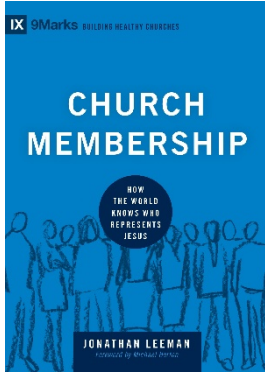
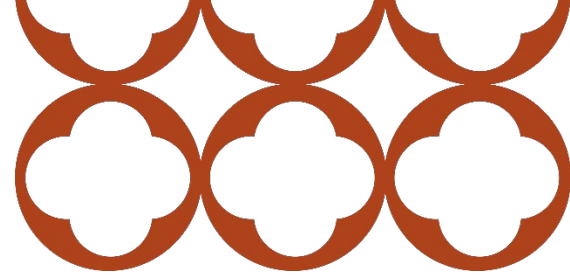


CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

First Baptist Church – Book Discussion Questions



Read: Chapters 1-2 of Church Membership

Questions

These questions are designed to help you think about the chapters you have read and also applying the content. You do not NEED to use these questions if you feel like the conversation is helpful and staying on topic. Feel free to come up with some of your own questions if you think of some you want to add.

CHAPTER ONE

1. What is "Imperium," and why is it important?
2. What makes local churches different from other service providers? How are they similar?
3. What does Jonathan Leeman argue is the primary issue in our understanding of the local church in light of the culture we live in?
4. From the list of symptoms of our culture's wrong thinking about church (pgs. 23-24), which one surprised you the most, and why? Which one can you relate with?
5. What is an embassy? How does this image help you understand what the local church is and what it is not?

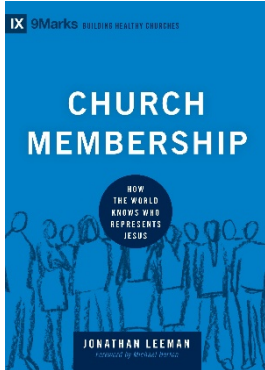
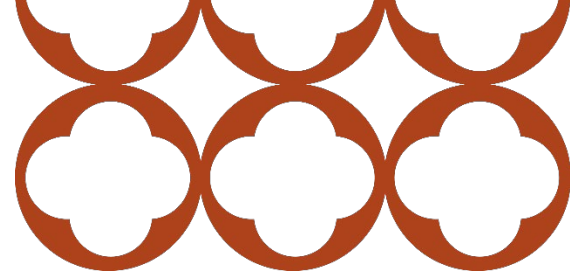
CHAPTER TWO

1. According to Leeman, what was the result of Peter's preaching in Jerusalem? What do those things tell you about the characteristics of members in the early church?
2. As the early church grew in Jerusalem, what things were important in terms of how members related to one another?
3. What was the result of the persecution the early church faced in Jerusalem, and what do the effects tell you about how Christians understood who belonged in the church and how they treated one another?
4. What is at the center of the church's existence that brings unity to all of its members, and how does that affect how we as Christians relate to authority?
5. Which of the ten themes about the local church and membership (pgs. 42-46) stood out the most to you and why?
6. How does Leeman, from reflections upon the early church, summarize what it means to be a Christian? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

Before you go: What is one action step you believe the Lord is calling you to make as a result of your discussion?

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

First Baptist Church – Book Discussion Questions



Read: Chapters 3-4 of Church Membership

Questions

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CHAPTER THREE

1. What are the similarities and differences between two Christians who belong to the same church and two Christians who belong to different churches?
2. What does Leeman say are the "bones" or institutional description of a local church? Why is it vital that the church has both "bones" and "flesh?" (institutional and organic -- pg. 50-52)
3. Can any individual represent Jesus' kingdom? Why or why not? What is needed in order to represent Jesus in the world?
4. What does Leeman say is "the rock" on which Jesus builds his church? How does that help us understand what the local church is authorized to do on behalf of God?
5. Read the definitions of "local church" and "church membership." What about either definition challenges or encourages you personally as you seek to live in obedience to Christ?

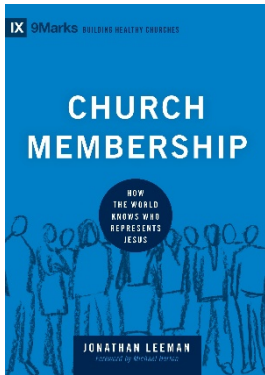
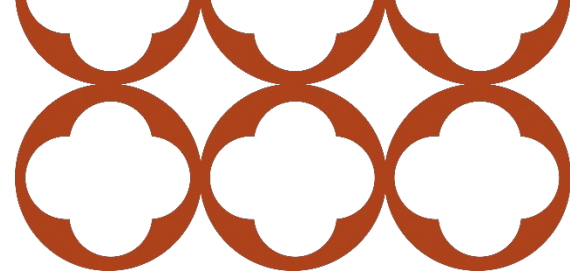
CHAPTER FOUR

