Seven expectations of every church member that should never change

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Almost two decades ago, a church member asked me a straightforward question: "What things should we all do all the time?" This person understood individual calling and spiritual gifts, which can vary with each believer. He wanted to know the timeless expectations of every church member that never change.

Simple question. But a challenge to answer.

The question was more off-the-cuff, but it got me thinking. Over time, I landed on these seven expectations that I now teach at every membership class in my church.

1. Worship: Saying "Yes" to God

Worship isn't just singing on Sundays. It's a posture of surrender to God's will. True worship happens when we seek God Himself, not just what He gives. That means laying down personal preferences, engaging with your church family regularly, and keeping your focus on His glory. Weekly worship isn't a ritual to check off. It's spiritual nourishment that strengthens your walk with Christ.

2. Grow: Making Disciples Who Make Disciples

A Christian belongs to Christ; a disciple follows Him daily. Spiritual growth happens best in community, not isolation. The most effective way to grow deeper in your faith—and

help others grow—is by being part of a group. Whether it's a Sunday school class, Bible study, or life group, these smaller circles provide the encouragement and accountability we all need.

3. Serve: Reaching Outward Beyond Yourself

Jesus came "not to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45). Following His example means using your gifts to meet needs inside and outside the church. Service isn't about finding the perfect role for yourself; it's about filling the gaps where help is needed. Look for opportunities, take initiative, invite others to join you, and remember—the ultimate goal of serving is to share the good news of Jesus.

4. Give: Honoring God with Your Offering

Generosity is a tangible way to express worship. Every gift matters to God, not just the large ones. Giving isn't about guilt but gratitude, recognizing that everything we have comes from Him. Sacrificial giving goes beyond convenience. It changes the way you live and guards your heart against greed. When you give through your church, you're investing in God's mission and uniting with others for the cause of Christ.

5. Pray: Prioritizing God's Will Through Prayer

Prayer is more than presenting requests. The purpose of prayer is to align your heart with God's. Jesus taught His disciples to pray with a focus on God's name, kingdom, and will. As you make prayer a daily habit, you'll find it connects every part of the Christian life: it fuels evangelism, deepens unity, and shapes decisions. Pray alone and with others. Pray for your church's leaders, ministries, and mission. Prayer keeps your priorities anchored in God's purposes.

6. Seek Unity: Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

Unity doesn't mean uniformity. The point is not about everyone looking or acting the same. Instead, it's about being bound together by God's Word and mission. That often requires setting aside personal preferences for the sake of the gospel. Jesus' command to "do to others as you would like them to do to you" (Luke 6:31) applies inside the church too. A unified church is a powerful witness to a divided world.

7. Sacrifice: Putting Others Before Yourself

Sacrifice is the glue that holds all the other expectations together. Romans 12:1 calls believers to be "a living and holy sacrifice." That means surrendering time and resources for God's mission. Healthy churches are built by members willing to put others first, give up personal comfort, and work together as one body for the sake of Christ.

Joining a church is more than putting your name on a roll or attending worship services. Membership is a commitment to live out your faith in community. The Bible describes the church as the body of Christ, where every part belongs to the whole (Romans 12:4–5). If you've said "yes" to membership, you are also committing to these seven expectations that form the foundation for belonging.