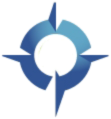


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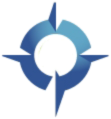
Akigawa Baptist Church

秋川バプテスト教会

New Member Class

ニューメンバークラス

English Edition

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# Lesson 1- Who We Are, What We Live By

New Member Class

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# **Joining a Church Family**



In order for someone to become a part of any church family, we believe that it is important that they know who they are, what they believe, and what their purpose for existing is. The same is true for those who join the Akigawa Baptist Church family as well. It is also important to understand what it means to be a church member, what they can expect from their new church family, and what their family expects of them.

In this class, we will be going over these things in order to help you to make a proper, informed decision about joining Akigawa Baptist Church, and to make that process as smooth and as comfortable as possible.

In this lesson, we will discuss who we are as the family of Akigawa Baptist Church, and what we strive to live by.

# Who We Are- A Brief History of Akigawa Baptist Church



Akigawa Baptist Church was started in September of 1998 by Pastor and Mrs. Dave Carter in their home in Amema, near Akigawa. In 2003, his son, Steve, and his family came from America to help with the church. In October of 2004, we as a church family moved from Pastor Carter’s house to a rental Hall on Mutsumibashi Dori. Then, in July of 2007, we moved to our current building. In April of 2015, Pastor Carter resigned as head Pastor, and the church voted to have Pastor Steve become the head Pastor.

Our church is named after what was then Akigawa City, (before the city merged and changed its name to Akiruno), as well as the Akigawa river. Our logo reflects not only the river here in our city, but primarily Jesus as our living water (John 4:13-14), and the privilege we have as Christians to come to him, to abide in him, and to drink fully from the grace and mercy that flows from Him.

# What we Strive to Live by- Our Core Values



Every church, whether it is done intentionally or not, has a core set of values that they live and function by. At Akigawa Baptist Church, we want to make those core values known, so that we can determine whether we are living, and actively functioning, both individually, and as a church family, the way we believe God wants us to live.

# We exist to- “Love God, and Love Others.”



Our core values, our purpose for living is based on what Jesus called the two greatest commands in the Bible, found in Matthew 22:37-40.

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

At Akigawa Baptist Church, our goal, both individually, and as a church family, is to put our focus on obeying these two commands: to love God, and to love others. As we strive to obey these two commands, we understand that all of the other commands in Scripture are given to us as “landmarks” to guide us in following these two great commands.

# Love God



We grow in our love for God in several ways.

**1. Abide in Him.** Spend time with Him in fellowship.

John 15:4- Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

**2. Know Him.** Grow in our knowledge of Who He is, and what He does for us.

2 Peter 3:18- But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

**3. Please Him through faith.**  Faith is needed not only for salvation, but also to live each day.

Hebrews 11:6- But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

**4. Thank Him.** Acknowledge his grace and mercy toward us, and be thankful for it.

Colossians 3:14-17

14. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

17. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

# Love Others



We love others by purposefully living and acting out the characteristics of love found in

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

4. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

**\*These two commands go hand in hand. They cannot be separated from each other.**

# Love others by loving God



In order to properly love others the way God wants us to, we must love and know God.

1 John 4:7-8, 11

7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

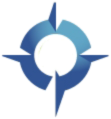
# Love God by Loving Others



We show our love for God in a real and practical way most effectively by loving others.

1 John 4:20-21 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.



# Lesson 2- What We Believe

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# What We Believe About the Gospel



The requirement for potential membership at Akigawa Baptist Church is that a person needs to be both saved and baptized. Because of that, it is incredibly important that we spend time talking about these things with those who want to become members of our church family. Because there are many views about salvation that are unfortunately incorrect, we feel a deep responsibility to make certain that we clearly explain what the Bible teaches about salvation through the Gospel.

# What is the Gospel?



Simply put, the Gospel is the plan that God has revealed to us concerning what He did to save us from our sins, and the judgment we deserved, through the sinless life of Jesus, His death, burial, and resurrection. God’s gift of salvation is given freely to everyone who, through repentance and faith, puts his trust in Jesus.

# The Gospel in Detail



In order to understand what the Gospel is clearly and thoroughly, let’s take some time to look at it in detail.

