

FAQS REGARDING MEMBERSHIP AT REDEEMER'S

Redeemer's encourages individuals to be "All In" as they function as a member of the body of Christ at Redeemer's. The way to do that is to attend our Membership Classes at the conclusion of which you will be given an opportunity to make that commitment by signing a commitment card.

How did membership come about?

Since 1990, we have had an informal membership. We have said, "At Redeemer's, we ask you to do three things:

- 1) Come to a service more often than not
- 2) Be a part of a group (because we have no "Plan B" for fellowship)
- 3) Do something. Serve somewhere."

Recently, in the changes in our culture, we've determined that a more formal commitment is helpful in our non-commitment, disconnected, individualistic age.

"Member" in the New Testament is always applied to the larger Body of Christ. We become "members" of His Body when we believe the Gospel and receive His Holy Spirit which connects us to Him, and to every other person who shares His Spirit.

However, in the New Testament, every town and city had a single church with identified leaders (elders and pastors), and a recognized membership.

At Redeemer's, we are free to organize ourselves within biblical guidelines to promote Christlikeness. We see membership as a creative solution to the human problem of non-commitment to promote the biblical goal of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20).

Do I have to sign a card?

No. You can attend, be a part of a Community Group, and serve without ever signing a card.

So why do I have to sign a card to become a member?

Three reasons:

1) It helps you be intentional about your commitment to pursue the five biblical marks of a member of the Body of Christ at Redeemer's:

- Acknowledge Christ in your life
- Belong to a Community Group
- Contribute time, energy, and resources
- Develop Christian maturity
- Embrace Redeemer's vision and values

There's a difference between deciding to lose weight this year, and signing up to go to Weight Watchers; or living together and officially getting married. Intentional commitment matters.

2) It lets the pastors and elders of Redeemer's know for whom they are clearly responsible, and who are "All In" with our purpose and direction.

3) Why not? Which of the five marks do you disagree with? And if you agree with all five, is the problem one of unwillingness to submit to leaders who have to give an account to Christ for your growth? Ponder Hebrews 13:17:

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

What is it directing us to do? It does mean something for leaders and those who are trusting their leadership. So, again, assuming you are committed to pursuing these five marks, why not do what the elders are asking you to do by signing a commitment card?

Can't I be "All In" and not sign a card?

Not really. Redeemer's asks you to make known your commitment by signing the card. If you choose not to, you may be "mostly in," but not "All In." Deciding not to do it for whatever reason is fine, but it isn't what we're asking you to do when you're ready to be "All In" with Redeemer's.

What will I be restricted from doing if I fail to become a member by signing the card?

If you don't become a member by signing the card, very little will change. Communion is for every Christian, not just those who attend a certain church. Every study group, every Community Group, every growth opportunity is always open to everyone.

Most serving opportunities are also open to everyone; however those which have an influential teaching or leadership aspect will be limited to those whom we know embrace Redeemer's vision and values.

In our pluralistic society where variant and conflicting ideas abound (even in churches), and lifestyles (even unbiblical ones) are accepted in many churches, we are committed to help people seriously live out the Scriptures in their lives. We want those who exercise influence on others to have more in common than merely attendance at weekend services.

I already signed a card. Why do I have to do it again?

The card is not a "metric"—a means of simply counting innies and outies. It is a means of encouraging individuals to pursue what Christ wants as members of His body. Last year's commitment to lose ten pounds doesn't do much this year. Commitments need to be renewed. The last thing we desire is for people to sign a card and forget it.

This card is a "Covenant" (i.e. a very serious commitment), not a "metric." We are making a commitment to God as a church to serve Christ's Kingdom purposes. We have no goals as a church about how many members we want to tally annually, but we are clear about what kind of discipleship Christ calls the Church to live out. We intend to keep that picture clearly before our eyes so that we will not forget who we are in Christ (James 2:22-25) and that we might strive together to live out the faith of the Gospel (Phil 1:27).

Every January, we intend to encourage making a fresh commitment to pursue the five marks of a functional member of the Body of Christ at Redeemer's:

- Acknowledge Christ in my life
- Belong to a Community Group
- Contribute time, energy, and resources
- Develop Christian maturity
- Embrace Redeemer's vision and values

Again, these are not metrics used to measure perfection; they are values that we are dedicating ourselves to embody as members of this local church.

How will you use this information? I fear you will misuse or abuse my commitment.

We will use the information primarily three ways:

1) To encourage you personally to move toward Christlikeness through your own commitment. The very act of intentionally committing (i.e. signing the card) to pursue these five biblical values is a motivational tool in itself. Covenants—serious commitments—are biblical means of living out our faith wholeheartedly among others.

2) To assist you in living out these five values as members of the Body of Christ at Redeemer's by helping you find a Community Group, by presenting you with opportunities to grow and to serve and make a difference.

3) To ensure the unity of purpose in our leadership by restricting those influential positions (e.g. elders, teachers and Community Group leaders) to those who are committed to be "All In" with the vision and values of Redeemer's, and those who intend to recognize and respond to the leadership of Redeemer's.

Though accountability is a real value in the New Testament—to love and care for each other—pastors and elders will not be involved in restricting your freedom in Christ. We are not called to micro-manage your lives, but encourage you to become and act as responsible, free, wise Christians in this age of the world. We will never abuse your commitment or the information you entrust to us.

For reasons beyond my control (schedule, health), I can't be a formal part of a Community Group. Can I still be a "member"?

Yes, of course—if you are committed to pursuing the values of "Community" with at least a few others. You can think creatively how to connect with others regularly. Pastor Kory can help you find ways to experience Community in your life.