

Church Membership

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In light of the fact that Southside Bible Church is an Elder ruled congregation and that “membership” in a local church has no Biblical mandate or precedent, the immediate need for any form of church “membership” is questionable. However, the Elders of this church believe that for reasons of good order, legal protection, and effective shepherding of the congregation having church membership is wise. There are two forms of membership in this local assembly. The first, “formal membership”, is granted by the Elders based on the request of an individual, the profession of that individual of his or her personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, baptism, and upon the demonstration of a life consistent with that profession. This is “formal” membership and carries with it certain freedoms and privileges within the congregation. The second form of membership is “de facto” membership. This is based on the regular attendance of an individual that has a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and agreement of the Elders. “De facto” membership does not carry any special freedoms or privileges, except for those granted as a courtesy by the Elders. The Elders may revoke these freedoms at any time. Any professing believer is subject to church discipline under the oversight of the Elders of this church if they have demonstrated regular attendance in this congregation at any time and are not currently under the active shepherding of another church.

Freedoms and Privileges of Formal Members

- Any formal member may serve in any ministry in this congregation. The Elders have final say over an individual’s qualification for service in any ministry.
- Any male formal member may serve in the offices of Elder or Deacon if they meet the Biblical qualifications of those offices and have been approved by the Elders.
- Any formal member may participate in discussions or debates that have been sanctioned by the Elders so long as it is done in a God honoring manner. This privilege may be suspended during a public meeting if an individual becomes hostile or overly quarrelsome during public discussions. An individual must be given one warning prior to suspension during that meeting. The privilege is restored for any subsequent meetings so long as the individual’s behavior remains God honoring.
- The Elders may establish any other freedom or privilege that they see as beneficial for the spiritual growth of the congregation, for good order, or legal protection. Additionally, any freedoms or privileges granted in the church by-laws are granted to formal members.

Freedoms and Privileges of “De Facto” Members

- De facto members may be granted any or all of the freedoms or privileges granted to formal members with the exception of serving as an Elder or Deacon. As a general courtesy all privileges and freedoms are granted to de facto members. Male de facto members may serve as “aspiring leaders”, but may not serve as Elders or Deacons without becoming formal members.
- Any freedom or privilege may be granted, suspended, or revoked by the Elders for any individual or group as they see fit for the spiritual growth, good order, or legal protection of the congregation (except those expressly forbidden above, e.g. Eldership).

How to Become a Formal Member

- To become a formal member an individual needs to fill out an application for membership in Southside Bible Church. When this is done the individual should have read and understood the doctrinal statement, church practices document, and church by-laws, as well as any other pertinent church literature. It is assumed that by making application for formal membership that an individual is in agreement with the doctrine, practice, or operation of this church. If there are variances in belief they should be discussed with one of the Elders (or Board) and these variations considered in determining formal membership. For those men who eventually are considered for an Elder or Deacon, the differences will need to be discussed. All church leadership will be subject to annual renewal of their positions regarding the doctrinal statement and any variance. Application for membership may be obtained from the church office or with the general literature concerning the church. Applicants should sign and give his or her application to an Elder, Deacon, or Aspiring Leader. Families may use a single application.
- The Elders will review this application and depending on the knowledge of the Elders concerning the individual any or all of the following may occur.
 - A personal meeting with the individual to understand his or her testimony of faith, baptism, and conduct.
 - A request for confirmation of the individual’s good standing in his or her previous church.
 - Discussions with those of the congregation that have personal contact with the individual to determine if his or her behavior would bring into serious question his or her profession of faith.
- Upon determination by the Elders that the individual meets the requirements for membership he/she will either be publicly presented to the congregation as a new member and/or will have his/her name published in the church’s general announcements (typically the church bulletin).

Application for Formal Membership Southside Bible Church

Family or Individual:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Last Name: _____ | First Name: _____ | Date of Birth: _____ |
| 2. Last Name: _____ | First Name: _____ | Date of Birth: _____ |
| 3. Last Name: _____ | First Name: _____ | Date of Birth: _____ |
| 4. Last Name: _____ | First Name: _____ | Date of Birth: _____ |
| 5. Last Name: _____ | First Name: _____ | Date of Birth: _____ |
| 6. Last Name: _____ | First Name: _____ | Date of Birth: _____ |
| 7. Last Name: _____ | First Name: _____ | Date of Birth: _____ |

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Previous Church (if any): _____

I make application for Formal Membership at Southside Bible Church. I confess that Jesus Christ is my personal Lord and Savior, I have been baptized according to Scripture after my profession of Jesus as Lord and Savior, and my life is, though not perfect, being lived in a God honoring manner. I affirm that I have read, understand, and am in agreement with the doctrines, practices, and operations of this church. (This affirmation does not require full agreement with the doctrinal statement dealing with "end times" activities so long as your beliefs do not conflict with the other doctrines, practices or operations of this Church or cause discord within this Church.) I further affirm that I am not currently under any Church discipline action by any other congregation. I believe that at the current time the Lord has lead me to join with this local expression of His universal church and here serve Him joyfully in the work He has laid before this congregation.

Signed:	Date:	Approved:	Date:
1. _____	_____	1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____	2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____	3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____	4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____	5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____	6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____	7. _____	_____