



I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

“A Healthy Church Member ”

Ephesians 5:22-6:4

February 16, 2014

- ✓ We Should Be Deeply Falling in Love with Jesus on an Individual Basis

- ✓ We Should Fall Deeply in Love with the Church

- ✓ We Should Teach Our Children To Deeply Love the Church

- ✓ We Should Pray Together as a Family for Our Church
We Should Pray for Our Pastor/Staff - Church Leadership
 - Pray His Family
 - Pray For His Preparation of Messages
 - Pray for His Protection
 - Pray for His Physical/Spiritual/Emotional/Mental Health

- ✓ We Should Worship Together as a Church Family

- ✓ We Should Serve Together in Our Church

The 3rd Pledge

I will pray for my pastor every day. I understand that a pastor's work is never ending. His day are filled with numerous demands that bring emotional highs and lows. He must deal with critics. He must be a good husband and father. Because my pastor cannot do all things in his own power, I will pray for his strength and wisdom daily.

The 4th Pledge

I am a Church Member...I will lead my family to be healthy members of this Church. We will pray together for our Church. We will worship together in our Church. We will serve together in our Church. And we will ask Christ to help us fall deeper in love with this Church because He gave His life for Her.

Our Response:

1. Do you understand how much God values your life and desires to have that personal relationship with you? You can ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart and life and save you right now. Remember it is as simple as **ABC!** **Admit** to God you are a sinner, **Ask** for His forgiveness, **Believe** Jesus is God's Son, **Confess** Him as Savior & **Commit** Your Life to Him as Lord (the Boss).
2. Maybe you have made that decision, but never have made it public. He is calling you to step out and take that next step that He asks us to do. Be baptized.
3. In order for you to grow and be all that the Lord is calling you to be, you need to be plugged in to a church. If you do not have a church home, and God has called you to be a part of **Petal FBC**, then step across the line today and join! We need you and you need us
4. Make a fresh commitment today to pray every day for your Pastor – He desperately needs it and desires it!!
5. Let us all be teaching our families about falling more in love with Jesus and His Church each and every day!

I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

“A Healthy Church Member”

Ephesians 5:22-6:4

February 16, 2014 AM Service

So we continue this most important journey in the life of our Church – What does it mean when we say, I am a Church Member? What does that imply? What does that require? What are the benefits? All great questions. So far we have talked about it means to be a Biblical member – To be a **Functioning Church Member** – one who understands and embraces their unique and important role in the body of Christ – the Church. It means that I am active – it’s not passive – it means that I serve and not come to be served. Last week we talked about being **A Unifying Church Member** – that is our calling and responsibility to make certain that there is unity in the Church – that means we actively pursue unity, we seek to forgive and give forgiveness, we don’t gossip and challenge others not to do it either, we focus on what we have in common more than what is different about us and when conflict does arise we are committed to working it out in a Biblical Fashion based on Matthew 18.

We’ve also made 2 important pledges and we will ask you to make 2 more today – not to just read these words and forget them but embrace them – in fact we’re going to have a banner here next week and going to ask everyone who is willing to be a church member and willing to pledge these 6 commitment to sign it.

This morning we come to the Third part of the journey on discovering what it means to be a Church Member – my commitment to be **A Healthy Church Member**. If we want to have a healthy church which is vital then it must full of healthy Church Members. A healthy church grows, it is able to reach into its community and make a huge and lasting impact, it is able to send people out into the world to make a difference. Are we a healthy Church? I would say yes in many ways, but we have room to improve. The Lord has certain brought us to a better place of health over these last several years and for that I am grateful! But may we not get content. Being healthy means we have to work at staying that way. It doesn’t happen naturally, it is something we must work at. Here some of what it means to be a healthy Member.

✓ **We Should Be Deeply Falling in Love with Jesus on an Individual Basis**

This is vital and perhaps the most important thing I will say today (which is dangerous since I still have most of the message left!). In order for our church to be the church the Lord desires for it to be, it will only be as healthy as the members who make it up – healthy meaning those who are becoming followers of Jesus Christ each and every day and not fans. It means we are embracing the clear call Jesus gave His disciples we talked about from Matthew when Peter proclaimed who Jesus was and He told them what it would mean to follow Him – we also see it clearly laid out in the Great Commandment... To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

It means that you are doing something that your preacher can't make you do or check to see if you are doing it – and that is that we are daily spending time in the Word of God, praying, memorizing His Word and moment by moment falling more in love with Jesus. This is where most of our growth happens – it's not in church or a LifeGroup or a special camp or revival – no it's what happens when it's just you and the Lord alone! And the scary part is, it can be the easiest to let slide and skimp on because nobody will notice we think! The old saying goes, miss time alone with the Lord one day, He knows it, a 2nd day and we know it and a third day, others know it!

We all have those dry seasons – I've had them and so have you – so the challenge is to keep coming to the well and drinking – start over today and make that fresh commitment to spend time alone with the Savior! He's waiting and ready – will you be?

✓ **We Should Fall Deeply in Love the Church**

And here is the 2nd thing that follows naturally – the more we fall in love with Jesus, the more we will fall in love with the Church. And this should be a natural response – the more we fall in love with Jesus we will fall in love with what's He's in love with – and that's His bride – the Church. That's why it makes no sense at all for a believer to ever say that don't need the church, don't have to go to church, don't like the church – it simply doesn't equal up!

