

Genesis Membership Process

Jesus was the founder of a movement that changed the world within a few generations and continues its life-changing power today. Genesis seeks to capture some of this dynamic by having a simplified structure and membership process based on Jesus' ministry as it centered on two clearly defined communities:

There was a community of care and concern of whom Jesus asked nothing. The poor and outcast came to Jesus in multitudes because he welcomed them, healed them and loved them unconditionally. The only people who did not become part of this community were those whose self-centeredness, self-righteousness or closed-mindedness made them want to have nothing to do with it.

There was also a community of covenant and commitment of whom Jesus asked everything. This was a community within a community consisting of those who had heard and responded to the call of Jesus to discipleship. Like the tax collector Levi, they "got up, left everything and followed Jesus."

Genesis seeks to base membership in its community on the model of Jesus by emphasizing the twofold nature of our community:

There is a Church Community of whom we ask nothing. We welcome into our midst those who are broken and hurting, those who have felt like outcasts in other churches, those who have questions and doubts, those who are confused and frustrated. Some people feel like they belong the first time they walk in the door; others respond more slowly. That's okay; God calls us to love people, not judge them.

There is also a Covenant Community of whom we ask everything. Discipleship is not for the faint of heart. For us to be a people among whom God dwells and through whom God transforms lives, we need to make profound commitments to follow Jesus and to love one another.

Becoming a member of the Church Community is as simple as showing up and providing essential information such as name and address. Becoming a member of the Covenant Community involves much more:

1. Being Baptized

As Jesus prepared to begin his ministry, he was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Genesis views baptism as a natural first step for those who follow Jesus because it allows us to identify publicly with him by dying to self and being raised to new life.

2. Understanding Our Statement of Faith

When Peter affirmed Jesus as "the Messiah, the Son of the Living God," Jesus told him this revelation from God was the rock upon which the church would be built. Genesis affirms the Apostles' Creed which, in its brevity and simplicity, captures the essence of historic Christian faith:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. On the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

3. Owning Our Core Values

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:10-13 that the church can build on the foundation of Jesus with various materials, some of which will stand the test of time while others will not. Genesis has identified the following values with which to build:

Every Person Matters: *Each person is created in the image of God, entrusted with creative and spiritual gifts. We are each called upon to make a unique and humble contribution in the body of Christ.*

Taking the Next Step: *Becoming disciples of Jesus Christ requires faithfulness to Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The journey has to begin somewhere; it is an ongoing pilgrimage that starts where we are and continues throughout our life.*

Authentic Community: *We seek to be a people that God might dwell among; open, honest, accepting, welcoming and non-judgmental. We recognize that we are better together than apart.*

All of Life is Worship: *God is good. In response to God's faithfulness we are compelled to respond with worship, reverence and praise in all areas of our lives; in work, play, study, prayer, giving and service.*

Love in Action: *God loves people and so we love people. We show God's love in the world through action born of compassion. Without judgment, we seek to embody the love of Jesus Christ through tangible acts of kindness, care and service to others.*

Sending Out: *We send empowered and equipped disciples of Jesus Christ into the world. Every follower of Jesus is a missionary in the community where they live, work, serve and play.*

4. Affirming Our Church Covenant

In order to live out our core values as a Covenant Community of disciples, we make these commitments:

- *to discover, develop and utilize our creative and spiritual gifts in service to the body of Christ while treating with dignity and respect both those within our community and those outside of it.*
- *to study the Scriptures regularly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to respond faithfully to biblical teaching and the leading of the Holy Spirit throughout our lifelong spiritual journey.*
- *to be actively involved in a small group where we can learn how to deepen our connection to God and be open, honest, accepting, welcoming and non-judgmental in all our relationships.*
- *to enter fully into our worship gatherings and to acknowledge God's constant presence in our lives, giving thanks wherever we live, work, serve and play.*
- *to demonstrate God's love in the world through action born of compassion, seeking without judgment, to embody the love of Jesus through tangible acts of kindness, care and service.*
- *to respond faithfully to God's call, serving as missionaries wherever we live, work, serve and play.*

5. Participating in a Covenant Service

Twice a year, in March and September, Genesis will have a Sunday morning Covenant Service that will explain what it means to be part of the Covenant Community and will give everyone an opportunity to indicate in writing their commitment to be an active member of such a community.

Membership in the Genesis Covenant Community does not confer elevated status or special privileges, nor is it either necessary or sufficient to qualify a person for service or leadership. Membership is solely intended to give clear indication of an individual's desire to be a disciple, following Jesus together with those at Genesis.