

# I'D LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER.

## INTRODUCTION.

**ChristChurch London started with a passion to make a difference in the heart of the nation. It was to meet in the centre of the capital and reach out across the Greater London area. It was to be a church that emphasised the importance of Scripture and the presence of the Holy Spirit, whilst seeking to be culturally sensitive to those it was reaching out to.**

This guide has been developed as an introduction to ChristChurch London, and is designed to help you decide whether this is the church to which you should belong during your time in London.

Becoming a member of a church is about becoming a part of the community and committing oneself to playing a part in pursuing the church's vision.

As you consider becoming a member at ChristChurch we would ask that you read through this guide and watch the accompanying videos, and that you ask yourself these two questions: Is this a vision I can own? Is this a community I could be part of? Every person has a unique role to play, and we hope that you will find in ChristChurch a community where you can both belong and make a significant contribution.



## VISION

**Our vision is to build a large church in central London whose members will glorify God by loving Him, loving each other, loving those who do not know Jesus yet and loving the nations.**

### LOVING GOD<sup>1</sup>

This is central to everything we do at ChristChurch. We want to give Him the best of the time and energy which we have available to make Him known and to bring Him glory in whatever we are doing.

We want to be a community which is continually growing in our knowledge of God and our experience of living our lives for Him. We prioritise worshipping together as a community, and encourage every member to be developing a personal walk with God.

### LOVING ONE ANOTHER<sup>2</sup>

We are convinced that one of the greatest needs in 21st-century urban society is to build strong, supportive communities. God has been building such communities ever since He created men and women! We believe that He wants to build another one across London.

The Bible gives us a framework for how we work this out in real life: how we honour one another, resolve conflict, help each other practically and strengthen each other through being faithful friends. We are taught to be welcoming and hospitable, to believe the best of one another and to seek each other's best.

Life Groups and serving teams are at the heart of our community, providing a place to belong, grow and live life together. In the context of a growing church, Life Groups form an ideal way in which we can enjoy community, build friendships and have fun together!

Life Groups meet in pubs, restaurants and homes in different areas of the city, and we encourage every member to belong to a Life Group and to serve in some way in church life.

### LOVING THOSE WHO DON'T KNOW JESUS YET<sup>3</sup>

Jesus' final command was to "go and make disciples"<sup>4</sup>. ChristChurch does this with energy and vigour, building a church that prioritises reaching others with the good news of Christ.

Every member of the church is encouraged to pray for friends who don't know Jesus, to invite them to Life Group socials and then to the Alpha Course. Through this, through one-to-one conversations with friends, and through meetings where we preach the Gospel, we are expecting many people to come to know Christ!

### LOVING THE NATIONS<sup>5</sup>

We are committed to being a church which embraces people of many nationalities, and believe that the cosmopolitan nature of London gives us a wonderful opportunity to build a church which demonstrates God's love for the nations.

We also want to equip and send people out to serve God in their workplaces across the city as well as planning to send church-planting teams to the international cities of the world in years to come.

God has called us to play a part in his worldwide mission to glorify His Son!

<sup>1</sup> **Matthew 22: 37-38**

<sup>2</sup> **John 13:34**

<sup>3</sup> **Matthew 28:18-19**

<sup>4</sup> **Matthew 28:18-20**

<sup>5</sup> **Matthew 28:18-19**

## HISTORY

**The first step towards the planting of ChristChurch occurred when God spoke to David Stroud on a train coming out of Waterloo Station in the mid 1980s: David was to return to London one day and be involved in planting churches.**

However, it was not until the summer of 2003 that God spoke again to David and Philippa in some quite remarkable ways, telling them that it was now time to make plans to move to London and begin the new church.

Adrian & Julia Holloway and Rhys & Sara Scott soon joined them. In April 2004, a core team of around 40 people began meeting fortnightly near Regent's Park, and mid-week Life Groups began to form in different parts of the city.

By the autumn, the team was ready to begin regular Sunday meetings, and ChristChurch London started to meet on a weekly basis in Covent Garden.

Within a year, the church had outgrown its meeting place and had moved to meet in a wine museum close to London Bridge. It was at this time that the first Alpha Course was launched, in a bar just off Fleet Street.

The Alpha Course has become a key part of our church life ever since then, with many people giving their lives to Christ as a result of being invited on the Course by their friends.

In September 2006, ChristChurch moved to the Piccadilly Theatre and continues to multiply Life Groups across the capital.

# THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP

**Becoming one with Christ, which happens at the moment of your conversion, means that you become part of His worldwide Church<sup>6</sup>, and this is totally a result of His grace. This 'positional' membership is eternal and unchanging. However, the Bible also urges 'positional members' to continue growing by becoming 'participating members' in a specific local community. Participating members have expressed their willingness to be part of the local church, to get involved and to help to make things happen. It is an important step for each believer to make in one's spiritual journey, and we believe that it is an essential part of becoming a mature and healthy believer.**

There are a number of other advantages to becoming a member of ChristChurch London:

1. **It gives us an opportunity to identify with other believers.** One of the marks of a true disciple is that they want to identify themselves with other followers of Jesus. Belonging to a local church is the biblical way of working this out.
2. **It gives us an opportunity to identify with the vision and calling that God has given this group of believers.** A sense of what God wants to do in the future, is of enormous benefit in our lives. It gives us a sense of focus and direction. It helps us to decide how to live now in the light of what God intends for the future. Embracing and owning the vision of the local church allows us to participate in God's great worldwide mission and to make our unique contribution to it. God wants to take ordinary people and to accomplish extraordinary things through them. Together, we can do much more than we can do apart.
3. **It gives us a chance to commit** - something we are not able to do by simply attending. The New Testament does not know anything of spectator Christianity or of believers drifting between churches. In this sense the local church is more like a battleship crew than guests on a luxury liner who are simply going along for the ride. We are participants together, not simply consumers.
4. **It provides some accountability to our lives:** we are no longer trying to do this on our own. We are part of a team. In the local church, we give permission to others to speak into our lives, to encourage us to live godly lives and to challenge decisions and life issues that might not be godly. Church membership also matters because the church leaders have to give an account to God for those entrusted into their care<sup>7</sup>; they therefore need to know who they are accountable for!
5. **It gives us opportunities to grow in ways that we would not otherwise<sup>8</sup>.** Serving in church life helps us to develop new skills, to take responsibility and to participate in building God's church. Time after time, the Bible tells stories of people who showed themselves faithful and dependable in serving, before seeing God's full call on their lives come to light.
6. **It gives you great relationships.** We all need friends with a similar outlook on life and heart for God. A coal removed from the fire will quickly die. Together we worship, serve, reach out and love. In this context we grow strong. As we commit ourselves to real relationships with each other, we sharpen one another and find ourselves growing closer to God. We become mature through developing authentic relationships, resolving conflict, working together and enduring the difficult times in life with our friends. Communities which exhibit these qualities become very attractive – Jesus tells us that we will be known as His disciples by our love for one another.  
We believe that the church is the hope of the world. Through the church, people who are far from God encounter Him, believe in Him and grow to be like Him. They begin to be agents of righteousness in the marketplace, in government, in the media, in their families. Like salt, they begin to flavour society with the knowledge of God.  
When you join a church, you don't join an organisation; you join a community and become part of a family.

<sup>6</sup> Romans 12:5

<sup>7</sup> Hebrews 13:7

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 25:14-30



# THE EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

THOSE WHO JOIN THE CHURCH ARE:

**1. BORN AGAIN AND BAPTISED IN WATER<sup>9</sup>.** It is impossible to be joined to God's people without first being joined to God. Being born again means committing your life to Jesus, repenting and turning away from sin, and accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour. The New Testament pattern was that those who became Christians were publicly baptised in water as an expression of their faith and their decision to lay their lives down for Christ. We are also taught that Christians live the Christian life by the power and enabling of the Holy Spirit and that all members are encouraged to continue to seek the Holy Spirit for his energising power in their lives<sup>10</sup>.

**2. ABLE TO GIVE TIME TO MEETING WITH OTHERS.** This includes regular attendance at our Sunday<sup>11</sup> celebrations and Life Groups. Weekly celebrations are a very important time in the week for the church community. They are where we gather before God together in worship, hear Scripture expounded, and are reminded of the vision we have together. It is also a great opportunity to meet new people and catch up with old friends. We encourage everyone to make attendance at these celebrations a high priority in their lives.

Life Groups provide a context for developing and maintaining real relationships in a church which is growing, and in which it is impossible to know everyone. True communities live life together and Life Groups give us a meaningful way in which we can do this with each other.

**3. READY TO GIVE FINANCIALLY.** The Bible teaches that we are to be good stewards of our resources because they are entrusted to us by God. He provides for us and teaches us to provide for His work. God sets the example of giving generously and calls us to respond in the same way<sup>12</sup>.

