Church Member Accountability Checklist

10 questions every church member should know the answers to

Church / congregation: _____ Date: _____

Check one response per question. Use the line below it to record a name, policy, or next step.

01 Does our church have written bylaws that members can review?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Where to find them: _____

02 Is there a clearly identified person or governing body responsible for holding the pastor accountable?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Name or role: _____

03 Does our church have a governing body with authority to exercise meaningful oversight?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Name of governing body: _____

04 Is there a safe, established way for members to raise concerns without retaliation?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

How to raise concerns: _____

05 Is there a process for independent review of serious concerns about church leadership?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Who conducts the review: _____

06 Is there a documented approval process for changes to church doctrine or the statement of faith?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Where the process is documented: _____

07 Can church members request a congregational meeting under the church's governing rules?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

How to request one: _____

08 Is there a written procedure for responding to allegations of leadership misconduct?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Where to find the procedure: _____

09 Is denominational or other outside oversight available to our congregation?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Outside contact: _____

10 Are members informed of their options when leadership refuses reasonable accountability?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Where the options are explained: _____

Questions to follow up on: _____

When You Have Serious Concerns

A measured five-step process for church members and leadership teams

1. Verify the facts and examine Scripture

Separate confirmed events from rumors. Read relevant biblical passages in context (Acts 17:11).

2. Ask for clarification respectfully

Request a meeting or written response. Identify the specific teaching, policy, or conduct at issue.

3. Review governing documents

Check bylaws, membership provisions, statements of faith, and any denominational procedures.

4. Use appropriate accountability channels

Bring concerns to qualified, impartial leaders. Record dates, responses, and next steps.

5. Decide on responsible next steps

Consider reform, outside guidance, or leaving where appropriate. Avoid personal attacks.

SAMPLE REQUEST TO CHURCH LEADERSHIP

I would appreciate an opportunity to understand how our church handles concerns about leadership decisions or teaching. Could you share the relevant bylaws or policies and explain the appropriate process for asking questions?

KEEP A RECORD

Date of concern: _____ Person or body contacted: _____

Response / next action: _____

IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDING NOTE

If you suspect abuse, threats, exploitation, or illegal activity, prioritize safety and contact appropriate civil authorities or qualified independent professionals. Do not rely solely on an internal church process. Procedures vary by church polity and applicable law.

Scripture for reflection: Acts 17:11 | Matthew 18:15–17 | 1 Timothy 5:19–20

This educational resource is not legal advice or a finding about any specific congregation.