

Church Membership at Ebenezer: A Simple Guide!

As a charity we are required to have trustees and a church membership. In addition, we are required to have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and 3 additional meetings (“Quarterly Church Meetings”) each year.

The following FAQ is based on our Church Handbook and should hopefully cover most of the key questions you might have, but please don’t hesitate to speak to a church leader or email leaders@ebenezermachen.com if you’d like any more information. Full copies of our Constitution and Church Handbook are also available on request.

Q. Who can become a member of Ebenezer Machen?

If you are an adult, a Christian and you think of Ebenezer Machen as your ‘spiritual home’ then you can demonstrate this formally by becoming a **Church Member**.

Alternatively, if you are below the age of 18 you can become a “**Junior Member**”. Junior Members are not allowed to vote in church meetings but you may attend with consent of their parents/guardians and at least one Church Leader.

Furthermore, if you are 18 or over but spend periods of the year away from the local area due to academic study/apprenticeship or similar you can become a “**Student Member**”. Student Members may attend and vote in all Church Meetings.

Finally, if you have membership of a church elsewhere but are joining our church family for a significant period of time you can become an “**Associate Member**”. This category of membership is also available for anyone who may not be capable of managing and administering their own affairs because of mental disorder, illness or injury. As an Associate Member you may attend and participate in discussions at a Church Members’ meetings but are not allowed to vote.

Q. What does becoming a member involve? What is the commitment?

Become a Church Member is a formal way of committing to use your gifts and time to serve in our Church. Church Members are encouraged to attend Church Members’ meetings whenever possible, and have a particular role in decision-making within our Church, for example proposing and voting on decisions such as:

- appointing Church Leaders and Charity Trustees;
- agreeing ways the Church should carry out its mission, activities and priorities;
- deciding to create new staff roles and/or appoint staff;
- identifying ways of using the Church’s resources.

Q. How can I become a member?

If you’d like to become a Church Member, we ask people to complete the following online form **at least 2 weeks before our AGM**:

The form will ask you to do the following:

- Enter your details (name, contact number and email address).
- Select which “type” of membership you are requesting (see above).
- Agree with our Basis of Faith (please see Appendix A at the end of this page).
- Commit to use your time and gifts to serve Jesus together with the other members of the Church.
- Accept the responsibilities of being a church member (see Appendix B at the end of this page).
- Agree to abide by the constitution (available on request).

Applications for membership will then be taken by the church leaders to the AGM, where they must be voted on by the Church Members. Following the AGM the Church Leaders will contact you to let you know the decision of the church.

Q. What is the procedure for changing or ending my membership?

If you wish to change or end your membership at the church, please write to the leaders or simply email leaders@ebenezermachen.com

Appendix A – Basis of Faith

1 God

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator; Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

2 The Bible

God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

3 The Human Race

All men and women, being created male and female in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please him.

4 The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all

his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

5 Salvation

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

6 The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

7 The Church

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for pastoral care and discipline, and for evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

8 Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into His Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

9 Marriage

Sexual intimacy is a gift from God and is to be enjoyed exclusively within the context of marriage. Marriage is, by definition, heterosexual and between one man and one woman. Marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and His Church.

10 The Future

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.

Appendix B – Responsibilities of Church Members

The following is taken directly from the Church Handbook:

Being a Church Member brings both privileges and responsibilities. The privileges include being identified as part of this local Church of God, being able to take part in discussing and agreeing the way in which the Church should move forward and benefitting from the pastoral care of the Church leaders and other members.

We ask all Church Members to show their commitment to actively serving Christ as part of our Church, including by:

- a. Seeking to live a life that is consistent with the faith we profess in our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Bible's teaching (Philippians 3:16; Hebrews 10:23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- b. Regularly taking part in church meetings "(Acts 2:42, Acts 20:7 and Hebrews 10:24-25)".
- c. Regular private prayer, including for Church Members and the work and ministry of our Church, and personal Bible study (2 Timothy 3:15-17, Philippians 4:6).
- d. Sharing in the work of our Church, according to the individual calling, gifts and opportunities God has given you. (1 Corinthians 12-14).
- e. Using opportunities to witness to those who don't regularly attend our Church, by what you say and the way you live. (Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 15:58).
- f. Praying for the Leadership team in their commitments and as they work together to build up the church of God, both locally and worldwide (1 Thessalonians 5:12-18).
- g. Regular financial giving to our Church and the Lord's work in general, including for mission, in accordance with your means (Malachi 3:10, 1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 9:6-7).
- h. Showing Christian love and concern both to others in the church and for the wider community (John 13:35, 1 Thessalonians 3:12).
- i. Attending and participating in Church 'business' meetings, as individual circumstances allow. Sharing views respectfully and openly and engaging in constructive discussion on matters raised at church meetings with the aim of reaching a common mind and unity of purpose. (1 Timothy 4:12, Philippians 2:1-2).

Each Full Member also has a legal duty, which is stated in our Constitution as follows:

“It is the duty of each member of the Church to exercise his or her powers as a Member of the Church in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the Church.”¹

¹ This is a statutory duty under s.220 Charities Act 2011 that each voting member of the ClO must comply with.