

# Who We Are

## Christians

Not some brand of Christians.

Not Christians plus something else.

We've no denominational affiliation, no governing association. We wear only the name of Jesus Christ, glorify Him alone in our name, acknowledge Him alone as our governing head.

*Colossians 3:17 ; Galatians 6:14 ; 1 Peter 4:14-16*

# What We Believe

## The Bible

Not part of the Bible—all of it.

And the Bible alone.

We've no creed, no catechism. We preach, we teach, we read, we recommend, we seek to know and live just the words God gave—all of them.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 ; 2 John 9 ; Revelation 22:18-19*

# What We Offer

## Spirituality

**Preaching** that convicts, exhorts, instructs and encourages.

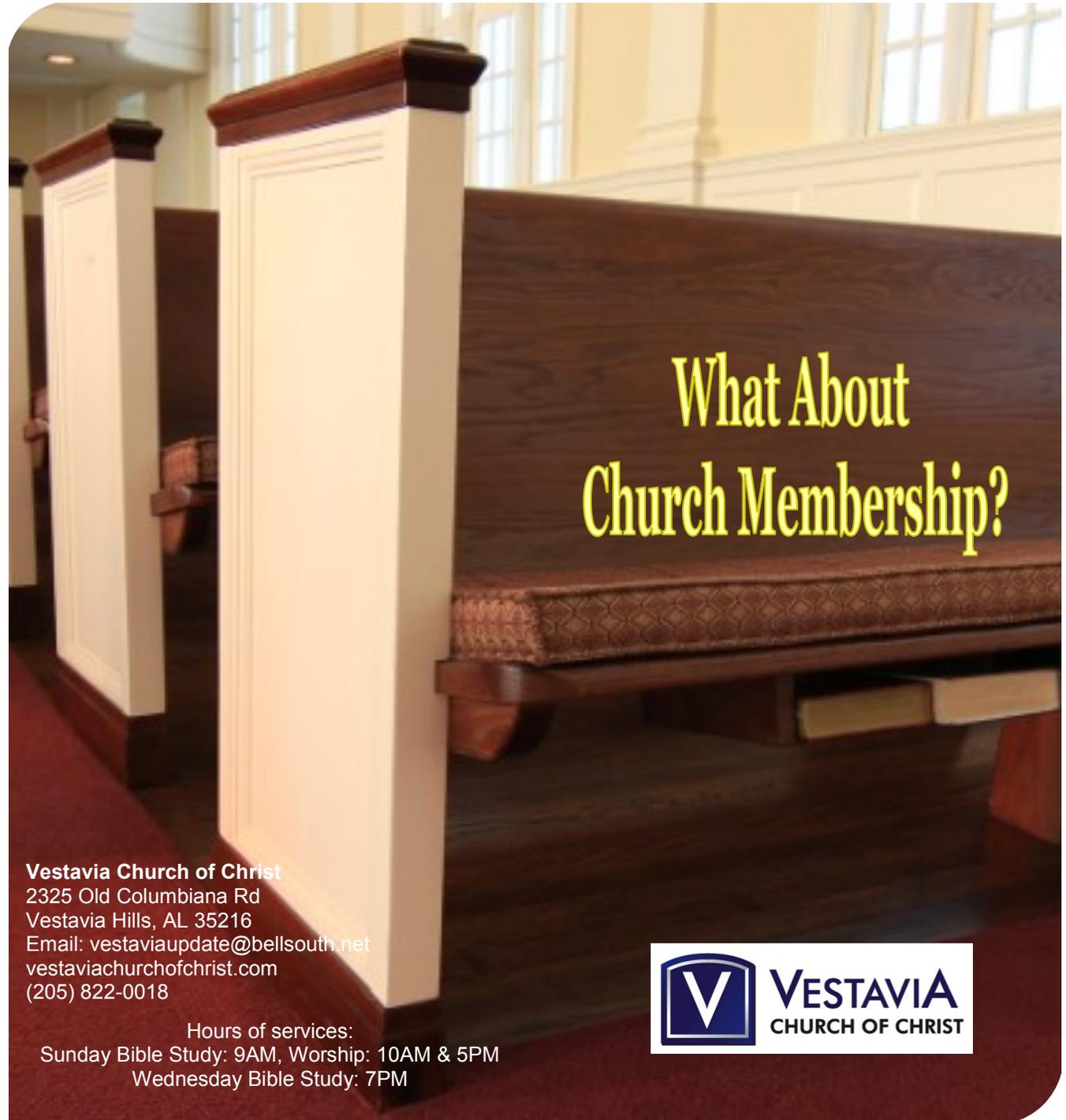
**Bible classes** that are practical, informative and stimulating for all ages.

