

## **MEMBERSHIP AT MARION BIBLE FELLOWSHIP**

Thank you for your interest in Marion Bible Fellowship (MBF) and our ministry in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Individual churches have different purposes in creating membership rolls. Certainly, membership in churches is not a biblical requirement. At Marion Bible Fellowship, our purpose in creating a category called “membership” is to understand the level of commitment a person or family has to serving the Lord with the Fellowship and to define the willingness they have to the unique type ministry we share. To this end, at MBF, membership is more than simply making a statement of where you worship, it includes a commitment to the Statement of Belief, Church Covenant, mission and ministries of MBF. There is a recognition that we can count on fellow members to agree and work together as we strive to impact and influence each other’s lives, as we strive additionally to reach out to our community, our country, and our world for Jesus Christ and the Gospel as we understand it. This requires a special level of commitment and we wish to recognize that by creating “members”.

Attending Bible study classes or worship does not require you to be a member. Meeting regularly with the staff does not require you to be a member. Bringing your children to church does not require you to be a member. These things are important, but they do not require extraordinary agreement with the ministry at MBF nor any particular commitment to serving the church or spreading its unique message to the community.

### **OUR MEMBERSHIP PROCESS**

To begin the process of church membership, we like to have folks visit several services at the church, review some key information about our beliefs and practices and then meet to discuss a potential commitment to the church. This meeting gives prospective members the opportunity to ask questions about Marion Bible Fellowship’s beliefs and practices and to discuss opportunities for ministry. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for personal questions to be asked by the church of the individual or family that is considering membership and to further explain the expectations of membership.

#### **Interested Folks Should Attend Services, Bible Study and Study Groups**

Attending Bible study, women’s, men’s or youth groups and worship services at MBF is of the utmost importance in order to determine if God is leading you to join MBF in its mission. By attending, there comes a basic understanding of the beliefs, ministries and the opportunities that are part of MBF and it allows potential members to get to know other members of the church.

#### **Interested Folks Should Review a Visitor Information Packet**

If you are considering membership, please ask Pastor Michael Reynolds. He may be reached at any service, by phone or by e-mail. All these points of contact are presented in the Visitor Information Packet available at any worship service in the lobby or from our Outreach Coordinator, Steve Kirkham, or through the church Secretary, Van Munro at 740/387-4080. The packet includes several pieces of information:

A copy of the Church Covenant and Statement of Faith

An explanation of the requirements for church membership (this paper)

A list of the ministries at Marion Bible Fellowship and their leaders

A brochure describing various aspects of the church

### **Interested Folks Should Request a meeting with an Elder of the Church**

At your request, you can set up a time to meet with one of our leaders. The purpose of this meeting is to determine if membership is right for you and for the church. In addition, this is your opportunity to ask any questions you may have about MBF. If membership seems appropriate, and you have a desire to become an active member, a period of time for prayer on the subject will be allowed and membership will be announced and formalized. You may request to meet with church leaders by speaking with Pastor Michael Reynolds, by calling him or by calling the church office.

### **Membership is Considered by the Elders and the New Potential Member**

At Marion Bible Fellowship, the authority to receive new members lies with the elders of MBF rather than by a vote of the general congregation as is true for some other churches. It is very important that those who consider membership should take some time to prayerfully reflect on the possibility for a week or two before their commitment is confidently stated to be the Lord's will.

## **MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

We have attempted to list the general topics we like to have as foundational requirements for membership. We list these requirements only because it would be difficult to share in the teaching and ministry of Marion Bible Fellowship without these few things being intact, beforehand.

### **A Valid Testimony of Salvation**

Christ is the head of our Church. For this reason, it is imperative that only those who acknowledge Him as Savior and Lord be part of the church's ministry.

### **Baptism**

Because baptism is a public statement of faith, the baptism received by members must contain the following elements to be consistent with what we believe and publicly proclaim and teach at Marion Bible Fellowship:

By immersion, if physically possible;

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;

Follow a personal faith placed in Christ as Savior and Lord

Performed by a person of like faith

### **A Life Consistent With a Testimony of Salvation**

The life a person attempts to live should show a serious and real commitment to learning and walking in the Commandments of God. We believe the Gospel preached by the Lord Jesus was one that was for people to repent (turn) towards God's ways (commandments) and not just to add "salvation" to an unchanged life. As well, repentance is a turning towards God for guidance and not simply giving up one or several bad habits. For example, those in the Scriptures who came to follow Christ sought to love Him by following his commandments after they put their faith and trust in Him unto salvation.

### **Agree with the Statement of Faith of the Church and Our Church Covenant**

Being on mission with a group of believers should include sharing key convictions and beliefs with them. Committing to working closely with one another should only be done if common directions and beliefs are shared.

### **Place Attendance at Worship, Group Study and Prayer Above Other Activities**

Our members need to be closely attached to one another. Such attachment may only occur if there is significant time spent together. Most of each week is spent apart. The basic meeting times we spend together such as Sabbath worship, prayer, Bible study and so on are of utmost importance to binding us together with the larger body of Christ.

### **Invite the Prayers, Encouragement, and Correction of Fellow Members in Order to Walk More Closely in the Commandments of God**

As we walk in Christ, we encounter challenges that require one another's support, temptations that require one another's oversight and correction and difficulties that require one another's prayer. These activities should be binding activities that are desirable to every member and they should increase our love and concern for one another when done with the right spirit.

### **Place the Needs of Other Members of the Congregation Above Self**

With this attitude of the heart, we will do well. This requirement of the Lord for His church is second only to that of loving God and obeying His commandments. Indeed, our understanding is that our commitment in life should be first to God, then to our spouses, after that to our children, then to our church, afterwards to our jobs, then to the lost and lastly to ourselves.

We hope you find membership at Marion Bible Fellowship a desire of your heart. Certainly, we would consider it an honor and privilege to serve alongside any who wish to grow in the Lord's ways and witness the blessing of salvation in Jesus Christ to the entire world. Please let us know if we may assist you in considering this in any way. Whether a member or not, know that we look forward to helping you strengthen your walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.