In the Old Testament, Scripture speaks of giving the first tenth (or tithe) back to God<sup>13</sup>, and the New Testament develops this with a generous attitude that assumes a tithe as a starting point for our giving.

At ChristChurch, our goal is to encourage everyone to give a tenth or more of our income to the work of God in the local church.

In turn, ChristChurch gives a tithe of all our income to the work of Newfrontiers (www.newfrontierstogether.org). This supports church planting, work amongst the world's poor and other aspects of the Newfrontiers Apostolic Team's ministry.

**4. PREPARED TO SERVE.** Dedicated teams of people spend hours welcoming visitors, rehearsing music, leading Life Groups, setting up for our Sunday meeting, running great children's activities and much more! There are so many opportunities. We would ask you to consider in what way you might be able to serve in church life.

**5. WILLING TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY TO REACH OUT TO THOSE IN THEIR WORLD.** Our church mission is to extend Jesus' love to those who don't know Him. This is a responsibility which we all share together, and it is central to God's call on us as a church.

**6. READY TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CARING FOR 'ONE ANOTHER' IN OUR WORLD.** Scripture tells us to love one another<sup>14</sup>, serve one another<sup>15</sup> and encourage one another<sup>16</sup>. Friends care for each other and support one another through the ups and downs of life. Pastoral care in a New Testament community is largely done as we care for one another. Church is a place where we love and serve others, and in turn we are loved and served.

It is also important that we keep short account with others. Therefore, where conflict arises, it is important to strive to maintain unity and to seek to resolve differences with one another quickly<sup>17</sup> so that the church remains healthy and united. We know that there is particular blessing on those who maintain good and godly relationships<sup>18</sup>.

**7. THOSE WHO WILL SUPPORT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH AND FOLLOW THE LEAD THAT THEY GIVE<sup>19</sup>.** God gives anointed leadership to the church to care for it, strengthen it, and protect it. Leaders in ChristChurch are accountable to the elders, who carry ultimate responsibility before God for the church. The elders and leaders seek to lead the church with a servant-like heart, giving attention to prayer and a godly lifestyle.

The elders are accountable to God for the way the church is led, taught, managed and cared for.

ChristChurch is a part of Newfrontiers, a family of churches together on a mission. Scripture teaches that apostolic ministry is given in order to build churches on a biblical foundation and to support and appoint eldership in the local churches. As such, the eldership team is also accountable to the Newfrontiers apostolic team.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 2:38

<sup>10</sup> Ephesians 5:18

<sup>11</sup> Hebrews 10:25

<sup>12</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:8-9

<sup>13</sup> Leviticus 27:30 Malachi 3:8-10

<sup>14</sup> Romans 13:8

<sup>15</sup> Galations 5:13

<sup>16</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:11

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 5:23, 18:15-18

<sup>18</sup> Psalms 133

<sup>19</sup> Hebrews 13:7



## THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

BEING PART OF THE LOCAL CHURCH GIVES US:

**1. SOMEWHERE TO CONTRIBUTE** The church is a place where everyone has something to give. In fact, the Bible teaches that all those who are born again are now 'ministers'<sup>20</sup>. This is a term for everyone who serves, not just for leaders! The Holy Spirit is promised to everyone who is saved<sup>21</sup>, and we can all minister by His power. The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts<sup>22</sup>, which we use to serve, encourage and build up the church. God also gives us practical gifts and skills, which are also vital for the development and establishing of God's church.

**2. SOMEWHERE TO GROW** In the church we find a community of people who are like-minded - looking to become more like Jesus every day. Trying to live an isolated Christian life is like trying to keep a coal glowing when it is removed from the fire. It is simply impossible. If, however, we are plugged in to a community who are pressing forward together, meeting together to pray, to plan and to study Scripture, we will find ourselves energised, healthy and growing.

**3. SOMEWHERE TO BE CARED FOR** Jesus has called us to be His friends<sup>23</sup>. As we are invited into friendship with Jesus, so we are invited into friendship in the church. Not only does the church provide a context for us to grow, but also a community in which we are loved, cared for and supported. At some point, every one of us will experience difficult and painful times in our lives. Having others around us who are caring, encouraging and demonstrating God's love to us practically transforms these seasons into times of experiencing God's love and grace.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:4-31

<sup>21</sup> Joel 2:28-29 Luke 11:9-13

<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians 12-14

<sup>23</sup> John 15:13-15

## THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A MEMBER

SO, HOW DO I JOIN CHRISTCHURCH?

