

Why do we have a membership course?

1. So we can get to know each other more.

The elders & leaders like to be able to get to know people who are thinking of joining the church a bit better and are this gives an opportunity to be able to spend time with them and vice versa. The elders are known biblically as 'shepherds' of the church and part of that is being responsible in overseeing who comes 'in and out' of the church. If relevant, the elders may also make contact with your previous church.

2. So you can understand what we believe at M.F.C.

Many people come from many different types of churches and faith backgrounds and therefore may have a different understanding about God, the Bible, the church and how their Christian life should be worked out, this course gives anyone wanting to join us a basic understanding of our theological views and of any other distinctive views that they may find at M.F.C. The most important beliefs are outlined in our 'Core Doctrine' statement.

3. So you can understand our purpose, values and vision.

There are many different churches in Medway and although we are all part of the same Christian family, we work out our church life in our own particular ways. At M.F.C the purpose (*why we are here*), the values (*how we do it*), and the vision (*where we want to go*), may not be what you are used to or even what you want! This course gives you an introduction to such things and will help you to pick up something of our inner workings. It's important for you to be joined with us in heart and therefore to join with us in working out our church life in the particular ways we understand God is leading us to do so. This is outlined in our 'Vision & Values' Statement.

4. So you can ask questions

Over the sessions you are invited to ask any questions about M.F.C. and to honestly put your views forward, also to speak about any particular ways that the church can help or support you. There will also be opportunity to chat privately with the elders should you want to join, we will arrange this at your convenience.

5. So we can properly honour you

We want to demonstrate our value and honour of you as you consider joining the church, we believe we are doing this by taking the time to explain properly what the church is about and what to expect in the future. If you want to join we would then officially welcome you as a church on a Sunday morning where we will introduce you and pray for you. We will alert you to the date so you can plan to be there. We don't see joining the church as a 'non-event' but an important one in which you are making a serious decision to join in heart with this church family.

6. So the church knows who is a part of the church

Who are the leaders responsible for shepherding and leading? Not everyone who walks through the door of the church building? Those that complete this course and then join us have more visibly and formally identified themselves with this church. This gives the church an opportunity to be aware of who is choosing to put roots down at M.F.C. rather than just attending on a Sunday or remaining on the 'fringe' of the church. This way the church can then more readily commit to support and care for you as a willing part of the body.

7. So you can safely serve within the church

The majority of responsibilities in M.F.C. are given to those who have completed the Vision and Values course. This acts as a safeguard so that as a church we are all serving from the same foundational understanding and are hopefully able to reflect accurately the values of the church in all that we do. There is also clearer oversight and accountability from the leadership and therefore more safety for you.

8. So that expectations can be voiced

We want to give you opportunity to voice your expectations, but also for you to hear what the expectations might be from you if you join Medway Family Church. We recognise that everyone is different and that each person has a unique set of circumstances, therefore it is not always possible for everyone to do everything in the same way or to have the same level of input; however there are general expectations which act as a guide or a 'plumb line' for church membership. These are outlined in the 'What membership at M.F.C means' statement.

9. So that you can grow as a disciple of Christ

This course is an opportunity to go through a process of learning and growth! When we take time to dwell upon God, to study his word and think about his work in the world we can be strengthened and growth is encouraged. We hope this course will teach you new things, remind you of things that have grown dim, highlight things you were unsure of, challenge wrong thinking, stimulate your faith and invite you to give yourself to God's purposes in a fresh way.