ILLUS: Falling in love with my wife – because I love her I fall in love with what she does – LSU games – the game day experience – before I knew it I knew the cheers, when to yell, and even looked forward to it...

Our Anniversary Today – nobody has to tell me to love her or I better do something for her – it's my natural reaction or it should be because I deeply love her and need her. And the more I love her, the more I love her and love what she loves. So do you deeply love the Church? If not, then take a 2nd look today because the call is clear that we should. I love the church and I am committed to it for the rest of my days – I love being a part of the family of God – it's the greatest privilege of our lives and I don't want to waste one second of it!

So if we are falling in love with the church – we will be committed to it and be willing to sacrifice for it and it will be a huge priority in our lives and we will not allow the things of the world to crowd it out! Our world needs to see this by the way! Us saying no and telling them humbly but confidently that our Church and Church Family come before the things of the world! Honestly this shouldn't even be an issue and one that early church would be shocked at us today, but I urge you to fall in love with the church afresh and anew and be committed to it!

✓ **We Should Teach our Children To Deeply Love the Church**

Another key ingredient and where we tie the Scriptures together Mom and Dad – our children we fall in love with what we are in love with! This is huge! ILLUS: Boys – LSU & Ole Miss

That's fun stuff – what do your children and grandchildren see that you are in love with and what is a deep priority in your life? Is it Christ? Is it the Church? Do they see it as a priority in your life and your family's lives?

We talked earlier about the fact that in just 2 generation we have seen a steep decline in the church – from 66% of a generation being in in Church to less than 15% with the Millennials – born 1980-2000. What in the world happened? Our Vision Team is reading the book Essential Church and it talks about the importance and opportunity of reclaiming a generation of dropouts. It tells us that they no longer see the church as essential as necessary in their lives. One of the key ingredients has to do with parents and their children and church. Children are told church

is important but do not see the church as essential in the lives of their parents. Studies have been done and shown clearly the direct correlation between a parents saying church is important and showing them it is essential in their family. The problem comes when parents simply attend church but never give any spiritual guidance to their children. We must be telling them why church and matters of spirituality are essential. It's not just getting them here that counts though it is important – it's telling them why it's important. Action without words leaves this generation wondering why they're attending church. Because we have to, your grandparents expect us to, it looks good in the community, I need a pick me up once a week, it makes me feel better about myself – they need to see that it makes a huge difference in our lives but how we live and what we say. They see how we live our faith and share our faith. Survey showed that your child was 20% more likely to stay connected to church when you regularly discuss spiritual matters, actively serve in the Church (and that means them too), and praying together regularly. This is huge!

Lastly we be discipling our children – teaching them how to pray, how to read the Bible and that it helps guide their decision, and that they have a strong belief system (A Christian worldview) in place. The stats show that if they have established the habits of a disciple the rate of them staying is even higher – some of these as much as 40%!!

So moms and dads, grandparents, and even Church members – what are they seeing in you and me? How do they see what we believe and what we say making a difference in the way we live our lives? We must show them, lead them, and teach them why Church is vital and essential to the spiritual health of any Christ Follower. Without we are doomed!

✓ **We Should Pray Together as a Family for Our Church**

I humbly ask you to do these things not only for me but Chris, our staff and our Church Leadership! It is a high calling and one that is demanding and challenging and overwhelming and makes one feel very inadequate to do! Let me brag – I feel many of you do this and you have been so kind and you have spoiled us rotten since we have been here! I cannot say thank you enough!

We Should Pray for Our Pastor/Staff (Church Leadership)

- **Pray His Family**
- **Pray For His Preparation of Messages**
- **Pray for His Protection**
- **Pray for His Physical/Spiritual/Emotional/Mental Health**

The battle is won and fought through prayer. I encourage you when you worship together as a family that you pray for your Church every day! Be reminded that Satan doesn't stand idly by while our Church grows – He will seek to distract us, divide us, and make us too busy to have time for the church and time to serve! So please pray, pray, pray. A family who prays together, stays together.

✓ **We Should Worship Together as a Church Family**

This is vital and important and again why I love a multi-generational church and why we don't have a separate Children' service and youth service, but we worship together as a Church Family. Single adults it's also why worshiping together is so vital – we worship as a family. I want my kids to see me worship, sing, pray, and involved myself in the life of this church. How do they know how to sing? How to worship? How to pray? How to lead? They watch us. I know we are not to worship for show, but we realize though that our worship is a testimony and a witness to others around us. I know you may not know all the songs (I don't either all the time) but many you do know and you can sing or at least read the words – don't just stand there unmoved and unstirred let's worship together as the family of God!

✓ **We Should Serve Together in Our Church**

This is vital as well – that we teach our children the importance of serving in the Church. That's why next Sunday we will host our annual Ministry/Missions Fair – to highlight the ways you can get involved in serving both here in our church and especially and most importantly outside of our Church. This is vital. Back to getting this generation connected – one way is that they have a vital place of service – why we are moving our High School students into places of service – love our children help take up the offering – they can help greet too, we want to involve them – they are not the church of tomorrow but today – if we wait until tomorrow many of them will be gone – it will be too late! Let

your children see you serving and the importance of serving and serve together as a family!

The 3rd Pledge

I will pray for my pastor every day. I understand that a pastor's work is never ending. His day are filled with numerous demands that bring emotional highs and lows. He must deal with critics. He must be a good husband and father. Because my pastor cannot do all things in his own power, I will pray for his strength and wisdom daily.

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