

# Belong



**Bro. Kory Cunningham**

**1 Corinthians 12:27**

I just want to clue you guys in on what this service is about. We want you to respond in some way to the membership paper you find in your seats. There are basically three options. Number one says, "As a HBC member, I recommit to membership." So if you are a current member of our church, we would love for you to just formally say I love membership and I'm still all in. If you're not a member, then we would love for you to become a member, and we have two really easy ways to do that. There's a workshop we're going to put on, or there's an online application you could do instead of coming to the workshop. I'm going to talk about those extensively through the service, so just track with me. And then lastly, it says, "I'm not ready now but please ask again in three to six months." So maybe you've been coming a while and you're thinking I'm not really sure about this, but I would love to revisit it later. That's going to be a third option. Then, there are comments or questions you can ask at the bottom. Now, if you're a visitor with us, if you've only been here a few weeks, we just ask that you kind of listen in. We don't expect to do anything with this piece of paper. But if you've been coming for a while, we would love to have you respond to this message about church membership.

So before we get into what exactly is church membership, I want to tell you about Barry and his wife, Jean. Barry is from California and Jean is from Illinois. They met and got married a little later in life, and came to faith later in life. But man, they love Jesus. I got to know Barry just because he's a guy who got involved here. They started going to Jackson Greer's Sunday school class because they love church history. After coming for a while, he got into a men's discipleship group and there he met Dennis. That led to him getting on the security team and they become fast friends. So he started serving at the school in security, which is around our offices, so he's a guy I saw a lot and got to know really, really well. One day at the office, he came up to me and said, "Hey Kory, my wife and I would like to become members." I say, "That's great!" He said, "No, I want you to know this is a big deal because we've never joined a church in our lives. This will be our first church we've ever joined." They're in their sixties and you could tell he is really excited about this. I said, "Well, what made you want to join Hardin?" He said, "Well, I've been talking to Dennis for a while, and man, Dennis has really been on me about joining the church. I asked him why should I join—I'm in a Sunday school, I'm in a men's group, I'm coming—I don't see a reason to join the church. I'm already in." Dennis was able to say, "Well, it's actually a big deal that you do join because when you join, there's an identity change. You're not just coming to Hardin; you are Hardin. You're not just like coming to church; you become the church at Hardin Baptist."

See, it's a little like dating versus marriage so we'll use this as a little bit of an analogy as we work through this sermon this morning. Think about dating. When you date someone, you're trying to figure out if you like this person. And then if you do, you start going to dinner and movies and hanging out and falling in love. But if you stay dating, then that's different than getting married because when you get married, there's an identity change, right? The two become one flesh. When you're dating, you're two individuals, when you get married, now you are one flesh. There's a theology under marriage. What we want to say this morning is there's a theology under church membership. It's you formally saying I'm not just an individual Christian who's following Jesus, I'm also part of the bride of Christ. I'm also part of the body in church membership, so it's sort of like

getting married. You're saying let's covenant together. I want to move from individual to part of this body of Christ. So that's where we're going as we think about church membership. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 12 is a passage about gifts within the church, but it's a passage that also gives information about church membership. So let's think about belonging, which is church membership. Here's what Paul writes to a church at Corinth, a local church, a specific church.

## **Scripture**

***"Now you are the body of Christ and individual members of it."***

The goal today is we want you to identify with the body of Christ by formally joining Hardin Baptist Church as we grow and go together. We're ending a sermon series called "We Are Sent" and we've preached through gather, connect, serve, give, and go, and that's what we expect members to do as a church. But now I'm going to ask the question, are you part of the we are sent? Well, how do you become part of the 'we' that's about belonging, that's about church membership? So if you're an individual, we want you to join the 'we.' We want you to join the body of Christ as we grow and go together. This morning I'll answer four questions:

**1. What is church membership?**

**2. Who can join?**

**3. Why should I join?**

**4. How do I join?**

Now, I know that there are different people listening to this message. Some of you are brand new guests. You came for the first time, you parked in our guest parking, you came in, and now you're like, "Brother, you're talking about membership. This is our first date and you're already talking about marriage!" I know it's a little awkward. We don't normally talk about marriage on the first date. So if that's you, just hang with us. We do not want you to sign a card and join our church. We actually think that would be kind of weird. If it's your first time, so we just want you to hang out and listen, because maybe down the road in six months you're going to say, "Hey, I actually like this people and this is where I want to be my home

church. Now I'm ready to join." You're going to know how to do that when the time comes.

