a tongue it will be one at a time, (1 Corinthians 14:27) there must be an interpreter, (1 Corinthians 14:28), and there must be one who discerns whether it comes from God. (1 John 4:1)

3. **Alcohol:**

The Bible gives some stern teaching about the dangers of alcohol (Proverbs 20:1; 23:31-32). While it never prohibits its use, it certainly gives some clear guidelines about its practice reminding Christians who choose to drink that they must be wise about any consumption of alcohol. (1 Corinthians 10:23-33). It is very clear that the Bible condemns drunkenness. (Ephesians 5:18; 1 Timothy 3:3).

We recognise that the incorrect use of alcohol has caused widespread damage to lives in our community. We also recognise that the incorrect use of alcohol can lead to addictions at various levels, which results in the deterioration of health, behaviour, relationships, and lives in general. As a consequence, we do not support the incorrect use of alcohol. *Note: Alcohol cannot be consumed on any occasion while on church property.*

4. **Women in Ministry:**

The Bible teaches that women were involved in a variety of different ministry roles. They were entrusted with the responsibility of declaring to the disciples that Jesus was alive. (Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16: 1-8; Luke 24:1-10). In the early church, the daughter of Philip prophesied (Acts 21:9) and Priscilla participated with her husband in correcting the inadequate teaching of Apollos (Acts 18:26). Paul, like Jesus, seems to have had women helpers in his entourage. These women (Phoebe, Lydia, Euodia, Syntyche, Priscilla and Junia) functioned in prominent leadership positions designated as ministers (or deacons as seen in Romans 16:1), fellow workers (Romans 16:3), and co-labourers in the gospel (Philippians 4: 2-9).

On the day of Pentecost God poured out His Spirit on **'all people'** including sons and daughters' and 'servants, both men and women' (Acts 2:14-18). If the gift of the Spirit was given to all believers (both men and women) then so were His gifts. There is no evidence, (apart from the gift of apostleship) that the distribution of these gifts was restricted to men. Therefore, we believe that Christ gave spiritual gifts (including teaching and leadership gifts) to both sexes and expects them to be exercised and used for His service by the church. If we interpret scripture against scripture, it seems quite clear that a women gifted to teach, or lead can do so under the proviso of 1 Corinthians 11:3. This is our practice at BBC.

5. Sexuality & Marriage

The Bible has a lot to say about gender, marriage, human sexuality, and the way it should be expressed.

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27) Rejections of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

When it comes to marriage, we believe the Bible affirms it to be a lifelong union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6); upholding this relationship as the only appropriate place for sexual intimacy. While sex outside of the marriage relationship has become commonplace in our society, God's Word speaks against such activity declaring it to be immoral. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 7:2; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Ephesians 5:3)

When it comes to matters of homosexuality, we believe the Bible speaks against sexual acts with others of the same sex. (Genesis 19:1-13; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Timothy 1:10) While we as a church have determined our beliefs about these matters, we recognize that churches and other Christians take different views and approaches especially to the issues surrounding same-sex marriage. While we are NOT supportive of same-sex marriage, we also believe that we aren't called to take an activist position on this matter. In other words, we will NOT be found in the public square campaigning on this matter because we believe we have been called by God to abandon any rhetoric that might isolate or shame people and replace it with a willingness to build a bridge that introduces everyone towards the most wholesome relationship, which is found in Christ.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10) And as such, we believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Mark 6:31) Hateful and harassing behaviour will not be tolerated at Bendigo Baptist Church.