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“...they devoted themselves to  
the apostles’ teaching and fellowship,  
to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

Acts 2:42

## Notes

## Questions for my Pastors

Hello from New Life!

Your pastors are very happy that you've decided to think about becoming a member here.

Membership's got a long history starting back when Abraham was called by God. It's much the same today. We respond by faith to God's rescuing us through Jesus Christ by saying "yes" to Him. But belonging to Jesus also means being part of the church, which Jesus called His Body. Jesus made it and keeps it alive like parents care for their child.

And we know New Life's not perfect (what church is?) but it's a super place to begin your pilgrimage as a member of Jesus' Kingdom. You've probably acted much like a member already – being baptized, attending worship services, and helping the church in all sorts of ways. That's good. Now it's time to make it all official by making a "public profession of faith" and starting to take communion. Here's what we'll ask of you:

1. Discuss your interest with your parent(s) and make sure you get their approval. Even if they aren't members of New Life, we want them to be part of this process.
2. Plan on coming to **three sessions**. The first with your parent(s) and then two more when we study this booklet. We expect you to have done your "homework" first and have your parent(s) sign off.
3. We will talk more, after we have gone through the material, about whether you feel ready to make a profession of faith.
4. We will arrange a time when you can sit with two elders to discuss your profession of faith.
5. On a Sunday, when others join, you will stand before the congregation to confess your faith in Jesus by answering the vows we will be studying. If you haven't been baptized that will happen as part of joining the church.

## I. joining Jesus' church

**When you join Jesus' church** you are declaring yourself a follower of Jesus who is now part of the community of other followers of Jesus. The public sign of this declaration is **baptism**. Jesus told his disciples to go and make other disciples, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit".

So a follower of Jesus is baptized *once* to mark the beginning of his participation in Jesus church. Once he or she is baptized there is a special meal that is repeated over and over to gain spiritual strength for a life of following Jesus. It is called *communion or the Lord's Supper*.

That is why "joining the church" is also called becoming a *communicant member*. You will now be taking communion as part of your life of following Jesus.

Notice the questions from the Westminster Shorter Catechism (WSC) that explain what a sacrament is, and what two sacraments Jesus gave to his church.

Q. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is a holy regulation established by Christ, in which Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers by physical signs.

-WSC 92

## 4. Help You.

- Look to share the gospel with those who don't know it or don't care about it. We need your help to do this. There's many ways to do this too. Both formally and especially informally, we all share the gospel through our work, schooling and attitudes.
- Offer financial help when you really need it. For real! We have deacons to help in just this area. Sometimes, members need money because of an emergency. Sometimes the deacons are able to help. And with money comes responsibility and a plan to use it well.
- Provide regular opportunities to grow in grace through mercy and mission efforts. It's not just Deacons and the Missions Team that does all the hands-on stuff. They are set up to help you to be challenged in just that way.
- Discuss with you your skills, gifts, and struggles so that you find a good place to serve our church. There's lots of ways to serve but we aim to find a place where you'll serve and be challenged in the process to pray more regularly for God's grace to work in you.

LESSON COMPLETED FOR SESSION #3 \_\_\_\_\_,

PARENT INITIAL \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Feed You.

- Talk about the gospel formally (from up front each week in what we call the sermon) and informally in our community groups, youth groups, and households. The gospel is the central message of the Holy Bible where we learn of God's rescuing us through Christ.
- Provide the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism publicly and with plenty of notice. Do you know what a sacrament is and why it matters?
- Pray for you and lead you in prayer each week.
- Model public praise.
- Offer regular, systematic training in the basics of the Christian faith free of charge to all members regardless of their age, stage, or psychological or physical condition. This is a tough task and takes lots of detailed coordination. But we think it's worth it. We want to grow in our love for Jesus Christ and find that such growth starts with learning. We're aiming to be lifelong learners in the Kingdom.

## 3. Shepherd You.

- Do our best to visit you when you are in a crisis. We will all face crises. We want to help you through. Call your pastor or youth group leader when you feel the need.
- Encourage you away from sin where we have to. This is often hard to do. Sometimes we sin and don't even know it. That's why we look to warn each other when we know that a brother or sister has sinned – especially if there's a pattern of similar sins.

## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:

### 1. Have you been baptized?

Were you brought to baptism by your parents?

What did they mean when they had you baptized? Ask them.

If you were not baptized as a child, is that your desire now?

### Think about these verses:

*And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. (Acts 2:38, 39)*

### 2. What is communion all about?

What are the two elements of the communion service?

What do they represent? Are they symbolic or real?

What are you saying by eating and drinking the elements?

### Think about these verses:

*The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? (I Corinthians 10:16, 17)*

Q. What are the sacraments of the New Testament?

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's Supper. -WSC 93.

## II. your part in membership

You will be asked to take the following church membership vows by answering the questions below. These are the questions one of the pastors will ask you when you are up in front of the congregation on Membership Sunday. The membership questions have been slightly re-written. They emphasize *your part* in membership. You should also know how the Scripture sentences explain the membership questions. Take time to fill these out and think about how you will live by them. Our goal is for you to answer the questions on Membership Sunday honestly, understanding what they mean.