The second group is you're a member at Hardin Baptist Church. You've already done this; you're already in. Well, what we want you to do is just become more passionate about membership, to love it, and to recommit, to check the box and say I recommit. We're hoping there are like 600 of you that recommit to membership because we want to celebrate that.

Tomorrow, we want to go through just piles of cards saying you are all in and you're still loving membership. Now, there are some of you who have no idea if you're a member or not. Yeah, that a lot of us, right? You've been coming here and maybe you don't remember if you switched you membership, so how do you figure out if you're a member or not? Just call the church office and they will look it up on the computer and if not, we will walk you through what to do.

The third group is you're a regular attender and you've been coming for a while. Maybe you're already in group, maybe you're already in discipleship group. You're like, "I'm attending. I don't really know why I should join." Well, this is what this sermon is about. It's about convincing you that marriage is better than dating, that we really don't believe God wants us to just date the church, He wants us to marry the bride. This is about marrying the bride today, about saying yes I'm all in, count me in. If you're not a believer, we hope that you'll be compelled by the gospel to become a believer today, to believe and trust in Jesus, because that is the first step to becoming a member of a church. You have to believe in the Lord Jesus and get baptized. So maybe that's your step at the end of service.

### **What is church membership?**

As we walk through these questions, as we know our audience, I'll start with question number one. What is church membership? Uh, Jonathan Leeman, he's with 9Marks, wrote a book called Church Membership. In the book, he says, "It's a declaration of citizenship in Christ's Kingdom. It's a passport. It's an announcement made in the pressroom of Christ's Kingdom. It's the declaration that a professing individual is an official, licensed, card-carrying, *bona fide* Jesus representative." So what's he

saying there? If you're a believer in Jesus, you're walking with the Lord; church membership is a group of people where a church and pastors are saying yeah, your testimony and baptism checkout. We also believe by looking at you and looking at your life, that you are a believer in Jesus, so here's your card, here's your passport. It's a stamp of approval to say yes, we're in agreement too that you are a believer in Jesus Christ. So that's one of the things that happen in church membership. You tell us your testimony and baptism and then we say that checks out...we're all in agreement that you are a believer in good standing with the Lord.

Then Jonathan goes on to say, "More concretely, church membership is a formal relationship between a local church and a Christian characterized by the church's affirmation and oversight of a Christian's discipleship and the Christian's submission to living out his or her discipleship in the care of the church." So that's what membership is. It is formally saying I do; it is formally coming together and saying I'm an individual Christian and I want to formally commit myself to this body of believers and pastors, to say I want you guys to carry me through discipleship and maturity. I want you to help me grow in the Lord and go for the Lord. And then in that formality, it's us as leaders and members saying we got you. We're going to come alongside you. We're going to walk with you. We're going to be there for you. It's a formal way of saying I'm in...we're not dating; we're married. Now there's an identity change that's happened. Now you are part of the body of Christ here at Hardin Baptist Church. So just very simply, it's formally belonging to Hardin Baptist Church, to be the church. That's what membership is about. It's that formality. You're like, "Well, I don't like formalities." Well, marriage is a formality, but it's a pretty big deal, right? You go from dating to marriage; it's a big formality. There's theology under it. We think the same with membership. It's not just a formality; there is theology behind it. You are becoming something. You're becoming the body of Christ in a local place to express to the world who Jesus is.

So what is church membership? Church membership is identifying as the body of Christ. I want you just to hear the language in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1. Paul writes to this church that we're about to study. Here's what he says in verse 2, "To the church of God that is in Corinth..." So he's writing to the

church of God but it's not everybody, it's to the church of God in Corinth, a particular place, it has an address. Take the letter is to these people, he says, "...to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together..." So he's writing to a local church of saints in Corinth who are connected together. They've believed in the Lord Jesus and now they are connected together as a local body of Christ. He's writing to them. So we're going to see in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians the reality that there are local churches with addresses where people meet at, and we know who's in and who's out.

But notice there's also this idea of a global church. Paul says, "...with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours..." So the people are coming to the local church there are Corinth—but also they're part of the bride of Christ that is universal, which is all people everywhere who call upon the name of the Lord. When you became a Christian—when you believed and were baptized—you were baptized into the church at large, the universal church of the Lord Jesus. But now what the Lord wants you to do is to also connect with a local expression like these Corinthians did. We're not just universally part of Jesus' body; we're locally part of this body to express that in real ways. We're going to see that as we go back and walk through chapter 12.

