

At the request of the Church Assembly in 1954 Geoffrey Fisher and Cyril Garbett, archbishops respectively of Canterbury and York, produced

## **A Short Guide to the Duties of Church Membership**

All baptized and confirmed members of the Church must play their full part in its life and witness. That you may fulfil this duty we call upon you:

To follow the example of Christ in home and daily life, and to bear personal witness to Him.

To be regular in private prayer day by day.

To read the Bible carefully.

To come to Church every Sunday.

To receive the Holy Communion faithfully and regularly.

To give personal service to Church, neighbours, and community.

To give money for the work of parish and diocese and for the work of the Church at home and overseas.

To uphold the standard of marriage entrusted by Christ to His Church.

To care that children are brought up to love and serve the Lord.

Geoffrey Cantuar :

Cyril Ebor :

A report to the Church of England's General Synod in 1990, *Receiving and Giving: The Basis, Issues and Implications of Christian Stewardship* (GS 943), recommended that an updated version of this be widely used 'as a guide, rather than a requirement, for new and existing members' of the Church.

### **Why Church Membership?**

The Apostle Paul mentions two different types of commitment:

**"First they gave themselves to the Lord; and then, by God's will, they gave themselves to us as well" (2 Corinthians 8:5)**

You commit yourself to Christ for salvation and then you commit yourself to other Christians for membership in our Church family. The word fellowship ("*koinonia*") means being as committed to each other as we are to Jesus Christ. We live as New Testament believers and so we commit ourselves to our Lord and to one another.

Why these Statements?

These statements have stood the test of time and reflect what it means to be fully devoted followers of Jesus.

Based on Scripture, they define how we can best grow to maturity together as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- To follow the example of Christ in home and daily life, and to bear personal witness to Him.  
**"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15)**
- To be regular in private prayer day by day.  
**"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." (Ephesians 6:18)**
- To read the Bible carefully.  
**"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**
- To come to Church every Sunday.  
**"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25)**
- To receive the Holy Communion faithfully and regularly.  
**"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26)**
- To give personal service to Church, neighbours, and community.

**“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13:14-15)**

- To give money for the work of parish and diocese and for the work of the Church at home and overseas.

**“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7)**

- To uphold the standard of marriage entrusted by Christ to His Church.

**“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh... However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (Matthew 19v5-6) & Ephesians 5:31,33)**

- To care that children are brought up to love and serve the Lord.

**“He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these...And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them” (Mark 10:14, 16)**

In *Yours Lord: A Handbook of Christian Stewardship* (A&C Black, 1992), pp. 96-97, Michael Wright offered an adaptation of *A Short Guide to the Duties of Church Membership* as a help for considering one's own personal discipline. He suggests noting some specific intentions for the next twelve months to be kept in one's Bible or a devotional book, for regular reference.

- We have our unique part to play in the life and witness of our church.

*What do you see your part being in your church now?*

- We have the opportunity to reflect the light and love of Christ in our lives.

*How do you see you can do that in your activities, decisions and relationships each day?*

- We are invited to share each day of our life with God.

*How do you intend to safeguard time to listen, love and share with him each day?*

- We are offered the Word of God in the scriptures.

*How do you plan regularly to read and seek to understand the Bible?*

- We have the opportunity to share in worship and fellowship with other Christians each week.

*How often do you plan to do this?*

- Christ invites us to his table, to be fed with the sacrament of his body and blood.

*How often do you intend to accept this invitation?*

- Christ asks us to 'always treat others as you like to them to treat you'.

*How do you plan to express this in service of others?*

- Marriage is intended as a lifelong partnership of love.

*How can you help to nourish this ideal in your own relationships, and how can you help others to do so?*

- Christ has a special love and protection for children.

*How do you aim to nourish and protect the spiritual, emotional, social, educational, and artistic well-being of your own, and other people's, children, and help them to know Christ's special love for them, and to experience the joy of knowing him?*

- Christ invites us to store up treasure in heaven, rather than treasure on earth.

*What proportion of your income will you decide to give this year, as an act of gratitude to God for all he has given you, that you may help to do his will on earth as it is in heaven?*