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I Am A Church Member: Discovering The Attitude That Makes The Difference



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Synopsis

Best-selling author and ministry leader Thom S. Rainer drew an exceptional response when he posted a 500-word declaration about church membership to his daily blog. "I Am a Church Member" started a conversation about the attitudes and responsibilities of church members -- rather than the functional and theological issues -- that previous new member primers all but ignored.Thoughtfully expanded to book form, I Am a Church Member begins to remedy the outbreak of inactive or barely committed church members, addressing without apology what is expected of those who join a body of believers. When a person’s attitude is consistently biblical and healthy, matters of giving, serving, and so forth will fall into place more naturally.Six intentional chapters with study questions guide this rising discussion:1. I Will Be a Unifying Church Member 2. I Will Not Let the Church Be About My Preferences and Desires 3. I Will Pray for My Church Leaders 4. I Will Lead My Family to Be Healthy Church Members 5. I Will Be a Functioning Member 6. I Will Treasure Church Membership as a Gift

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Customer Reviews

Thom Rainer has written more in behalf of the local church than any scholar I know.Ã Â I Am A Church Member is a stellar example of such monographs, the perfect introduction for anyone serious about pleasing Jesus through responsible church membership.Ã Â Fun, perceptive, challenging, and steeped in Scripture, I sincerely wish that every evangelical churchman would read-- and then practice this book.Ã Â Ã Â Paige PattersonPresident, Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, TexasÃ Â Ã Â I am a Church Member is a great resource for both church leaders and

church members. In a world obsessed with consumerism Dr. Rainer shows that, as a biblical church member, I am called to a greater commitment. I recommend that any church that takes belonging seriously consider giving a copy to every member.Ã Â Geoff SurrattManaging Director, ExponentialÃ Â As a church member I have the privilege to unite with the body of Christ in making an eternal difference through my giftedness in His service. Church membership is an honor, privilege, and joy. Where would I be without the fellowship, encouragement, and edifying of the church? I am so thankful to Thom Rainer for making that reality come alive in this book!Ã Â Johnny HuntPastor, First Baptist Church of Woodstock, GeorgiaÃ Â So much ink has been spilled to critique the church that it has almost become sport. Yet, I am confident that you cannot love Jesus and despise His wife, the Bride of Christ. Here, Thom Rainer offers a positive vision of healthy church membership and deep value for the Bride of Christ. There's a deficit of books like the one in your hands, a rare treasure for a generation deeply in need of a compelling vision for this community called church."Ã Â Ed StetzerPresident of LifeWay ResearchÃ Â Church membership is the shape of Christian discipleship.Ã Â Wise, simple and sweet, practical and even piercing--this brief volume, if read and digested, helps us to follow Christ.Ã Â It comes complete with questions to be considered and pledges to be made.Ã Â Thom Rainer has written a book to instruct new members and to remind long-time members that true discipleship may sometimes be heroic; it must always be humble."Ã Â Mark DeverSenior Pastor, The Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, DCPresident, 9MarksÃ Â According to Thom Rainer, Church membership doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t simply have privileges, it isa privilege.Ã Â And I couldnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t agree more.Ã Â In I Am A Church Member Thom delivers a biblical perspective and practical approach to church membership. This little book is both refreshing and inspirational.Ã Â I couldnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t put it down. I highly recommend you pick it up!Ã Â Andy StanleyNorth Point MinistriesÃ Â One of the great privileges of my life is to pastor a local congregation of saints.Ã Â Over the last decade I have seen first hand the fruits of those who understand the content of this book and don't just go to a church but belong to one.Ã Â Dr. Rainer has served us all well in this book.Ã Â He has wrung from the scriptures God's commands concerning the fullness of life found in Christ among his people in covenant faithfulness.Ã Â If you love your church, are frustrated with your church, or don't understand why membership matters, I encourage you to pick this book up and read it.Ã Â Matt ChandlerEdler, The Village ChurchÃ Â For many years, the Lord has used Thom Rainer to encourage and challenge church leaders to be evangelistic, raise expectations, design a discipleship process, reach millenials, etc. And the Church has benefited. Now, the Lord will use this helpful book to encourage church members to discover or rediscover the privilege and responsibility of belonging to a local