1. The Bible uses many different metaphors for the church (ie. Family, body, flock, temple, etc.). Share about one of the metaphors that has helped you understand the church more, and why it has been enlightening.
2. On page 72, Leeman warns against picking our favorite metaphor, to the neglect of the others. The result can be that churches are “all intimacy (family) or all hierarchy (body).”
3. On pages 70-76, Leeman lists four reasons why Biblical metaphors for the church are important. Which of them was most helpful for you and why?
4. When you consider the four reasons for the Biblical importance of metaphors (pg. 70-76), which do you think our church needs to embrace most right now?
5. Imagine a church that fully embraces all the Biblical metaphors and is truly shaped by them, what would that church be like? If you were a member of that church, would it require of you? What would be the benefits of being a member in a church like that?

Before you go: What is one action step you believe the Lord is calling you to make as a result of your discussion?

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

First Baptist Church – Book Discussion Questions



Read: Chapters 5-6 of Church Membership

Questions

These questions are designed to help you think about the chapters you have read and also applying the content. You do not NEED to use these questions if you feel like the conversation is helpful and staying on topic. Feel free to come up with some of your own questions if you think of some you want to add.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. On pages 83-84, Leeman mentions that some people might see church membership as too exclusive. What is the potential danger of membership being overly moralistic? What impact would it have on a local church's gospel witness?
2. What, then, are the "standards" by which people join a church? Why is it important to hold these standards for church membership? (pgs. 84-86)
3. On page 86, Leeman states that membership begins with the affirmation of a person's confession of faith. How does a church's statement of faith help to facilitate and protect this process?
4. What does repentance look like for a Christian? (pgs. 88-89) Where in your life is God calling you towards greater repentance and faith in the gospel?
5. According to Leeman, on page 90, what is the purpose of baptism? How does baptism affect the relationships between church members?

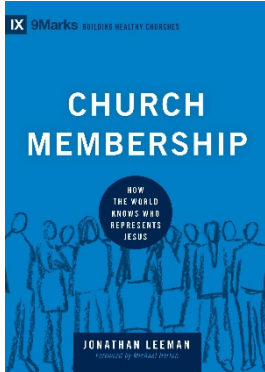
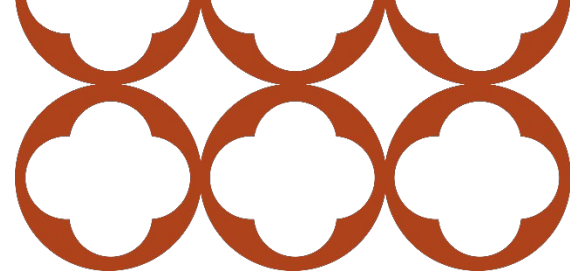
CHAPTER SIX

1. The word "submission" might scare many people today. How do you feel about the word "submission?" How do the Scripture passages mentioned on page 91 affirm the use of authority for our good?
2. On page 93-94, Paul is described to have painted two pictures in his letter to the Philippians. What are the two pictures Paul paints, and how do they show how Christians ought to live among one another?
3. What should Christians seek through submitting to one another, in order that they might shine like lights in the dark (pg. 94). How have you experienced the light of Christ through fellowship with other Christians? How could you and other fellow Christians shine the light of Christ to others in this dark world?
4. Leeman gives eight major ways Christians can submit to their churches, following Christ's example. Which way resonates with you the most and why?
5. Even though our churches are full of sinful, broken people, how might you submit to and serve the church with the same love that God has demonstrated to us, even while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8)?

Before you go: What is one action step you believe the Lord is calling you to make as a result of your discussion?

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

First Baptist Church – Book Discussion Questions



Read: Chapters 7-8 of Church Membership

Questions

These questions are designed to help you think about the chapters you have read and also applying the content. You do not NEED to use these questions if you feel like the conversation is helpful and staying on topic. Feel free to come up with some of your own questions if you think of some you want to add.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. What was your reaction to the story about Mono at and his being disciplined by the church at the beginning of the chapter?
2. On page 109, how is church discipline defined in formal terms? How is one who is disciplined regarded by the church?
3. From pages 110-111, how does church discipline help the church maintain its role in representing Christ in the world? How is discipline actually loving?
4. At what time is formal church discipline required? (pg. 112). What factors come into play when making a decision about what warrants formal church discipline?
5. How should discipline be carried out, and what warrants restoring one who is disciplined back into membership?

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. How is church membership the same everywhere in the world?
2. Why is it important to realize that all churches worldwide exist on "enemy territory?"
3. How is church membership different in other places of the world? How does a more complex society affect church membership?
4. How has reading this book, in general, helped connect your understanding of church membership with your Christian life in general?
5. How do you think your church membership can help display Christ's love to the world?

Before you go: What is one action step you believe the Lord is calling you to make as a result of your discussion?