## God

The Bible, and the message of the Gospel, begins with the fact that God created everything. (Genesis 1:1)

But God didn’t just create the universe. He also made man. As the Creator of all, including man, He is the Lord, or Ruler of all, including man. (Genesis 1:26-27)

God created Adam and Eve with a purpose: the same purpose that He created everyone here on earth for, which is to please and honor God by obeying Him and trusting Him. Man fully enjoyed the love and goodness of God that He fully gave them through their trust and obedience. (Genesis 2:15-17)

## Man’s Rebellion

But man became dissatisfied with the righteous rule of God over them, and pridefully chose to reject it, wanting instead to exist apart from God’s rule, and to determine for themselves what was right and wrong. And in doing so, they rejected His goodness and love, and instead chose God’s judgment and wrath. (Genesis 3:1-7)

From that first sin, all of mankind has chosen, by nature and by their own choice, to reject the rulership of God, and to live apart from Him, thereby facing His just judgment and wrath. (John 3:36; Romans 5:12, 3:23, 3:19)

There is literally nothing we can do to save ourselves from God’s judgment upon us. We owe too big a debt because of our sin, and God’s holiness is too great for us to be in His presence in our sinful condition.

## Jesus’ Sacrifice

God loves the world so much that He sent His Son Jesus to redeem us from their sins. Jesus, while fully God, humbled Himself to also become fully man. He lived a perfect life in complete obedience to God, and gave Himself to die on the cross to fully and completely pay the debt for our sins. He resurrected after three days to show us His victory over death, and offers the gift of forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God to anyone who believes.

## Man’s Response

Jesus tells us that in order to receive this gift of salvation, that we should “repent, and believe the Gospel.” (Mark 1:15) Repentance is simply turning away from living for our own sinful desires and turning to live for Jesus. Belief is putting your complete faith and trust fully and completely in what Jesus did to save you and make you righteous before God. It is by GOD’s grace that He chooses to save you. It is NOT because you are worthy of it. It is ALL simply HIS gift of love to you. But he gives it to YOU, by your faith in Him.

*\*If you have not put your faith in Jesus for salvation yet, please understand that this is the single most important thing you can do. If you would like to repent and believe in Jesus, please talk to us, and we would be overjoyed to talk with you about this important matter.*

# What is Baptism?



Baptism is a rich and wonderful testimony that a believer expresses by identifying himself with Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection. It doesn’t produce or secure salvation; but it is one of the first steps of obedience that a believer takes as a follower of Jesus. When we are baptized, we are declaring that we belong to Jesus, and have decided to follow Him. We have died to our old way of living, and have started a new life with and for Jesus and in His power.

# What we believe as Baptists



We believe that anyone who puts their faith in Christ is a brother or sister, and should be loved as a part of the family of God. With that understanding, there are some things that we understand from Scripture that uniquely identifies us as Baptists.

## Biblical Authority

We believe that the Bible is the ultimate authority for what we believe and how we live. In other words, the Bible is completely sufficient to guide us in all areas of our Christian life. Because of that, we believe that there is no need for any extra Biblical messages from God to guide us, such as visions or unknown tongues.

(John 17:17; Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:21)

## Autonomy of the Local Church

We believe that each church should be governed by itself. Each church family is free to elect its own pastor and deacons, manage itself, and live within the guidelines that the Bible teaches.

(Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:15; Acts 20:19-30)

## Priesthood of Believers

We believe that every believer has equal and instant access to God. It means that we don’t need another person or church authority that we need to go through in order to fellowship with God, or for God to fellowship with us. We can go directly to God with our prayer requests, and He can make His will known directly to us.

(1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Hebrews 4:14-16)

## Two Offices Within the Church

We believe that there are only two offices that the Bible mentions for churches: they are the Pastor and Deacon.

**The Pastor** is the "under shepherd" of the church. He’s responsible for the care of the church family, to lead them in following Jesus, the Great Shepherd. In the New Testament, this office is also called "Bishop" and "Elder.

**The Deacon** is a servant of the church. His responsibility is to assist the Pastor in serving the church family.  These men are elected by the church family, not for the purpose of ruling over the church or the pastor, but to help in the work and needs of the church.

(Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

## Individual Soul Liberty

We believe that each person is free to choose their own eternal destiny. Because of this freedom, each person is also responsible for their choice, and will one day answer to God for their choice. Each person must choose for themselves to put their faith in Jesus.

(Romans 10:17; Romans 14:1-8, 12-23)

## Security of the Believer

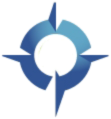
We believe that salvation is a gift from God that cannot be taken away. When a person is saved, he is always saved. Nothing can separate him from the eternal life that was given to him by Jesus, and he can live in complete assurance that Heaven is his future home.

(John 10:27, 28; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

## Two Ordinances

We believe that the Bible teaches us to observe two ordinances as a church family: Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. Neither of these is necessary for salvation. Each of these is a symbolic picture that reminds us of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection that gave us that salvation.

(Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-43; Acts 8:36-38; Rom. 6:1-6; 1 Cor. 11:23-24)



# Lesson 3- What Is A Church Member

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# Our View of the Church



As Christians, it’s important for us to understand who we are as a group of believers in Christ. It’s important because our understanding of this group of believers called the church determines our perspective of it.

* It determines how we look at our church as a whole. (Is it a place where we as a group of Christians study the Bible to learn about God together, or is it more than that?)
* It determines how we see and treat those within our church. (What kind of relationship should I have with the brothers and sisters in the church, and what should my response be to those who are going through difficulty or sin?)
* It also determines how we see ourselves in relation to the church. (How much do I want to get involved? How faithful do I want to be? What is my role as a member?)

Because of that, it is important that we have a proper understanding from the Bible, as to what the purpose of the church is, and how it functions.

# Our Pattern- How the Early Church Functioned



The Bible gives us a clear description of how the early church functioned, which helps us to understand how we as a church should function today.

Acts 2:41-47

41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44. And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45. And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

In the days of the early church, we can see how this group of Christians lives and interacts with each other. Here in the church at Jerusalem, they listen intently to the apostles teaching, they fellowship with each other, they share meals together, they pray together. This pattern continues throughout the New Testament. Because of persecution in Jerusalem, the Christians start traveling to other cities, and wherever they went, they preached the Gospel, and started churches, and continued to follow this same pattern found in our passage.

# The Characteristics and Purpose of the Church



The more you study the way the people in the church lived, the more you could see the characteristics of the church, and their purpose for doing the things the way they did. One thing that becomes very clear is that they were fulfilling the commandment of Jesus in John 13:34-35.

34. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

One of the purposes of the church is to, as a group, show Christ in their lives as His disciples by loving each other. Think about what this meant for the early believers. They ate meals together, they heard and studied Scripture together, they helped each other, they gave to each other as they saw needs, they encouraged each other, they forgave each other, and they warned each other when they saw sin becoming a problem in their lives. All of these happened out of love for each other.

Their love for each other was empowered by their ultimate love for Jesus, their Lord. He was their King. Each one of them loved Jesus, and showed their love to Him in a real way love by loving their brother and sister in Christ. It’s a clear picture of the two greatest commands, isn’t it? (Matthew 22:37-39)

The early church is exactly what WE as a church should strive for. But the question is, HOW do we do that?

# Commitment to Each Other



One of the key things we notice about them is that they were committed to each other.

Ephesians 4:2-3

2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

12. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

To them, being part of the church was more than simply coming to church, listening to preaching, growing as a Christian; which a LOT of Christians assume is what it means to be part of a church. Although being faithful in attending church is good, and even commanded (Hebrews 10:25), to them it was much more than that. That was literally just the starting point.

All the other things they did, encouraging each other, exhorting each other, serving each other, spreading the gospel together, holding each other accountable, walking in unity, all showed a level of commitment that was much deeper than just simply coming to church and learning how to be a better Christian.

In order to do THOSE kinds of things, they had to get to know each other a lot better. They had to spend time with each other, and they had to be willing to reveal their weaknesses to each other so that they could be helped in a REAL way, not just a superficial way. They had to make sacrifices for each other.

They also had to love each other enough to show them when a sin was drawing them away from Jesus, AND trust each other enough to be corrected. They had to not get offended by it and break off the relationship, but know that it was done out of love for them, and grow from it. That kind of commitment takes a LOT more than just coming to church on Sunday.

