

TIMELINE AND PROCESS FOR BECOMING A MEMBER

1. *Abundant Life Directory*. This is the first stage in the process of becoming a formal member of Abundant Life. Being added to the directory is simply you stating, "I want to pursue membership. This is my church; I plan on attending and taking the next steps in my faith journey." We welcome *all* to begin here; no matter where you find yourself concerning your relationship with Christ. Being added to the *Abundant Life Directory* enables elders and leaders to identify the persons they are to be connected to and helping grow towards Christian maturity. We encourage you to start the process by talking to an elder and signing up at the *Membership Connection* table in the lobby following our Sunday morning worship service. Here are a few important points to take note of:
 - a. At this time, you will be considered a *part* of our church. You will receive the care and love that comes from belonging to a body of believers. You will begin your journey towards understanding what it means to be a Christian and committed member of a local church. It is during this time in which elders and covenant members will help you grow in holiness, faithfulness, and understanding of the Christian life. We ask that you participate, or have participated, regularly in the life of our church for a ***period of (3-6) months*** before taking the next step of becoming a formal member. This is to ensure your spiritual development is healthy and that you are properly equipped for ministry when the opportunity arises.
 - b. If you have not been baptized, or you have just recently come to know Christ, we will make plans during this time for you to participate in and celebrate your new life through the ordinance of water baptism.
 - c. For those in this stage of the membership process, it is important to note that you are not yet a voting member of our fellowship. You are welcome and encouraged to attend all business proceedings as you grow in your faith and understanding of the life of our church.
 - d. It is during this time period in which you will have the benefit of participating in *Membership Connection*. This will be an elder-led, group class that will help you understand general Christian doctrines and practices. You will be led through several important documents regarding formal membership, including our church covenant, while being introduced to the life and ministry of our church.
 - i. We require all those pursuing membership to attend (1) meeting in which they will be led through all applicable membership documents. Classes take place **quarterly** at the church on Saturday mornings and last roughly (2) hours.
 - ii. If you are unavailable to attend *Membership Connection*, you may arrange a time with our elders that is more accommodating to your schedule.
 - e. One may think that during this stage our church is discouraging you from ministry; that is not the case. It is often those who have recently been converted to Christ that minister with the most passion, zeal, and urgency. We strongly believe you should be sharing your testimony, participating in personal evangelism, and praying/sharing with other believers. However, the leading and teaching aspect of ministry at Abundant Life is reserved for formal members. This

helps us move towards unity in our body and protects the individual believer as they grow in their faith.

2. *Meet with Lead Pastor and/or Elders.* This will be a short meeting in which you will be guided into the next step in the process. You will be asked to give a testimony concerning your conversion *and* to articulate the gospel message. First and foremost, we want to sit down with you and assess your growth while you have been attending services with us. This involves rejoicing with you in areas of victory, and humbly walking with you in areas of defeat. To schedule a meeting, please call the church office at (419)-675-3120.
3. *Formal Membership.* At this stage in the process we pray that you are a faithful, growing Christian and well acquainted with our church and its members. You will be asked to covenant with the other believers God has gathered at Abundant Life. Becoming a formal member will mean you are:
 - a. setting an example by leading and participating in the ministry life of our church.
 - b. taking serious the call to disciple other believers and members God has added to our church.
 - c. seeking the Lord for any directives He may give you about ministry and our church.
 - d. a voting member of our congregation.
4. *Leadership.* After becoming a formal member, you may feel the Lord calling you into leadership, whether in a general sense or concerning a specific area of our church; we encourage you to let the elders know. They will outline the process for becoming a ministry leader and help you discern what the Lord may be calling you to.