I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

SERMON OUTLINES

This is intended to be a complementary resource to author Thom S. Rainer’s book, I Am a Church Member. Pastors are encouraged to create their own sermon outlines based on this framework which follows the content of his book. Church members are encouraged to use the book to affirm each pledge over the course of this 6 week study.
I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

SERMON OUTLINE 1
I Will Be a Functioning Church Member
Text: 1 Cor. 12:12-31

I. Introduction: A tale of two church members
   a. Michael - persevering in the church, a different kind of church member
   b. Liam - disengaged at church, decides to leave
   c. Church member stats
      i. Nine out of ten churches in America are declining or growing at a pace slower than that of their communities.
      ii. Two-thirds of the Builder generation is Christians; Fifteen percent of Millennials are Christians.

II. Sermon text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31
   12 For as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 So the body is not one part but many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I’m not a hand, I don’t belong to the body,” in spite of this it still belongs to the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I’m not an eye, I don’t belong to the body,” in spite of this it still belongs to the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now God has placed each one of the parts in one body just as He wanted. 19 And if they were all the same part, where would the body be? 20 Now there are many parts, yet one body.

21 So the eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” Or again, the head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 But even more, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those parts of the body that we think to be less honorable, we clothe these with greater honor, and our unpresentable parts have a better presentation. 24 But our presentable parts have no need of clothing. Instead, God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the less honorable, 25 so that there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same concern for each other. 26 So if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it. 28 And God has placed these in the church:

first apostles, second prophets,
third teachers, next miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, managing, various kinds of languages.
Are all apostles? Are all prophets?
Are all teachers? Do all do miracles?
Do all have gifts of healing?
Do all speak in other languages?
Do all interpret?

But desire the greater gifts. And I will show you an even better way.

III. **Point 1 - Membership means we are all necessary parts of the whole**
   a. Biblical membership versus culture’s definition of membership
   b. Biblical definition of membership - 1 Cor. 12:27-28

IV. **Point 2 - Membership means we are different but we still work together**
   a. Each part of the Body has to do its own work
   b. The Body suffers when we fail to do our part - 1 Cor. 12:26

V. **Point 3 - Membership means everything we say and do is based on biblical foundation of love**
   a. Biblical definition of love – 1 Cor. 13
   b. We do not love because people are loveable
   c. Love is the foundation of church membership

VI. **Point 4 - Church membership is functioning membership**
   a. Country club membership (pay your dues) versus biblical church membership (give abundantly and serve without hesitation)
   b. Biblical membership is a functioning membership – 1 Cor. 12:12-26

VII. **Conclusion: Take the first pledge**
    “I am a church member. I like the metaphor of membership. It’s not a membership as in a civic organization or a country club. It’s the kind of membership given to us in 1 Cor. 12: ‘Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it’ (1 Cor. 12:27). Because I am a member of the body of Christ, I must be a functioning member, whether I am an ‘eye,’ an ‘ear,’ or a ‘hand.’ As a functioning member I will give. I will serve. I will minister. I will evangelize. I will study. I will seek to be a blessing to others. I will remember that ‘if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it’ (1 Cor. 12:26).
SERMON OUTLINE 2
I Will Be a Unifying Church Member
Text: Eph. 4:1-3

VIII. Introduction: That thing called unity
   a. Team sports – what happens if a football team does not have unity?
   b. Team sports – what happens if a football team does have unity?
   c. Church membership functions like a team

IX. Sermon text: Eph. 4:1-3
   1Therefore I, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, accepting one another in love, 3 diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds us.

X. Point 1 – Known by your love for one another
   a. People will know you by your love – John 13:25
   b. People will also know if you lack love

XI. Point 2 – Gossip and other negative talk
   a. An issue of righteousness - Romans 1:29-31
   b. The tongue can destroy - James 3:6
   c. Don’t be a source of gossip
   d. Gently rebuke gossips
   e. The tongue can be a source of life – 1 Pet. 3:10

XII. Point 3 – Forgiveness and unity
   a. It all begins with forgiveness - Matt. 6:14-15
   b. Unity will not happen if we don’t forgive – Col. 3:12-13

XIII. Conclusion: Take the second pledge
   “I am a church member. I will seek to be a source of unity in my church. I know there are no perfect pastors, staff, or other church members. But neither am I. I will not be a source of gossip or dissension. One of the greatest contributions I can make is to do all I can in God’s power to help keep the church in unity for the sake of the gospel.
SERMON OUTLINE 3
I Will Not Let My Church Be about My Preferences and Desires
Text: Mark 9:35

I. Introduction: Demanding children
   a. Children can be selfish, demanding
   b. Adults can be selfish, demanding
   c. Church members can behave the same way

II. Sermon text: Mark 9:35
    Sitting down, He called the Twelve and said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”

III. Point 1 – The servant motif
    a. The word “servant” occurs fifty-seven times in the New Testament (serve fifty-eight times)
    b. Jesus said we must be a servant to all – Mark 9:35
    c. Paul said we must be servants as well – Eph. 3:7

IV. Point 2 – A survey that said a lot
    a. Survey of dominant characteristics of churches that were inwardly focused
    b. Worship wars
    c. Prolonged minutia meetings
    d. Facility focus
    e. Program driven
    f. Inwardly focused budget
    g. Inordinate demands for pastoral care
    h. Attitudes of entitlement
    i. Greater concern about change than the gospel
    j. Anger and hostility
    k. Evangelistic apathy

