

members to seek baptism if you have not been baptised since you have become a Christian. If you have never been baptised (either as an infant or as a believer) we would very strongly encourage you to do this – as a direct command of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What if I am already a member of another church?

We would encourage you to write to your old church and resign your membership once you have decided to become a member at Oadby. We think it is vital to have one church family that you are accountable to. If you are an undergraduate student we recognise that this is, in many ways, a unique time. Our Associate Membership scheme enables you to retain membership of your home church and also be a member at Oadby in recognition of the fact that you will be living in the Leicester area for around half the year. Associate Members can attend Members' Meetings but are not entitled to vote.

Undergraduate students may choose to become full members if they so wish as long as they have no other church membership elsewhere.

What is the process for becoming a member?

If you would like to become a member then come along to one of the 'Exploring Membership' seminars we regularly hold or arrange to meet with the elders for an informal interview. This is really an opportunity for two elders to get to know you a bit and you will be asked about your own testimony (story of your Christian life) and to explain what you understand the Christian message to be and how you see yourself serving the Lord Jesus Christ and His church in Oadby.

The Elders will then discuss your application and you will be asked to give your testimony during a church service so the other members can get to know you before it is put forward to a church Members' Meeting (which you should not attend).

The members will take a vote and if a majority of those present at the meeting vote in favour you will be admitted into membership. You will be welcomed formally on a Sunday morning and will be invited to subsequent members meetings.

*What we believe
& What we do.*

Membership

Matters

Oadby

Evangelical Free Church



What is church membership?

We live in a society where many people are reluctant to join any organisation – and where freedom from commitments and obligations is generally perceived to be a good thing. We believe, however, that, for Christians, membership of a local church is a vital part of a healthy spiritual life.

Membership is a voluntary covenant to associate ourselves with a body of Christian believers. It involves a commitment to attend, pray, give and serve. But more than this membership is a statement that you want the other members of your church to help you in your Christian life – and that you want to help them.

Is church membership in the Bible?

The word ‘membership’, in the sense we use it, isn’t found in the New Testament. And throughout the New Testament period there was only one local church in each place. But it does seem that the church in each city knew definitely who was part of the church and who was not. Hence the lists of widows supported by the church (1 Timothy 5). The church at Corinth was asked by the apostle Paul to exclude someone because of their deliberate rebellion against Christian moral standards (1 Corinthians 5). The church is also asked to reinstate someone (2 Corinthians 2). This passage (2 Corinthians 2:6) also says that the man was punished by ‘the majority’ – so clearly the church knew how many people were ‘members’.

Who can be a member?

At Oadby we welcome into membership anybody who is willing to make the necessary commitment to be part of our church family and can enthusiastically commit to our Statement of Faith (a summary of essential Christian beliefs). Our ‘What we believe and What we do’ series recognises that true evangelical Christians may hold different emphases on certain issues and where we welcome into membership of the church those who hold a different view, we expect that they will respect the beliefs and practices of the church and will not seek to undermine them.

If you have real difficulty with our Statement of Faith or the practice of the church it may be that there would be another local church where you would be happier. and we would encourage you to talk about this with one of the

What does membership involve?

There are really three aspects to church membership:

A formal aspect. As a church with congregational church government the members are ultimately responsible for the running of the church. The members elect and re-elect the elders and deacons, approve the church accounts and are ultimately responsible for exercising church discipline against other members. This also means that by becoming a member you are signalling your willingness to submit to the discipline of the church leadership and its members.

A strategic aspect. As leaders we try and give a significant part of each Members Meeting to discussing an issue of our church vision or practice (e.g. pastoral care, evangelism, or Sunday meetings). The church’s vision is to reach people who live, work or study in the Oadby area with the good news of Jesus Christ. Our commitment is to do this by proclaiming the message of the Bible in many and varied ways. The role of the church members is to think about how we can do this most effectively.

A commitment aspect. Becoming a church member is an invitation to the other members of the church to encourage and challenge you in your Christian life. In order for that to happen it is important to be committed to:

1. Leading a life in accordance with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ through praying and regular Bible reading
2. Attending services and meetings including church member’s meetings as often as possible.
3. Serving—showing mutual concern for fellow members.
4. Showing practical concern for all people who come into contact with the church.
5. Being involved in evangelism.
6. Giving financially towards the work of the church.
7. Accepting the God given authority of the leadership.

Do I have to be baptised to be a church member?

We do not insist that you need to have been baptised as a believer in order to become a member of the church – though we would encourage all