church. And the Church will benefit.Ã Â Eric GeigerVice President, LifeWay Church Resources DivisionÃ Â There are scores of books on what it means to be a good pastor of a church. The same cannot be said for books on what it means to be a good member of a church. Thom Rainer helps cure the latter malady in this brief work that is biblical, simple and practical. This book is an easy read. It is also a convicting read. And, it is greatly needed when so many who attend church have a "what can I get" mentality rather than a "what can I give" mindset. This book will serve the body of Christ well.Ã Â Daniel L. AkinPresident, Southeastern Baptist Theological SeminaryÃ Â Thom Rainer, with this incredibly valuable little book, has once again demonstrated why he is considered a leader among church leaders.Ã Â Though small in size, this insightful resource has the potential to bring about big results, helping to guide individuals and churches toward much-needed changes in how we all think about what is really involved in becoming a faithful church member.Ã Â These thoughtful reflections, together with the illuminating and applicable responses, will serve as trustworthy steps toward health, renewal, and revitalization for congregations of all sizes.Ã Â David S. DockeryPresident, Union UniversityÃ Â Thom Rainer has created a profound and practical resource to help two generations of Christians - those who have become too comfortable and even apathetic in the church and those of my generation who are inclined to abandon it altogether. For those, like me, who have grown up in the church this is a pointed and necessary reminder of what it means to be a church member, and for those who are new to church it is a concise primer on the joy and life found in committing to a local church. I highly recommend this deep but uncomplicated book to any believer.Ã Â Barnabas PiperWriter, columnist for WorldMag.comÃ Â Thomas Rainer has tapped into a significant challenge in todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s church that is experiencing a decline in church attendance and membership.Ã Â I Am a Church Member focuses on the priority that all followers of Jesus Christ should emphasize and that is to serve Him by serving others based on the Biblical instruction set forth in Scripture.Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Now [we] are the body of Christ and individual members of itÃ¢â ¬Â• (1 Corinthians 12:27).Ã Â Thom has masterfully outlined how we should function within the context of the apostlesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ teaching and gives us pause to consider just how we should relate to others within the local churchÃ¢â ¬â •ChristÃ¢â ¬â„¢s words are to individuals that collectively make up the body of Christ.Ã Â His work takes root in each individual heart.Ã Â Franklin GrahamPresident & CEOSamaritanÃ¢â ¬â„¢s PurseBilly Graham Evangelistic AssociationÃ Â The Church is the only bride of Christ.Ã Â The Church is the only plan of God to reach the world and it is the only organization that will last forever!Ã Â The Church (with a Big C) is only as strong as its local churches around the world.Ã Â In a day of church decline and stagnation, it appears as if the church of today looks nothing like the church of the Bible.Ã Â I believe when

church members around the world get a clear picture of what the Bible has to say about their relationship with their church--it will change the world!Thom Rainer has done it again.Ã Â He has written a book that will advance the Church and therefore advance the Kingdom of God.Ã Â It is a must read for all church members everywhere.Ã Â Dr. Alex HimayaFounding and Senior PastorTheChurch.at (BattleCreek/ Midtown), Tulsa, OKÃ Â Timely. Needed. Powerful. Simple. Clear. Biblical. This book needs to be read by every Pastor and church member globally. Find a way to get it to every Christ-follower. I will do all I can to do it in my church. Thank you for calling us back to the Bible!Ã Â Dr. Ronnie FloydSenior Pastor, Cross Church, Northwest Arkansas

Ã Â Thom S. RainerÃ Â is the president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, one of the largest Christian resource companies in the world. Also a respected pastor and researcher, he has written more than twenty books and coauthored the No. 1 best sellerÃ Â Simple Church. Rainer and hisÃ Â wife, Nellie Jo, have three grown sons, several grandchildren, and live in Nashville, Tennessee.