# The Descriptions of the Church



We can see this commitment to each other further by seeing the way the Bible describes the church, and the members in it.

## 1. A Family

Galatians 6:10

10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

When you think about a family, you think of a very tight connection with each other. Paul puts a clear difference between all men, and those who are of the household of faith. There is the first description of commitment- they are your family.

## 2. A House

1 Timothy 3:15- But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Not only are they your family, but they are within your household. They are close to you, and you are close to them. They know you well, and you know them well.

## 3. A Temple Building

Ephesians 2:19-22

19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

We are built together. We each have a specific job to do, to hold each other up, to strengthen each other, to support each other. And in doing so, WE become the place that God dwells through His Spirit.

## 4. A Body

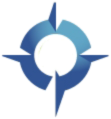
1 Corinthians 12:25-27

25. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

This is one passage from which we get the term member, as in church member. It means that we are each a distinct part of a body. When brothers and sisters in a church commit to each other by caring for each other, EVERYONE knows when one is hurting, and EVERYONE knows when one is rejoicing.



# Lesson 4- Becoming A Church Member

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# What it Means to Become a Member

When you choose to be a part of, or what we call a member of a church (specifically Akigawa Baptist Church), it should mean something more than just participating in the services. But how does it change? What difference does it, or should it make?

Becoming a member affects us in two ways. How it affects you, and how it affects your church family. So let’s look at each aspect.

# What Becoming a Member Means to Me.



1. When you become a member of Akigawa Baptist Church, you are taking a real, clear step of being committed to this church family. You are saying that you are now part of Akigawa Baptist Church. Essentially, your mindset changes from, “I am attending the services of Akigawa Baptist Church” to “I AM Akigawa Baptist Church.” We know that a church is not a building, but a specific group of people, and you are now part of that group.

2. You are choosing to obey Jesus’ command (Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:34-35) to love Him in a very real, practical way by loving the family of Akigawa Baptist Church.

3. You know that the other members of the church are committed to and will love you. By accepting you as a part of their family, we are showing the same commitment to you that you show to us by choosing to be part of us.

4. under the care, and guidance of the pastors and leaders in our church. You can know we are committed to serve you, to help you grow spiritually, to guide or correct you with love when needed, and to comfort and help you when you go through difficult times.

5. As a part of the church, you now help make decisions that shape its direction and future. You help choose the leaders, the budget, and other important decisions through the business meetings. You also play an active part in deciding how, as a church, we display Christ’s love to those around us.

# What Becoming a Member Means to My Church Family



1. It shows the church that you are choosing to be committed to them, to love them, to help and serve them as a part of their family. And by accepting you, they also choose to be committed to you, to love you, to help and serve you.

2. It helps the leaders to know that you want them to be your shepherd; you want them to care for you and teach you, and that you will be willing to submit to their loving correction, if they fear you are straying from your Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

3. It helps the church to know that you, as a part of them, are committed to help keep the church going in the right direction by wisely and thoughtfully helping to make decisions within the church. This decision-making by the church as a whole is important, because it places a proper balance of responsibility on the church and allows the leaders to help guide the church, but prevents them from unlimited authority, or in making decisions without relying on the wisdom of the church as a whole.

# What Should I be Doing as a Church Member?

As a church member, there are things that the Bible tells us that we can do to show our love and commitment to Christ and each other.

## 1. Be faithful to the weekly gathering of the church.

Hebrews 10:25- Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

We show our love and commitment to Christ and each other by being faithful in gathering together with our family in Christ. Of course we meet to study Scripture to grow in our relationship to God. But not only that, we meet to encourage and support each other.

## 2. Care for others in the church.

1 Peter 4:8-10

8. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9. Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

We show our love and commitment to Christ and each other by actively caring for each other. When we love each other in ways that are clearly obvious, by giving a helping hand, by sharing a meal, by meeting a need, we are using the gifts that God has given to us to love God by loving each other.

## 3. Try to spend time with others in the church throughout the week.

Acts 2:46-47

46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

We show our love and commitment to Christ and each other by not only spending time with each other on Sundays, but taking time during the week to get to know each other better. The more you know about each other, the more you are able to love, encourage, and strengthen them.