In chapter 12, he's dealing with spiritual gifts. That's the main point. But notice the subtlety of they only work with church membership. So here's what we see in verses 12–13, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit." He's talking about gifts, there is a variety of gifts, but they all belong to the same body, and he is using the illustration of an actual human body. As a human body, you're one body but you have a lot of parts. You have ears, you have a nose, you have knees, you have toes, all the body parts, right? They're all individual parts but they all make up one body. He's going to use that to the Corinthians to say this is you—every one of you are individual followers of Jesus, but also you all belong, connected to, one another to form the body of Christ locally to show it for the people around.

Then notice what we see in verses 26 and 27, "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." There's this togetherness of these members where if one is suffering, all do, and if one's rejoicing, all do. That can only happen in a local expression of the body of Christ. If a brother or sister is suffering in China right now, I don't know about it, I'm not affected by it because I'm not connected to them in the local body of Christ—but if one of *you* is hurting, it affects me. If one of you is rejoicing, it affects me. Why? Because I'm connected to you as part of your body and you're connected as part of the Lord's body. And notice this identity of who they are, "Now *you* are the body of Christ and individual members of it." So Paul's writing to Christians and he's saying you're not just a follower of Jesus.

Now, you are that but there's also been an identity change to these Corinthians who have gotten together, who are connected together as one body. He says here's the identity—you are part of the body of Christ and also individual members of it. He's saying guess what? All of you people are individuals. You have different gifting, different talents, and different stories, but all of you together form the body of Christ for the world to see. There's diversity and there's unity within the body of Christ. We see in the New Testament that most of the New Testament letters are written to churches—to the church at Ephesus, to the church at Rome, to the church at Philippi. These are specific addresses, locations with specific people in them that the letter is going to. Paul will name people in that church that he knows are part of that church. Think about Revelation. Jesus calls out various churches, and He names people and He names deeds. So it's not just a location, it's people who are gathering there—those are the church. Jesus can talk about specific people because Jesus knows who's in that church and who's not in that church. So the New Testament shows this idea of a global church and we're all connected to the body of Christ globally. But then we also see we're connected to a local body of Christ, and that's how we really express our gifts and we love one another as believers in Jesus. So number one, it's about identity. You're identifying locally as the body of Christ.

Secondly, church membership is mutually committing to members and church leaders. So by joining the church, you're committing to members and you're committing to the leaders of the church. Ephesians 5:21 says, "Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." Submit to one another. Who's Paul talking about? Is he saying to submit to everyone you see at Walmart today? When you go to the grocery, make sure you're submitting to one another in line? No, he's saying, Ephesus Church, submit to one another. So the application for Hardin Baptist church is submit to one another...not everybody one another. Why? Because we are the body of Christ. There's a submission between members. You are committing and connecting to other members in this church.

Then we see leaders. Paul says in Hebrews 13, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account." So we see that we submit to members but also we submit to leaders. Notice it says "your" leaders. So what's implication? You know who your leaders are. It's not the guy you follow on a podcast or the preacher you listen to on the radio—they aren't your leader. They're not responsible for your soul. Submit to *your* leaders, to *your* members. There are a specific people who have specific leaders and those leaders have specific responsibility; they're caring for your soul. You know, a lot of times the Bible talks about us as sheep. Sheep need shepherd...that's the idea of pastor. Pastors shepherd the flock, the flock of God.

This morning I was on my way to church and I pull out of my driveway, and I'm passing through our family farm that has about 80 head of cows on it. Those are my family's cows. I don't own them, but I'm a helper. They're dad's cows, but I'm connected to them obviously. So I'm driving down the road and I pass at least three different fences with cows that other people own. Now, if I had pulled out of my driveway and all of the cows on Redbud Road are in the middle of the road, guess what? My whole day is wrecked. I've got to stop, I've got to call Mom and Dad, we've got to set up perimeter, and we have to get all these cows back in because they're my cows, right? They're my responsibility. But if I pass by Shawn Jones's house and his cows are out, do you know what I'm going to do?



I'm going to call Shawn and tell him his cows are out. That's it. I'm not even stopping.