Rainer has put together an excellent prescription for the sickness of selfish thing that has invaded the Christian church in the last thirty years. The book is short yet back with challenging thinking. Each of the six commitments should be made by every member of every church. If that happened a lot of what ails the church and keeps it from being Christ’s witness in the world would go away. Great questions and covenants at the end of each chapter. Our church will be including it in our orientation for new members.The one drawback is the chapter on Pastors and church leaders. There are very few pastors that run into the situation of constant overwork that Rainer describes. Most churches have more that one staff member now to look after some of what he attributes to a single pastor or churchs have developed proceedures to ensure they have proper time to themselves.. There are times when a Pastor may find himself harried with a number of colliding demands on his time, but rarely on an ongoing basis and, in these days this is not different that the average working person. While Rainer does mention praying for other church leaders they are given only passing mention. Many lay leaders work full time and then put in a lot of additional time to volunteering in various church activities. This needed as much recognition as the Pastor.I would like to have used this book as a church-wide small group study, but this chapter was my reason not to. I felt it would be demeaning to hard working lay people and create controversy over the role of the pastor in our church where the pastor recently left.On the whole though it is a book every church attender should read and consider.

Six simple chapters accurately diagnose the problem at hand. Church isn't about me. But in an effort to get me to serve my neighbor I'm led to think that if church is centered on serving you everything will work well. In fact church is about Christ and his sacrifice. Only being rooted in the love of Christ can I love my brothers and sisters. The pledges are good things to strive for but not a silver bullet--even if all got on board.

This review, by Dr. Nicholson, has been provided courtesy of Desert Bible Institute (www.desertbibleinstitute.com).Thom Rainer in his book, I Am a Church Member, provides his audience with a clear, applicable commentary on how we, as church members, can better understand, appreciate, and enjoy our time in the church. Perhaps the first point that should be made is that this book's main audience is the new, disconnected, or frustrated Christian. Rainer repeatedly shares about people who come into the church, get excited, become more involved but ultimately see the flaws in the church. What Rainer offers is that we have two choices. We can either accept the flaws of the men and women we serve with, or we can focus on these flaws and because of this drive ourselves out of the church. This is not to say that we as Christians don't all (regardless of or time or position in the church) need to here this message. We all experience frustration and burnout; however, the thrust of Rainer's purpose is how to get the disenfranchised Christian to understand what it really means to be a member of the church.This book would prove extraordinarily useful in a home study, membership class, or small group study. What makes it most pertinent to these types of studies are the structure, the review, and the pledge. The book is broken into six, manageable sections that could easily be shared and discussed in under an hour. At the end of these sections are review questions. These questions help not only with discussion of a group, but also with the reflection of an individual. Finally, each section ends with a pledge. Not unlike the Pledge of Allegiance that we recited in school, these pledges are there for each person to reflect on our personal responsibly and accountability to something greater: our commitment to God, the church, and to each other.Trent Nicholson, Ph.D., D.Min.Desert Bible Institute, PresidentDr. Nicholson is a member of the christianaudio review program. To learn more, visit their website at: www.christianaudio.com.

This book does a great job talking through what it means to be a member in any Christian church. I love how he talked through the scripture and then also has discussion questions so the reader can really make sure that what was explained has sunk in. I also really appreciate the commitments that

the reader is asked to sign. This is not just information, but also practical applications for our everyday lives.The only critique I have is referring to the pastor only as "he". I assume only men are allowed to be pastors in Mr. Rainer's tradition, but I would think a simple edit to include women who are pastors would be doable.

This relatively short book is tightly written, engagingly direct, and biblically accurate. Rainer directly addresses the the difficulties that contemporary churches face concerning people who are not committed to the church. After an introduction which specifically shows the need for this book, he divides his discussion into six pertinent chapters: (1) I will be a functioning church member; (2) I will be a unifying church member; (3) I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires; (4) I will pray for my church leaders; (5) I will lead my family to be healthy church members; and (6) I will treasure my church membership as a gift. In each chapter he sets forth the rationale for his discussion, the relevance of his observations, and the biblical data which support his assertions. This is a book which all church leaders and members should read.

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