## 4. Be involved in serving in at least one area of the church.

Ephesians 4:7- But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-12

11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

We show our love to Christ and each other by helping the body of Christ to grow by serving with the gifts of grace that God has given us. The role of the leaders is to equip the members of the church to help each other and to reach others for Christ. As leaders, we want to help you use the gifts God has given you to build up the church and to help it grow.

## 5. Be continually involved in sharing the Gospel with others.

Romans 1:16- For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

We show our love and commitment to Christ by being faithful witnesses of what He has done for us. Sharing the Gospel is how we bring glory to Jesus, through the good news of salvation that He provides to all who will believe.

Jesus said in John 12:32,“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”When you share the Gospel, (Jesus’ death burial, and resurrection), Jesus is the one who draws men to Him through the power of the Gospel message. Through our sharing, Jesus is glorified as He draws people to Himself, when they see His great love for them.

Romans 10:14- How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

We also show our love and commitment to others by sharing the Gospel. Just as you are part of the family of God (as well as a part of the family of this church) because someone loved you and was committed to you enough to share the Gospel with you, you also show your love to future family members by sharing the Gospel with them.

## 6. Have a lifestyle at home and work that follows what the Bible teaches.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

We show our love and commitment to Christ and each other by living holy, pure lives that honor and glorify God, not only on Sunday at church, but also throughout the week at home, work, and play.

One of the things that we deal with in Japan is worshipping idols and/or our ancestors. It is something that we face with our families and friends. It’s easy to fall to the pressure to bow to them at the grave, or worship our ancestors through the burning of incense. but when we commit ourselves to Christ, we are saying that He ONLY is our Lord, and that he is FULLY our Lord. That means that we worship our Lord, and only Him. When we commit ourselves to each other, it means that we are accountable to each other in our Christian walk; not just at church, but also at home.

## 7. Give regularly.

1 Timothy 6:17-18

17. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

2 Corinthians 9:7-8

7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

We show our love and commitment to each other by supporting the church financially so that it can fulfill its purpose. That purpose is threefold: to strengthen the church family, to help those who are in need, and to reach others for Christ. The church, in order to fulfill its purpose, relies on the generosity of its members. We don’t check our member’s tithes and offerings. Rather, our prayer is that just as your faith in God grows in other areas, your faith in your giving will grow as well; always willingly, always cheerfully, always fully relying on God’s sufficiency.

## 8. Keep the unity in the church by peacefully resolving relational problems with other members the way the Bible commands.

Ephesians 4:2-3

2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Matthew 18:15-17

15. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

We show our commitment to Christ and each other by being willing to resolve problems that may come up between each other. If a problem arises with a brother or sister in Christ, your goal should be to prayerfully and lovingly talk with him or her in peace. The purpose of this is not simply to correct him, but to gain your brother; to gain that relationship back. Anytime there is a legitimate issue between brothers and sisters, the correction should be given and received in love. If you are the offender, remember that the one who came to you loved you enough to have the courage to talk to you about it, and if what you did was sinful or harmful, repent, and restore your relationship. We should do as Jesus taught, to forgive one another, even as Christ forgave us.

## 9. Pray for the church

Ephesians 6:18-20

18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

19. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

20. For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

We show our love and commitment to each other by praying with each other and for each other. Taking time to pray with each other deepens your bond of brotherhood, and praying for each other strengthens your faith together in God. And like Paul, your leaders realize that we cannot lead you without the Lord’s grace, wisdom, and strength. We also humbly ask that you pray for us.

# How Do I Become a Church Member?

After having gone through the Discover New Member Class, if you agree with what we believe and how we function, and choose to become a part of the Akigawa Baptist Church family, there are a few steps that we ask that you take to become a member.

### 1. Tell one of the leaders that you are interested in becoming a member.

They will set up a convenient time for you to have a relaxed chat to hear about when you got saved and baptized, and to answer any questions you may have.

### 2. Your request for membership will be presented to the church family.

Then we will present your desire for membership at the next church business meeting, where the church will vote to accept you as part of the family. When they vote to accept you as a member, they are affirming their commitment to you as a part of the family.

### 3. You will be officially welcomed as a member of the church family.

The Sunday following the vote for membership, we will officially announce your membership and welcome you into our church family during the main service.