See, it's this same idea of those cows belonging to me and I'm responsible for them. That's the idea of Jesus saying when you submit to a church, when you become a member, the leaders there are saying we're going to shepherd you. We're going to care for you and we're going to give an account for your soul one day. And I'm just going to be honest, when something happens with you and I look up your name on our church leadership app and I can see it says member, there's a little bit of like...ooh, I've got responsibility—not just me but the pastors, the deacons—there is responsibility. I'm going to talk to Jesus based on how I care for you in this moment. That's a serious thing...that we've committed, we've said we're going to go after one another, we're going to care for one another. It's like seeing my cows in the road man—this is a big deal. We're mutually committing to one another through church membership.

We not only see that, but we also see church membership is required for church discipline. Church discipline in the New Testament can't happen apart from church membership. Notice, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:1–2 says this, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you..." Where? Among you. "...and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans..." Who? Pagans. So there's "among you," that's the church, and "pagans," that's non-believers. There are two different groups—believers in the church and then those outside the church. Then he says, "...for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you." So we see that even in the church they have an idea of who's in and who's out. Those who are in, we're responsible for—those who are out, there's a different responsibility towards those. Notice with me in verses 12–13, it says this, "For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. 'Purge the evil person from among you.'" So notice the idea of among you, among pagans. Notice the idea of insider, and outsider. Paul's expecting the church to know who is in the church and who's out of the church, who's an insider and who's an outsider. And the insiders you're responsible for, the outsiders

we will let God deal with them. So this is only possible if there is some sort of church membership. They formally know who is in, who's one of us, and then who could be removed if they did something really crazy. Like if a guy has his mom, that's not good; you should do something about that. But we have inside, outside, that's church membership language around even church discipline.

Then, we see that church membership was practiced in the early church. We see in Acts 2:47, it says, "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who are being saved." What is adding to their number? Whose number? Their number. The church's number went from 120 to 3000, then to 5,000. People are getting saved and baptized. They're in. They've got their ear tag, they're one of us, we have to take care of them, watch over them, shepherd them, and love them because now they're in, they're a member now of this local expression of the body of Christ.

So what is church membership? It's you identifying yourself as the body of Christ at a local place. So if you're a member somewhere else and you're just visiting here, stay a member there. That's amazing. But if you're looking for a church, if you're a Christian and you're not a member anywhere, we would love for you to formally do that with us to be the body of Christ here at Hardin Baptist Church.

### **Who can join?**

So the second question is who can join Hardin Baptist Church? What's like the prerequisite to get into membership at Hardin Baptist Church? The first thing is you have to be a born again Christian who's been biblically baptized. That's a prerequisite for church membership at Hardin. Notice Matthew 28, the great commission, "Go therefore make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." So go make believers and then baptize them. If you're a follower of Jesus who's been biblically baptized, you can join our church. Now, we are a Baptist church, so by name that probably means we have opinions about baptism, right? What do we mean by baptism? Well, we believe in the New Testament the Bible teaches baptism by immersion after faith in Jesus. So

we practice believer's baptism. For instance, if you were sprinkled as a kid, or if you were baptized *before* your faith, or if you were baptized for regeneration (in other words, your baptism was your salvation) then those we would say are not biblical baptisms. And again, people disagree, that's why they're not Baptist, but we are. So we typically think, believer's baptism, you profess faith in Christ, we dunk you to show you've been dead and raised with Christ. So that's who can join. And by the way, if you've been baptized at Hardin Baptist Church, you are a member of our church. That's confusing for people. That baptism joined you to Hardin Baptist. So if you've been baptized at our church, or if one of our pastors baptized you down at the lake at a Hardin Baptist gathering, you're a member of our church.

Now, some of you're saying, "If I join the church, I would have to get baptized because I don't have a biblical baptism based on what this church believes and what I see in Scripture. Man, that could be embarrassing." What we want to say is we don't think you getting baptized would be embarrassing at all; we think it would be exciting. We think it would be amazing if we had to do a Lord's Supper night and we had a hundred people lined up that had to get baptized. That would be awesome! I promise if that happens, all of the current members are going to be here, and when you do, we're going to be clapping and amen-ing, "Yeah, let's go!" Right? We would love that! Listen, I got baptized *after* preaching my first sermon. It was very odd. I preached and then I got baptized. Yeah, it was strange, and it was a little embarrassing, but do you know what everybody did? They cheered! Because it's awesome when you decide...Yes, I'm going to listen to Jesus and I'm going to be biblically baptized.