**1. WE WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO BEGIN BY JOINING US REGULARLY AT OUR SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS AND BECOMING AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF A LIFE GROUP FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS.** Becoming a member is recognition of the fact that we are fully engaged in the life of the church, so getting involved is the first step!

**2. READ THROUGH THIS GUIDE** and watch the "Becoming a Member" videos in full and decide whether you are ready to give yourself to our vision, to supporting the leaders and to becoming involved in church life.

**3. CHAT WITH YOUR LIFE GROUP LEADER** about joining the church and ask them for a membership form.

**4. ASK YOUR LIFE GROUP LEADER TO SIGN YOUR MEMBERSHIP FORM,** and they will then pass it on to the eldership team.

**5. FROM TIME TO TIME, WE WELCOME MEMBERS INTO THE CHURCH DURING A SUNDAY CELEBRATION.** We will be in touch to let you know when that is happening for you!

We understand that there are some people who want to commit to ChristChurch but are not able to get involved in a Life Group because of family or work commitments. If this is the case, please ask to chat to a member of the staff team or eldership about this, as part of the process of becoming a member.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1. When should I become a member of ChristChurch London?

We read that when the Church started at Pentecost, 3,000 new believers were added on that very day<sup>24</sup>. There is no reason to delay becoming a member of the church once you are clear that this is the community you want to join. At the same time, becoming a member is not a light decision, so you should take the necessary time to make a clear and real commitment.

If you are joining ChristChurch from another church, it is important that you have resolved any issues and that the parting is on good terms. If you are unable to resolve things, please speak to one of the leaders about this so that we help you to seek a way forward.

## 2. Why do I need to be baptised to become a member?

Jesus commands us to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit..."<sup>25</sup> Similarly, "those who believed the message were baptised..."<sup>26</sup> and Peter calls those in Jerusalem to "repent and be baptised..."<sup>27</sup> There is clearly a link here between being a disciple and being baptised.

We also see in Scripture that baptism always meant full immersion. The Greek word 'baptizo' (which is translated 'baptise' in our Bibles) literally meant 'to plunge, dip, immerse' and would have been used to describe a ship that had sunk. Furthermore, baptism signifies that we have died with Christ, been buried with Christ, and then been raised with Christ to new life. Total immersion is therefore a significant part of this declaration: the water represents the grave which we go down into with our sin, and which we are raised out of in Christ without our sin<sup>28</sup>.

It is therefore our conviction that Scripture teaches that being baptised is an essential part of becoming a disciple and, for that reason, is something that we require for membership at ChristChurch London.

## 3. Why should I give 10% of my income to the church?

Old Testament teaching called the people of God to bring a tithe<sup>29</sup> (or a tenth, often referred to as the 'first fruits') as a sacrifice to God. This reminded the people that what they had was given to them by God, and that the first part of their income or produce should go back to God. The tithe was brought to the temple so that the priests and Levites had food and drink, and provided for the work of the temple and the priesthood.

In the book of Malachi, God confronts Israel for not tithing with the words "you are robbing me..."<sup>30</sup> He commands them to bring the whole tithe, or the full amount, to the storehouse, His place of worship.

On top of the tithe, there were other offerings that the people would present to the Lord during the year, and these would have been above and beyond that which was their regular 'first fruits' giving, or tithing.

In the New Testament, we are exhorted to be generous<sup>31</sup>. We are to reflect God's generous heart in the way that we give, and this would go further than the Old Testament 'standard' of tithing and giving offerings. Our giving is a part of our worship; we give regularly and in keeping with our income.

Tithing should not constrain us; some will be able to give more than a tenth, and we should grow in faith so that we can respond to God with greater generosity.

It is our conviction then that those people who are committed to the church should bring their full tithe into the church to provide for the work of the church, and seek to be generous over and above this when it comes to offerings, and in responding to other godly causes.

## 4. I'm already participating - why formalise it?

We believe there is great spiritual benefit in stating our intention to commit to a community of men and women who are seeking to follow God. It is a way of saying, "your vision is my vision", "these people are my people" and "I want to give myself to the building of the church in this place". The articulation of these things is powerful and helps us to grow as we both state them and seek to live them out. Membership helps us to do this in a meaningful way.

## 5. What if I disagree with a leadership decision in the church?

If you disagree with a leadership decision, you are welcome to come and chat with one of the leaders about it. Hopefully, they will be able to explain the decision, and the matter can be resolved in the ensuing dialogue. In the event that you are still in disagreement, we ask that you "agree to disagree" but make church unity a priority and continue to trust that God is at work in the church through the leadership. We would ask that you do not seek to make your viewpoint known among others in a manner that breaks down unity and undermines their trust in the leadership. Rather, we ask that you represent us fairly and respectfully, and that you work with us as we press ahead together seeking God's will for the church.

