



Church Polity

- Deacons -

Submitted Question:

I would like to understand why it would be important for anyone to become a member. Is it not submitting yourself under the authority of the church? Also, how does membership impact church discipline? Do non-members go through the same process?

Christian Member (All Members Profess Faith)	Non-Member Who Professes Faith & Regular Attender
Vote	No Vote
Leadership	No Leadership
Legal Identification with Westwood	No Legal Identification with Westwood
Expected to serve in any ministry where gifting and need match	Limited Service
Pastoral Care	Pastoral Care -- as we are best able to care
Trials and Needs -- Expected to Stay (real life...hope people stay to work it out)	No covenant expectation – real life ... can walk away with no commitments – we hope people will stay while we work things out
Expected to use resources to advance the ministry	No expectation

Ephesians 4:11-13 seems to be saying that the role of apostles/prophets/evangelists/pastors/teachers is to equip all the saints to do the work of the church, or to equip them “for the work of service/ergon diakonia.” I think there’s a common perception in our culture that the staff/elders/deacons do most of the work (with the exception of those who truly understand what God has called them to, and typically, the ratio falls in line with the 80/20 rule—20% of the people doing 80% of the work).

How should the average congregant think about their role in this specific church body, especially if they don't have one of these titles that suggest they've been specifically tasked with an office? What specific tasks should we **explicitly** ask and encourage members/regular, committed attendees to be involved in (either from the pulpit or as we consider people to ask to be involved in certain ministries)? Should there be a distinction between what we allow official members, regular attendees (not officially members, but have proven committed), and newer attendees who haven't had time to show commitment to our body to do in our specific church body? I'm thinking specifically about children's ministry, greeter ministry, food ministry, etc. And further, what should our community look like overall, and what should the expectation be for communicating what our community is doing together? Small groups, regular meals, intentionally serving the community together and sharing the gospel, etc.?

How should the average congregant think about their role in this specific church body, especially if they don't have one of these titles that suggest they've been specifically tasked with an office?

Proverbs 3:27

James 4:17

What specific tasks should we **explicitly** ask and encourage members/regular, committed attendees to be involved in (either from the pulpit or as we consider people to ask to be involved in certain ministries)?

Luke 10:29-37 – Need

Matthew 6:3 – Humility

1 Corinthians 11:33/Ephesians 5:19/1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13 – Explicit – Use YOUR gifts

Should there be a distinction between what we allow official members, regular attendees (not officially members, but have proven committed), and newer attendees who haven't had time to show commitment to our body to do in our specific church body? I'm thinking specifically about children's ministry, greeter ministry, food ministry, etc.

Yes – but we are not in a lab...body is very diverse, life is crazy, and commitment is not the same for church as for other parts of life – trying to move to a healthy model and understanding of membership – i.e. background checks for all those who serve in leadership or vulnerable sectors

Church is not a business – it's a family – how diverse is any one family on any issue?

Church is not a business – it's a hospital and rehab facility of the soul. There will always be varied levels of Christian maturity AND unsaved people who seem to have fruit – Luke 8:4-15

Church is not a business it is our identity – 1 Peter 2:4-5

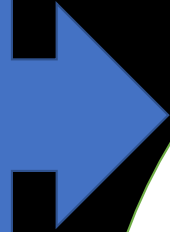
Bible

Book

Text

Historical View
Of The Church
On The Text

(Not
Inspired/Not
Authority –
Helpful)

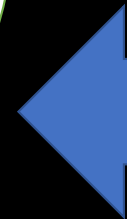


Bible

Book

Text

Commentaries
(Not
Inspired/Not
Authority –
Helpful)



2 Tim 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”

**The Bible will not contradict itself. Find the harmony! –
The Bible is God’s revelation of Himself – Find humility!**

Primary Texts:

- **Acts 6 – First Deacons**
- **1 Timothy 2:8-3:13 – Men and Women in Worship, Elders and Deacons in worship and life**

Primary Texts:

- **Acts 6 – First Deacons**
 - **Need was with the Greek speaking Jewish believers**
 - **Need was met through Greek speaking Jewish men**
 - **Hellenists**

1 Timothy 2:8–3:13 (ESV): 8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 9 likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, 10 but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. 11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

(See 1 Peter 3:3 – Adornment)

3:1-7: The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

- Notice flow of thought:
 - V 2 an overseer must be
 - V 8 deacons likewise [must be be]
 - V 11 women (wives?) likewise [must be]
 - V12 men [*must be* – each be]
- Structure, then, seems to point to the fact that the distinction is not between men and women, but deacons and elders
 - Verse 8 – 10, and 13 all deacons
 - Verse 11 female deacons
 - Verse 12 male deacons

- Silence:

Why would deacon wives be addressed and not elder wives in the section on leadership, especially since “wives/women” in the deacon section are held to the same moral qualifications as elders and other deacons, i.e. dignified, sober-minded?

Answer? We are understanding this to be because the instruction for diaconate includes male and female deacons.

Few more things to consider:

- The text can be translated as wife, but there is the issue of Paul toggling back and forth between women and wives for general interaction in the church and deaconate, but then no instruction to wives of elders.**
- When there is a question of what to do, we lean on the weight of scripture and as we saw last week, usage of the word in the N.T. is very broad and inclusive of both genders.**

Few more things to consider:

- **Historical presence of deaconesses in the church**
- **Faithful churches in our own context that adhere to this interpretation**

Conclusion:

- **It is reasonable to argue for deaconesses in a church context where deacons and elders are not seen as one office.**