### **Why should I join?**

So now, why should you join? I get this question a lot, "Why should I join? I mean, I can already do everything, I go to Sunday school, I joined a small group, and I'm in a ministry team, so why should I join?" I love this quote by Thom Rainer...he says, "Church membership doesn't simply have privileges, it is a privilege." In other words, church membership is not about perks, it's about privilege. See, when you join a lot of places, it's

about perks, right? If you join the country club, you can swim in the pool and play golf. That's the perk. That's why you pay the money. That's why you do the thing, right? I can't go to their pool because I'm not a member, but you can because you're a member. There are perks to that. But the thing about joining our church is it's not about perks; it's primarily about privilege. It's you saying, "I love being a part of the body of Christ, and I want to express that." It is a privilege to get to identify who Jesus has said you are, and that is part of His body. So we think it's about privilege rather than about perks.

Now, there are some privileges that non-members don't get. For instance, if you're a member of the church, you get to vote on things. Think about Acts 15 when Peter and Paul were disagreeing, they brought it to the church and the church had to settle the matter. We believe as a Baptist church we get to vote on things. I love when we have a church vote, because I get a flood of people who want to join the church because they want to vote on what we bring before the church. And that's a good thing. And there are other privileges. We have family meetings...we call business meetings at Hardin family meetings. You don't want to come to a business meeting, right, that just sounds like something you don't want to come to, so we come to family meetings. We're hoping in the future to have a regular rhythm of family meetings, two to three a year where all the family gets together and we report to you guys, we talk about things, and we deal with things. Those are going to be member only type meetings where we're dealing with family matters. When it comes to deacon care, deacons handle the physical needs of members. And then pastoral care, if you're a member, we're going to come and be there and make sure you are connected—we have a responsibility for your soul. So there are some things about membership just like booking building use—all that is free to you if you're a member. So there are some perks, but we think it's better to say it's just a privilege to be a member of a local body of Christ.

So again, four reasons to join. Reason number one is for identity. I mean, really, I think that's enough said. It's about identity. It's about you saying, I'm part of the body of Christ. In other words, I'm not like John Wayne out on my own doing this Christianity thing. I'm part of the body of Christ. I

don't want to be a lone ranger. I want to be part of the body of Christ. Here's what Mark Dever says about church membership, "When a person becomes a Christian, he doesn't just join a local church because it's a good habit for growing and spiritual maturity. He joins a local church because it's the expression of what Christ has made him — a member of the body of Christ." That's what it's about. It's about that shift—wanting to formally say it's not just about what I get to do, or for formation of habits—it does include those things. Again, it's that dating to marriage. Dating says I like this person, I enjoy hanging out with them, and I want to spend some time with him. Do you know what marriage says? It says I love this person and I want to spend my life with them. It is a transition of identity. You become two individuals who are in love to now being two that have become one flesh. That is a different reality, and church membership is very similar. You've been here for a while, you've been a regular attender for a long time, and we're agreeing—we like each other; we might even love each other. So now you're saying I want to commit to this, I want to put covenant underneath it. I want to join, I want to go to the process of saying I formally want to be recognized as a member—I want to go from dating to marriage. It's an identity shift from being an individual Christian to becoming a member of the body of Christ, and wanting to do your part.

Secondly, why should you join? It's about commitment. It's you saying I am all in. It's a commitment factor of you saying I'm not just coming to church; I am the church. I'm committing to the people. I, I'm committing to the leaders—I want to be part of this bride—I'm all in. That's what your membership says to us and also to you.

Number three, it's about partnership. It's saying I will do my part. In this "We Are Sent" series, we've talked about the expectation for members at Hardin. The expectations are gather, connect, serve, give, and go. We think that's what just Christians should want to do. But if you're a member at Hardin, that's what you should want to do and love to do. So membership is saying I'm partnering and I want to do my part in those things. Now you don't have to do all five of those things at the same time to be a member at Hardin. Some of you are in a season where you can't serve right now; maybe you have a crazy situation. Hey, that's fine. Stay connected and

there'll be a season of serving. There'll be a season of connection. There'll be a season of giving. Maybe you can't give anything, that's fine. We're not requiring that for membership. We just think these things are what you should want to pursue as a believer in the Lord Jesus.

And then lastly, it's about accountability. Honestly, it's just saying I'm prone to wander and I need someone to hold me accountable. I need you guys to be there for me because I'm following Jesus today but I don't know ten weeks from now, so I need you guys to be in my life. See, you need us, you need your people, and you need the pastors. You need that. You need us to be in your life to make sure in ten weeks, guess what? You're still following and loving after Jesus.