## 6. What is your position on women in leadership? What if I disagree?

It is our conviction that the spiritual gift of leadership is available to both men and women and that both sexes are to exercise leadership in the local church<sup>32</sup>.

We also believe that there is a role of ultimate responsibility in the church - eldership - that the Bible teaches is for men only, in the same way as the husband has final responsibility and authority in the home<sup>33</sup>.

Elders are to serve the church with love, humility and care, being examples of the way we should all follow Christ.

We are happy for those who disagree with this position to be members of ChristChurch London but we would ask that they do not 'crusade' for a different point of view or engage in disruptive or divisive behaviour regarding this or any other issue. Rather, we ask that they respectfully honour the convictions of the leadership in this church and follow the leadership wholeheartedly.

## 7. How are decisions made in the church?

The elders are responsible, before God, for leading the church forward, and they delegate responsibility for the Life Groups and various ministries in the church to the appropriate leaders. ChristChurch London is a registered charitable company and the directors of

the Charity are responsible for the legal and financial running of the church. The majority of the directors cannot be employed by the church. We believe that it is important that each local church is accountable to others outside their own setting, and ChristChurch London is overseen by the Newfrontiers London team. Members of the Newfrontiers London team meet regularly with the elders.

## 8. What is the next step?

Once you have read this guide and watched the accompanying videos we would encourage you to talk with your Life Group leader and ask for a membership form.

<sup>24</sup> **Acts 2:41**

<sup>25</sup> **Matthew 28:19**

<sup>26</sup> **Acts 2:38**

<sup>27</sup> **Acts 2:41**

<sup>28</sup> **Romans 6:3-4**

<sup>29</sup> **Lev 27:30-32 2 Chron 31:4-6, Neh 10:36-37 Deut 18:3-5**

<sup>30</sup> **Malachi 3:9-10**

<sup>31</sup> **2 Corinthians 9:6-12**

<sup>32</sup> **Romans 12:8**

<sup>33</sup> **Ephesians 5:21-33**

# STATEMENT OF FAITH: WHAT WE BELIEVE

**THE BIBLE** We believe that God inspired the words of the Bible to be written. The Bible is the supreme authority to which we refer in all matters of faith and practice. (*Psalms 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21*)

**GOD** We believe in the three-fold revelation of God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, given in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. We believe that God is sovereign - in creation, in sustaining the universe, in the revelation of Himself, in saving mankind and in the final judgement of all people. He works out everything in accordance with His will. (*Genesis 1:1; Psalms 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; Colossians 1:15-17*)

**JESUS** We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is both fully God and fully man. He lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all mankind by dying on a cross. He rose from the dead and is now at God's right hand, interceding for His people and ruling as Lord over all. (*Colossians 2:9; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Philippians 2:6-11; Romans 8:34*)

**THE HOLY SPIRIT** We believe that the Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. It is He who makes people aware of their sin and their need of God, and He lives in the hearts of all Christians. He reveals spiritual truth to us, gives us power for living, and changes us to be more like Jesus. (*Genesis 1:2; 2 Corinthians 3:17; John 14:16,17; John 16:8; Acts 1:8*)

**MANKIND** We believe that God made Man – male and female – in His own image, as the crown of creation, to have fellowship with Him. However, because of sin, we are all guilty before God and subject to His wrath and condemnation. (*Genesis 1:27; Psalms 8:4,5; Romans 3:23; Romans 14:10; Ephesians 2:3*)

**SALVATION** We believe that salvation is a gift from God to man. God has had an eternal plan to rescue people from sin, death and hell and to bring them into a relationship with Himself, which they will enjoy both here on earth and with Him in heaven for eternity. We are saved when we turn from our sin and put our trust in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus; this is solely by God's grace, and not because of anything good we have done. (*Romans 1:17; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Timothy 1:9*)

**THE CHURCH** We believe in one universal Church, made up of all true followers of Jesus Christ. We believe that all Christians need to be committed to a local church, where they can join with other believers in worshipping God and showing His love to others. (*1 Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 2:19-22; Ephesians 3:10,11*)

**THE RETURN OF JESUS** We believe in a future, personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus to the earth in power and glory. (*Matthew 16:27; Matthew 26:64; Acts 1:11; Revelation 22:12*)