

himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.’ (V 28-29) If someone is not in a right relationship with the Lord (whether because they are not yet a

Christian, or because they know at the time of communion that they have an issue which they are not yet ready or willing to deal with) then the leadership would recommend that they do not take communion. This would apply as much to Members as Visitors.

It is for each person to examine their own hearts before they share in communion. An opportunity will be given to those who do not choose to take Communion to receive a blessing. The leaders will not withhold communion from anyone who comes forward whether or not they are a Member.

Children are welcome also to join us for Communion, either for a blessing, or if the parents are confident that they are in relationship with the Lord, they can eat the bread and the wine.

Can ‘Friends’ receive ministry from Freshwaters?

The leaders welcome everyone who would like to receive ministry, whether or not they are Members of Freshwaters. There may be rare occasions, however where we may not be able to pray or minister to people until they are ready and willing to respond to teaching or advise given.

Membership Course

Potential new Members will be asked to attend a Membership Course which provides an opportunity to explore what we believe as a Fellowship and what Membership involves.

There are a total of 5 sessions as follows:-

- 1. What we believe about being a Christian***
- 2. What we believe about being a disciple of Jesus***
- 3. What we believe about Christian living***
- 4. What it means to become a Member of Freshwaters***
- 5. Becoming a Member of Freshwaters***

Between session 4 and 5 the potential Member will be asked to pray and consider whether they would like to go ahead with Membership. If they and the Leadership of Freshwaters believe it is right, then they will go ahead with session 5 and then be welcomed into Membership on a Sunday morning at Freshwaters where the new Member and the Fellowship will make a public statement of their commitment to one another and to Christ.

If you are interested in becoming a member of Freshwaters then please speak to one of the Leadership Team who will explain what is involved.

Freshwaters Christian Fellowship

Preparing a people for the Lord

Membership Statement



Membership Statement

INTRODUCTION

Freshwaters Christian Fellowship operates a Membership policy which identifies those people that are committed to following and serving the Lord Jesus Christ within this part of His church in Harlow. We welcome in love friends who join us either on a regular or more occasional basis but who are not in a position to be Members of the Fellowship.

COMMITMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

Read *Colossians 3:1-17* as a summary of biblical standards expected of 'members of one body'.

Members of Freshwaters are committed to loving, serving and following Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. What this means will be explored with potential new members as part of a pre-membership course. Members are expected to demonstrate their faith through maintaining standards of behaviour, attitude and speech consistent with the Bible (for example those things mentioned in the above passage). This does not mean an expectation of perfection (otherwise we would have no Members!) but it does mean taking responsibility for our actions and being ready to repent as soon as we become aware of sin in our lives.

Members of Freshwaters are also committed to one another and to the particular vision and purpose of the Fellowship in the context of the wider church in Harlow (as described in the leaflet 'Freshwaters Vision and Purpose'). Such

a commitment is demonstrated through such things as regularly joining in corporate worship, teaching and prayer, on a Sunday morning but also as part of Small Groups or other gatherings of the church. Members are also expected to support the ministry of Freshwaters in giving their time, skills, prayer and finances as led by the Holy Spirit and in a way that is consistent with their own destiny, calling and gifting.

Members of Freshwaters need to be willing to accept the model of governance and spiritual authority recognised and operated by Freshwaters.

LEAVING MEMBERSHIP

People may of course choose to leave the Fellowship at any time. Should a time come that a Member considers leaving then the leadership would ask that, wherever possible, they talk with a leader before making a final decision to leave. This gives an opportunity to talk and pray through the reasons for leaving before you come to your final decision. The leadership will then seek to provide a 'pastoral handover' to another fellowship.

On rare occasions the leadership team may decide that it is no longer appropriate for someone to be a member of Freshwaters. This will be because of issues relating to the 'Commitment and Responsibility of Members' which cannot be resolved through the normal process of pastoral care or loving correction.

In most cases the person involved will be welcome as a 'Friend' to Freshwaters, and the hope would be that one day they will be able to be restored to Membership having fully dealt with the issues involved.

In very rare cases someone may be asked not to attend Freshwaters even as a 'Friend'. This would be because in the judgement of the leadership team a person is causing harm to other Members of Freshwaters, for example, if they were encouraging others in sin, or were being regularly disruptive or abusive.

Matthew 18:15-17 provides in outline a process that can lead to someone being asked to leave the Church.

If someone feels that they have not been treated fairly by the leadership team then they are welcome to contact Paul Taylor (leader of Immanuel Ministries) who is a 'Trusted Friend' of Freshwaters.

OTHER QUESTIONS RELATING TO MEMBERSHIP

Can 'Friends' be involved in areas of ministry within Freshwaters?

We are always thrilled to have people who are keen to help at Freshwaters. There are some areas of service, however, where we believe that the commitment of Membership is so important that we would restrict them to members only. Examples would be leadership positions, certain roles within the Worship Team or teaching our children and/or young people..

Can 'Friends' take Communion (or The Lord's Supper)?

In accordance with *1 Cor 11:20-34* the leadership would encourage each person to ***'examine***