**An atmosphere** for building better character and nurturing better homes.

**Worship** that is spirited, reverent, God-centered.

**A spiritual family** committed to God, to each other, to evangelism, to a heavenly hope.

*2 Timothy 4:2 ; 1 Peter 4:11 ; Romans 12:9-13*



# What About Church Membership?

**Vestavia Church of Christ**  
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(205) 822-0018

Hours of services:  
Sunday Bible Study: 9AM, Worship: 10AM & 5PM  
Wednesday Bible Study: 7PM



# What About “Church Membership”?

By Doy Moyer

When visiting with local congregations, it may be a common question to hear: “Are you interested in being a member of this congregation?” Where does this idea come from? Is it biblical, and what is the purpose?

The local church is not a country club. We are not trying to keep anyone out or produce some elite group. Rather, it is a matter of knowing who is part of our fellowship and how best to address the needs of all. We want as many as possible to be a part of our family, but this brings responsibilities with it, and we can carry these out more efficiently by knowing whom we are working with. Here are some principles to consider:

## 1. The distinction between the senses of the word “church” in Scripture is important.

“Church” (*ekklesia*) refers to an assembly, group, or congregation. With reference to God’s people, the word is used in these senses:

- A. *Universal*. This refers to all of God’s people no matter when or where (Heb 12:23). There is no universal organization, and God adds us to this number when we are saved (Acts 2:47).
- B. *Local*. We read about the church at Corinth (5 Cor 1:2) and the church of the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:1). In our context of “church membership,” we are referring to a local group. The fact that local groups met and had responsibilities should tell us something about the need to be accountable within this context. Ideally, a local congregation is to have overseers (elders, shepherds) and deacons among their number (Phil 1:1).
- C. *Local assembled*. Paul spoke of the Corinthians coming together “as a church” (1 Cor 11:18)

and the whole church assembling together (1 Cor 14:23). James speaks of those who would come into their assemblies (Jas 2:1-2). This requires regular meeting times and organized responsibilities.

God wants Christians to assemble regularly with other saints (cf. Heb 10:25). This requires responsibility. For example, we are to encourage one another (Heb 10:24), edify one another (cf. 1 Cor 14), and partake of the Lord’s Supper together (1 Cor 11:18ff). If we do not know who is or is not part of our regular assembly, and who is or is not available to participate, we become hampered in our ability to carry out these “one another” responsibilities.

**2. A local church is compared to a flock with shepherds.** Paul told the Ephesian elders, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers...” (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2). Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, calls His sheep “by name” (John 10:3). If shepherds do not know who is named among their flock, how can they do their job well?

**3. The flock has responsibility to submit to the shepherds.** Christians are to submit to elders in a local congregation. The fact that they are called a “flock” with shepherds shows a relationship. The flock needs to listen and submit to shepherds. “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you” (Heb 13:17). How can they do this if they don’t know who is and isn’t part of their charge?

**4. Christians are considered members of one another in the body (Rom 12:4-8; cf. 1 Cor 12:14-27).** Various gifts and abilities are exercised in the context of a body with differing member

functions. We are responsible toward one another, but if we don’t know who is or isn’t actually a part of the group, how do we function well?

**5. Every part of a body is responsible for doing its share.** Read Ephesians 4:11-16. If every part is to do its share, then there must be some kind of organized understanding of what someone’s “share” is and how that will affect other members. We cannot know this if we have no way of keeping track who is or isn’t identified as part of our local group.

**6. Paul tried to identify himself with the church at Jerusalem (Acts 9:26).** Because of his reputation as a persecutor, Barnabas stepped in to vouch for Paul so that from then on “he was with them” (v. 28). They knew Paul and Paul wanted to be identified with them. This also shows that a congregation has a right to make sure that whoever is among them is one who will help and not hurt them.

**7. Identifying with a local church is simply the process of making it known that you want to be a responsible part of the group.** You want to participate and have fellowship in what we do. You want to be with us. “Church membership” is recognition that you are part of our group and will share in the responsibilities. It need not be a real formal process. The elders may speak with you, but this is to make sure we all understand one another and any questions may be addressed.

We hope you will consider being a part of this congregation. For more information on who we are, see our website here

[www.vestaviachurchofchrist.com](http://www.vestaviachurchofchrist.com)