### Membership Question 1

[Pastor will ask]: **Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?**

[What it means]: Do you believe that the Bible is God's Word to us? Do you believe that only in the Bible does God tell us how we can be rescued from God's anger?

Q. What does the Bible primarily teach?

A. The Bible primarily teaches what man must believe about God and what God requires of man.  
-WSC 3

## III. the church's part in membership

Here's a little about what the Church does for you. It's a set of promises you can rely on by being a member. Our church will:

### 1. Lead You.

- Think and act as if Jesus is King of this Church. That means that he's in charge and no one else. Really! In the end, church officers and other leaders are working under the authority of Jesus Christ Himself who sits at God's right hand.
- Call for regular Sunday meetings to hold public worship. Worship is what makes this community a church.
- Lead you by elders (teaching and ruling elders) and deacons. We're not going to suddenly invent new officers and ask you to follow their lead. We think elders and deacons are clearly recommended in the Bible. Can you find passages where this is true?
- Never force you to do one thing or another. The Bible forbids church officers from forcing you to do anything. The police, for example, have the authority of the state and nation to force us to obey the law. But the church can only ask you—sometimes plead with you—but never force you to do anything.
- Communicate clearly regarding church events, regular activities, services, and personnel.

## Membership Question 6

[Pastor will ask]: **Do you submit yourselves to the Government and discipline of the Church, and promise to devote yourself to its purity and peace?**

[What it means]: Will you listen to and follow the rules and guidelines of the Church (and do the same with your parents)? As a member of the church, will you live with your fellow Christians in peace, and seek the good of others—and the church—as a goal in your life?

### Study the following verses about question # 6:

#### Hebrews 13:17

- a. By listening to and obeying the leaders of the church (not just the elders, but also your KidsLife teachers or D-group leaders, too), in what way will you bless them?

- b. “Obey your leaders and \_\_\_\_\_ to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with \_\_\_\_\_, and not with \_\_\_\_\_, for that would be of no \_\_\_\_\_ for you.

### Study the following sentences to see what they say about question 1.

#### Jesus answers Satan (Read Luke 4:1–13.)

- a. How did Jesus answer the first temptation? “It is \_\_\_\_\_, man shall not \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.” (v. 4)
- b. How did Jesus answer the second temptation? “It is \_\_\_\_\_, you shall \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_, and him \_\_\_\_\_.” (v. 8)
- c. In the third temptation, even Satan quoted the Bible (wrongly), but Jesus still quoted Scripture again and said: “It is \_\_\_\_\_, ‘You \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_.’” (v. 12)

If Jesus used the Bible to be strong against temptation (and in many, many other places), then how much more do we need to know and use the Bible to help and guide us.

#### 2 Timothy 3:14–17 [ESV]

- a. How long had Timothy known the teaching of the Bible? “from \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 15)
- b. See verse 15: “...which are able to make you \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.”

- c. List the ways the Scriptures “are profitable” and give you that help you to know God and follow Him (see verse 16).

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- d. What does “breathed out by God” mean? (Hint: What happened in Genesis 1 when God breathed out?).

- e. If Scripture is from God, how should we respond to what it says? Do you really want to obey what it says?

Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is disobeying or not conforming to God’s law in any way.

-WSC 14

- d. “Now \_\_\_\_\_ are the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ, and \_\_\_\_\_ of it.”

**2 Corinthians 9:6-13**

- a. What should be the spirit in our hearts toward giving our money to God?
- b. “... whoever sows \_\_\_\_\_ will also reap \_\_\_\_\_, and whoever sows \_\_\_\_\_ will also reap \_\_\_\_\_.”
- c. “Each one must give as he has decided in his \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_ or under \_\_\_\_\_, for God \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ giver.”
- d. What do you think might be the “gift” you bring to being a member of New Life?



c. What does this passage say about not attending church or meeting regularly with God's people?

d. "not neglecting \_\_\_\_\_ together, as is the habit of \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_ one another..."

### 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-27

a. Does God give everyone the same type of gifts and talents?

b. "Now, there are \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, but the same \_\_\_\_\_; and there are \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone."  
(v. 4, 5)

c. Read verse 27 carefully. Even though you are not yet an adult, you have an important part to play in Christ's church.

## Membership Question 2

[Pastor will ask]: **Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?**

[What it means]: Do you admit that you are a sinner and that God has a right to judge your sin? Do you believe that you cannot please God through your own works or effort? Do you believe that only by God's mercy can you hope to have eternal life with Him?

## Membership Question 3

*Q. Who is the redeemer of God's chosen ones?*

**A.** The only redeemer of God's chosen ones is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God, Who became man. He was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.

-WSC 21

*Q. What is justification?*

**A.** Justification is the act of God's free grace by which He pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight. He does so only because He counts the righteousness of Christ as ours. Justification is received by faith alone.

-WSC 33

[Pastor will ask]: **Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?**

[What it means]: Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that only He can save you from your sins? Do you believe that only by trusting in Jesus can you receive forgiveness of your sins and the hope of eternal life with God?