V. Point 3 – The mind of Christ
    a. The attitude we should embody (Jesus Christ) – Phil. 2:5-11
    b. What did Jesus do?
       i. He “did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage.”
       ii. “He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave.”
       iii. “He Humbled Himself.”
       iv. He became “obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross.”
VI. Conclusion: Take the third pledge

“I am a church member. I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires. That is self-serving. I am a member in this church to serve others and to serve Christ. My Savior went to a cross for me. I can deal with any inconveniences and matters that aren’t my preference or style.”
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SERMON OUTLINE 4
I Will Pray for My Church Leaders
Text: 1 Tim. 3:2-5

I. Introduction: The Busy Pastor
   a. A word picture of a busy pastor’s life
   b. Do you pray for your pastor?

II. Sermon text: 1 Tim. 3:2-5
    2 An overseer, therefore, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher, 3 not addicted to wine, not a bully but gentle, not quarrelsome, not greedy— 4 one who manages his own household competently, having his children under control with all dignity. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of God’s church?)

III. Point 1 – Pray for the pastor and other church leaders
    a. All church leaders need prayer
    b. How can a pastor be qualified for ministry without prayer – 1 Tim. 3:2-4

IV. Point 2 – Pray for him and his family
    a. The family is the frontline of your pastor’s ministry.
    b. How can he manage his household without prayer – 1 Tim. 3:5

V. Point 3 – Pray for his protection
    a. Above reproach: reproach means “to find fault.”
    b. An impossible expectation for any man
    c. Made possible through the power of prayer – 1 Tim. 3:7

VI. Point 4 – Pray for his physical and mental health
    a. The first thing every pastor will neglect
       i. Physical health – why is this important?
       ii. Mental health - why is this important?
    b. God loves both the mind and the body

VII. Conclusion: Take the fourth pledge
    “I am a church member. I will pray for my pastor every day. I understand that the pastor’s work is never ending. His days are filled with numerous demands that bring emotional highs and lows. He must deal with critics. He must be a good husband and father. Because my pastor cannot do all all things in his own power, I will pray for his strength and wisdom daily.”
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SERMON OUTLINE 5
I Will Lead My Family to Be Healthy Church Members
Text: Eph. 5:22-33, 6:1-4

I. Introduction: Church and family
   a. Scripture teaches that church membership is like a family
   b. In a health church, like a healthy family, we are to love and sacrifice unconditionally

II. Sermon text: Eph. 5:22-33, 6:1-4
   22 Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, 23 for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. 27 He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. 28 In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30 since we are members of His body.

31 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

32 This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband.

6 Children, obey your parents as you would the Lord, because this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, 3 so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land. 4 Fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

III. Point 1 – Praying together as a family for the church
   a. Pray for the leadership of the church in a number of ways
      i. For spiritual protection
      ii. For protection from moral failure
      iii. For the preaching of the Word
      iv. For their families
      v. For encouragement
vi. For physical strength
vii. For courage
viii. For discernment
ix. For wisdom in their leadership

b. As a church member - I must teach my families to pray together for the church

IV. **Point 2 - Worshipping together as a family**
   a. Worship together in the church
   b. As a church member - I must encourage and lead my entire family to worship together in the church.
   c. Family as a mission field – 1 Cor. 7:14

V. **Point 3 - Falling deeply in love with the Bride of Christ**
   a. As a church member - I am not to merely like my church.
   b. As a church member - I am not merely to serve the church.
   c. As a church member - I am to fall deeply in love with my church. (Rom. 5:8)

VI. **Conclusion: Take the fifth pledge**
   “I am a church member. I will lead my family to be good members of this church as well. We will pray together for our church. We will worship together in our church. We will serve together in our church. And we will ask Christ to help us fall deeper in love with this church because He gave His life for her.”
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SERMON OUTLINE 6
I Will Treasure Church Membership as a Gift
Text: Various Texts

I. Introduction: Two scenarios
   a. Scenario 1: A child must clean his room
   b. Scenario 2: A gift awaits the child
   c. Country club membership versus biblical church membership

II. Point 1 – The biblical perspective of the gift of church membership
   a. The gift of salvation
      i. Rom. 3:23
      ii. Rom. 6:23
      iii. 2 Cor. 5:21
      iv. Acts 3:19
      v. Eph. 2:8-9
   b. The gift of the church – 1 Cor. 12:27-28
      i. A gift to be treasured
      ii. A gift to be anticipated
      iii. A gift to be enjoyed

III. Point 2 – Universal church or local church?
   a. The universal church
      i. All believers, everywhere
      ii. Not mutually exclusive (from the local church)
   b. The local church
      i. Some believers, somewhere
      ii. Is exclusive (by definition, some people geographically could never attend your church)
   c. It is invalid to claim membership to the universal church alone

IV. Point 3 – Understand the gift
   a. Church membership is a gift
   b. Receive the gift with true appreciation
   c. A picture of ingratitude – Matt. 20:26-28

V. Conclusion: Take the sixth pledge
   “I am a church member. This membership is a gift. When I received the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, I became a part of the body of Christ. I soon thereafter identified with a local body and was baptized. And now I am humbled and honored to serve and to love others in our church. I pray that I will never take my membership for granted, but see it as a gift and an opportunity to serve others and to be a part of something much greater than any one person or member.”