### **How do I join?**

Now, let's talk about how to become a member. This is where it gets real practical. How do you actually become a member? Well, there are basically three different ways to become a member, and we'll talk about the process. Number one, you get baptized here. You've believed in the Lord, you get baptized here, and that means you become a member at baptism. Number two, you've already believed in the Lord and you've been baptized somewhere else, and now you're coming to Hardin and you want to join us. Well, then you meet with us and you tell us your testimony and your baptism. If your testimony shows that you know the Lord and your baptism was biblical, then you can become a member by statement, or through the third way, which is through transfer of your letter from another church that you are a member of. If you're not familiar with a letter transfer, it means you became a member at say, First Baptist, Arkansas. Now you have moved here and you want to move your membership from First Baptist, Arkansas to Hardin Baptist church. Well, you let us know and we will contact your church back home and let them know that you want to become a member at Hardin and they transfer your letter of membership there to us. It's a way where churches can communicate to one another that shows the sheep is not out of the pasture, the sheep has found another pasture, and you actually have another shepherd now. It lets them know that we are now caring for you, and it also lets them take you off their church roll. We have someone here who takes care of transfer of

letter, just let us know where your other church was and we'll take care of all the rest.

Now what's our actual process like? If you come to me and say how I want to become a member, here's the normal process. You listen to our membership series so that you know what you're getting into. Then you meet with me or another pastor and we go over it. Have you been baptized, do you need to transfer your letter...and then after that we do a new member gathering. That's kind of the normal way. But we are going to offer a flexible way to join the church during the month of February; we're calling it the February Flex. We're trying to make it super easy for you to join the church during February so you don't have to spend an hour and a half with me. ☺ So you could just like do it a little bit easier way with February Flex, and that is what this card is all about. With February flex, there are actually two ways that you can join the church. Number one is to attend a membership workshop on February 18th. We think this is a great option for anyone who's sort of new to Hardin and doesn't really know us or we haven't really got to know you. There will be refreshments in the foyer and our staff is going to be here. You'll meet us, we'll hang out; it'll be a fun environment. Then you will have a conversation with one of our leaders. You will tell them your testimony, your baptism, you'll answer what the gospel is, and from there we will do whatever is necessary to get you with us in membership. It will be just a great way to discuss your membership with some fun and fellowship. Now, it's a two hour window but it won't take you two hours. We're expecting your time there to be fifteen or twenty minutes. Come in, get to know people, have the conversation, and then know what you need to do next. So we think it's a really good option for anyone kind of new to Hardin.

Now, if you've been to Hardin for a year to like ninety years and you're thinking...Man I've been here forever and you know me and I know you and you know my testimony, how can I just like formally join, what is a more simplistic way? We think a good option for you is to do an online application. On the online application, you would just answer those same questions. What is your testimony, tell us about your baptism, and then what is the gospel? You can go to our website and click apply online, it will

take you to a Google form where you have those three questions to answer along with your name and some contact information. We want short and sweet, just so we know that you know Jesus. You just fill out it out. We've already had several people do it and it's been awesome; the responses have been great. That will go to us as leaders, we will read that, we will check it out, and then we will call you, text you, or email you about any more information we need. Or we'll just say this is awesome, welcome to the family. Or you haven't been baptized yet, let's schedule that. So it's a real easy way for you to start the process of membership and maybe even complete it all in a really simple five to ten minutes. But it's for those of you who have been around for a while, we know you, you know us, you're sort of deeply connected already, and you're ready to do that. We're giving you a really easy way to do that thing. Now, once February's up, you have to meet with me for an hour and a half so if you had rather do that, just wait and schedule a time to meet.

The staff and I are going to celebrate these cards on Monday when we just read through them. We're so excited. We're hoping to get hundreds of people to become members in the month of February and we're going to celebrate all that God has done. We want to gather, connect, serve, give, go, because God has a mission for us. If you're not quite ready, check back with me. That's a great option. We would love to check back with you in three to six months. If you have any comments or questions, just let us know. We would love to have you take some step towards memberships.

## HBC MEMBERSHIP

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Num.: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ As a HBC member, I recommit to membership.
- ☐ I am not a member, but I want to become a member!  
(Select which way you want to apply for membership)
- ☐ Attend Membership Workshop  
on Feb. 18th, 3pm -5pm
- ☐ Apply Online ([hardinbaptist.org/membership](http://hardinbaptist.org/membership))



Scan QR Code  
to learn more  
about applying  
for membership.

- ☐ I am Not Ready now, but please ask again in 3 - 6 months.

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**Comments or Question**

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