**Study the following sentences about questions 2 and 3:**

**Read thoughtfully WSC #21 that summarizes the Bible's teaching about who Jesus is. Now think about what Jesus has done for us in our "justification."**

**Romans 3:10-11, 19-20, 23-25**

- a. " \_\_\_\_\_ is righteous, no, not \_\_\_\_\_." (3:10-11)
  
- b. "For by \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ no human being will be justified [declared righteous] in his sight, since through the \_\_\_\_\_ comes knowledge of \_\_\_\_\_." (v. 20)
  
- c. "...for all have \_\_\_\_\_ and fall short of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God." (v. 23)
  
- d. "...and the whole world may be held \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_." (v. 19)
  
- e. How is God's mercy shown to us, even though we are sinners? (v. 24, 25)
  
- f. "...[we] are justified by his \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_ through the \_\_\_\_\_ that is in Christ Jesus. (v. 24)
  
- g. ...God put forward [Jesus] as a \_\_\_\_\_ by his \_\_\_\_\_ to be received by \_\_\_\_\_." (v. 25)

**Membership Question 5**

[Pastor will ask]: **Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?**

[What it means]: Do you promise to support the Church through giving a portion of your allowance, or any money you earn, to its ministry? And will you also support the church by involving yourself in the life of the Church by attending Worship, and when possible Sunday School, Youth Group, and serving in the church?

**Study the following verses about question # 5:**

**Hebrews 10:24-25**

- a. What goal should we have in living with our brothers and sisters in the church? How do we help one another?
  
- b. "And let us consider how to \_\_\_\_\_ one another to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_."

**Titus 2:11-14**

- a. What is it that teaches us to say “No!” to sin and doing wrong things?
  
- b. “For the \_\_\_\_\_ of God has appeared, bringing \_\_\_\_\_ for all people, training us to \_\_\_\_\_ and worldly \_\_\_\_\_, and to live \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ lives in this present age.”
  
- c. What kind of life does the gospel call us to live through faith in Jesus Christ? (Answer in your own words based on the Bible verses you have just studied).

Q. *What does God require of man?*

A. God requires man to obey His revealed will.

-WSC 39

LESSON COMPLETED BEFORE SESSION #2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
 PARENT INITIAL \_\_\_\_\_

**Redemption** means to pay a price to buy something back, like the redemption of a slave. Jesus is our Redeemer—he paid the price to deliver us into freedom from our bondage to sin.

**Propitiation** means to take away the judgment and wrath. Jesus’ death took away the judgment that we deserved for our sin.

**WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?**

We receive forgiveness of sin and eternal life when we believe the *gospel*, which means *good news* about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So **the gospel is the good news that what we can’t do for ourselves, God has done by sending his Son to live and die and be raised up.**

**John 3:16-18**

- a. How do you know that God loves you?
  
- b. “For God so \_\_\_\_\_ the world that he gave his \_\_\_\_\_ Son.”
  
- c. How can you receive eternal life?
  
- d. “... that \_\_\_\_\_ in him should not perish but have eternal \_\_\_\_\_.”

## Ephesians 2:1-10

- a. According to this passage, we are \_\_\_\_\_ in our trespasses and sins (v. 1), and \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ children of \_\_\_\_\_ like the rest of \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 3).
- b. “But God, being rich in \_\_\_\_\_, because of the great \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 4), ... even when we were \_\_\_\_\_ in our \_\_\_\_\_, made us alive \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_—by \_\_\_\_\_ you have been \_\_\_\_\_ ...” (v. 5)
- c. Paul repeats this great truth in verse 8, “For by \_\_\_\_\_ you have been \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ ... it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, not a result of \_\_\_\_\_, so that no one may \_\_\_\_\_.”
- d. We are not saved by works, but according to verse 10 “we are created in Christ Jesus for \_\_\_\_\_.”

**The Gospel is the good news that it is God who is able to save us apart from anything we can do (our works), but it also teaches that He saved us to do good works. We are saved by the death of Christ for our forgiveness and the resurrection of Christ for a new life. That leads to the next question:**

## Membership Question 4

[Pastor will ask]: **Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?**

[What it means]: Do you promise with help of the Holy Spirit to live your life as a follower of Jesus Christ? In doing this, will you seek to show everyone that Jesus is your Lord and Savior by the way you think, speak and act, and feel?

**Study the following sentences about question 4.**

### Galatians 2:20

- a. Here is the key thought of how to live as a Christian:
- b. “I have been \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ. It is no longer \_\_\_ who live, but \_\_\_\_\_ who lives in \_\_\_\_.” (What this means: That Jesus took my sins upon Himself and was punished in my place at the cross. Jesus is now the center or purpose of my life. I live to obey and please Him and not live to please myself.)
- c. “And the life I \_\_\_\_\_ live in the \_\_\_\_\_ [this earthly body] I live by \_\_\_\_\_ in the Son of God who \_\_\_\_\_ me and \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ for me.”

**This verse is for everyone who has trusted Christ for the forgiveness of his or her sins! Read the verse again, and when it says, “I” and “me,” insert your name in it!**