

Disciplines of Membership

A set of core disciplines has been central to membership in the Church of the Saviour [1] since its founding in 1947. We believe that a commitment to a spiritual journey must be accompanied by a commitment to a set of disciplines. "Integrity of membership" is an important concept for us: Without accountability for our disciplines and under pressure from the demands of our daily lives, church members will tend to gravitate toward the lowest common denominator and lose consciousness of the centrality of our spiritual journey.

The disciplines that we have chosen are not better than other disciplines that one might choose. Many faithful followers of Jesus have different disciplines or no defined disciplines. The Eighth Day disciplines are simply those that describe us as a community. We have found that they work for us to bring us closer to God and to our community.

Covenant members [2] disciplines:

- Forty-five minutes of time spent in quiet daily, some combination of meditation, prayer, scripture reading, and/or journaling.
- Proportionate giving to the community. This begins with a tithe (ten percent for covenant members and five percent for intern members) of one's *gross* income (before taxes and to include all sources of income, eg inheritance, capital gains as well as normal income). Although after the ten percent tithe there are no defined amounts, proportionate giving means that the *percentage* of one's income returned to the community should rise as one's income rises. The *10% tithe* is given specifically to the community (to be disbursed according to our [yearly budget](#) [3]), many members dedicate their further proportionate giving to other forms of Christian work (direct service justice work, advocacy for justice, and so on).
- Weekly attendance at worship. While it is understood that other things will from time to time draw us away from our worship, we do commit ourselves to avoid other commitments and attend worship at Eighth Day whenever possible.
- A yearly weekend silent retreat, often held at the Church of the Saviour [Dayspring Retreat Center](#) [4]. Members can attend a silent retreat of any form at any location, but it should comprise periods of long silence for prayer, study and meditation. The community structures its own weekend retreat at Dayspring once a year in late April or early May.
- Participation in a [mission group](#) [5]. Weekly attendance at a mission group is one manifestation of our outward journey of service to the world. Mission groups are usually between two and eight members and meet weekly from one and a half to three hours per week. Although there is no set format, the mission group meeting ordinarily comprises periods of worship, personal sharing, study, and work on the outward mission. The mission group is also the place where issues confronting the community can be handled with some intimacy. In some ways, the life in the mission group is the core community of one's life in Eighth Day
- Accountability to a spiritual director. Usually part of your own mission group, the spiritual director holds you accountable for the disciplines that you have accepted. We write weekly reports to the spiritual director who comments upon them and returns them. Often there are also regular face-to-face meetings with the director.

Exceptions to any of the above can be granted with the approval of the leaders.

Community members [6] disciplines

The disciplines of a [covenant member](#) [2] can at certain times in one's life be simply too demanding on one's resources (of time, money or energy) or otherwise impossible to follow.

While we still believe that the disciplines we have delineated are important for drawing us deeper into our faith and into the community, we also recognize that those same disciplines can exclude many who also take their spiritual journey seriously. Such exclusion is contradictory to our understanding of our Christian faith. The way we've chosen to struggle with this tension between integrity of membership and exclusion is to develop the concept of community membership for those people who want to move more deeply into a spiritual life and into the community but for whom one or more of the Eighth Day disciplines are impractical at a particular time.

Community membership is open to anyone who worships with us and for whom the [membership commitment](#) [7] (also printed on the back of our order of worship) is an expression of their faith. Prospective community members choose another person (or, in some cases, a group) in the community to whom they will be accountable for their spiritual disciplines and then, in consultation with that person, they choose whichever spiritual practices best deepen their spiritual journey. In other words, community members choose their level of commitment, but they also choose to be held accountable to someone else for that level of commitment. (For the specifics of the process, [click here](#) [8].)

Source URL: <https://8th-day.org/disciplines-membership>

Links

- [1] <http://inwardoutward.org/the-church-of-the-saviour/churches/>
- [2] <http://8th-day.org/node/27>
- [3] <http://8th-day.org/other-non-basic-information/8th-day-current%20budget>
- [4] <http://www.dayspringretreat.org/>
- [5] <http://8th-day.org/basic-info/mission-groups>
- [6] <http://8th-day.org/basic-info/membership/community>
- [7] <http://8th-day.org/node/193>
- [8] <http://8th-day.org/node/25>