

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH GRESHAM ROAD INC

DISCOVERING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP CLASS 101



Pastor Norman Thomas, Jr.

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY:

Pastor LaBlonde Harmon

2394 Gresham Rd SE Atlanta GA 30316

Phone: (404)243-9288

Fax: (404)243-3229

email: firstbaptistinc@aol.com

website: www.fbcongresham.org



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WELCOME TO DISCOVERING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

We're glad you've chosen to learn more about First Baptist Church! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Because we have members from different church backgrounds, this class was designed to explain who we (FBC) are and how our church operates.

THE BASICS FOR THIS CLASS

".... You are a member of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." EPH,2:19 (LB)

Key Truths:

1. The church is **a Family.**
2. God expects you to be **a member** of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is **an orphan.**

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS

...That I will commit myself to **Christ** and the **Church Family**

WHAT MAKES FIRST BAPTIST A FAMILY?

Four Things unite us:

- **Our Strategy** (How we fulfill our purpose)
- **Our Structure** (When and where we fulfill our purpose)
- **Our Statement** (Why we exist as a church)
- **Our Salvation** (What God has done for us)

Session One

The First Baptist Church

Strategy

(Paul) “I have been all things to all sorts of people that by every possible means I might win some to God. I do all of this for the sake of the Good News.”

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 (Ph)

WHO IS OUR INTENDED AUDIENCE?

“...Yes. Whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.” 1 Cor. 9:22(LB)

First Baptist’s objective is to encourage personal spiritual commitments. Specifically, we encourage people to pursue four basic commitments (covenants).

- **THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT**
- **THE MATURITY COVENANT**
- **THE MINISTRY COVENANT**
- **THE MISSION COVENANT**

EXPLANATION OF THE FOUR FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH COVENANTS

1. THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT....

is a commitment to **Christ** and **the Church Family**

“You are members of God’s very own family...and you belong in God’s household with every other Christian. “Eph.2:19(LB)

“We are all parts of Christ’s Body, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we have different work to do. So, we belong to each other and need all others.” Rom.12:4-5(LB)

2. THE MATURITY COVENANT...

is a commitment to the **habits** necessary for spiritual growth.

“Continue to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2Peter 3:18

*“Take **the time and trouble** to keep yourself spiritually fit.” 1Tim.4:7 (Ph)*

3. THE MINISTRY COVENANT....

is a commitment to discovering and using my God-given gifts and abilities in **servicing** God and others.

God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other...” 1Pet.4:10(LB)

“There are different kinds of service to God...together you form the Body of Christ and each one of you is a necessary part of it.” 1 Cor. 12:5,27(LB)

4. THE MISSIONS COVENANT...

is a commitment to **share** the Good News with others.

“you will be my witnesses for me...to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (GN)

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do it with gentleness and respect...” 1 Peter 3:15

WHY DO WE HAVE THESE COVENANTS?

WE BECOME WHAT WE ARE **COMMITTED TO DOING.**

Session Two

The First Baptist Church Structure

“For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace...

Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”

1 Cor. 14:33,40

HOW OUR CHURCH IS STRUCTURED

The church's structure should *not* be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH DETERMINES ITS STRUCTURE

I. THE CHURCH IS A FELLOWSHIP

“They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles, and joined in the fellowship...”

Acts 2:42(PH)

ANY attitude that causes disunity is a sin.

Col.3:15, 1 Cor. 1:10, 2 Tim. 2:14, Prov. 17:14, 2 Cor.13:11,

Phil. 1:27, 2:1-3, Col. 2:2, Phil. 4:2, ,1 Peter 3:8, 1 Cor 14:33,

John 13:34-35, 2 Tim. 2:23, Rom. 15:5-6, Rom. 12:16-18,

Col. 3:13-14, Ps. 133:1

IMPLICATION: A GOOD STRUCTURE PROMOTES UNITY AND DOWNPLAYS DIFFERENCES

*“(Often)...your meetings do more harm than good because I hear that when you come together as a church, **there are divisions among you...**”* 1Cor. 11:17-18.

“Voting” tends to create conflict.

At First Baptist Church, we only vote on:

- *Purchase of land or buildings*
- *Calling the senior pastor*
- *Changes in the church constitution*

II. THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY

“You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.” 1 Peter 3:8 (LB), Gal. 6:10, Heb. 2:10-12, 1Peter 4:17

SO, WE OPERATE BASED ON RELATIONSHIPS NOT RULES

*“Don’t reprimand a senior member of the church, appeal to him as a **father**. Treat the young men as **brothers**, and the older women as **mothers**. Treat the younger women as **sisters...**”*

1 Tim. 5:1-2(Ph)

*“(A pastor) must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to **manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?** 1 Timothy 3:4-5*

III. THE CHURCH IS A BODY OF CHRIST 1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 5:23, Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 1:18, 2:19 We are a body, not a business! We are an organism, not an organization!

THEREFORE, WE FUNCTION BASED ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

NOT ELECTED OFFICERS

*“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many, form one body, and each member belongs to all others. We each have **different gifts** according to the grace given us.” Rom. 12:4-6*

In an organization, “maintenance becomes the focus. But in an organism, “ministry” is the focus.

AT FIRST BAPTIST WE HAVE A SIMPLE STRUCTURE SO WE CAN MAXIMIZE MINISTRY AND MINIMIZE MAINTENANCE

*“God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works **of ministry**, so that the body of Christ may be built up...” Eph. 4:11-12*

OUR STRUCTURE

- **THE PEOPLE ARE THE “MINISTERS”.**
- **THE PASTORS ARE THE “ADMINISTERS”.**

Currently, there are many different ministries in our church started and operated by members.

IV. THE CHURCH IS A FLOCK OF SHEEP (Jesus’ favorite description of the church)

John 10:1-30, Matt. 26:31, Matt. 25:33

THEREFORE, IT IS CARED FOR AND LED BY A SHEPHERD

*“Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Do you really love me?” ‘Yes Lord,’ said Peter. Then **take care** of my sheep. John 21:16-17*

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the *same* church leaders:

- **“POIMEN”**: (shepherd)
- **“PRESBUTEROS”**: (elder)
- **“EPISCOPOS”**: (one who oversees others, matters, or affairs)

*“To the **elders** I say...**Be shepherds** of God’s flock, serving as **overseers**...I Pet. 5:1-2*

*“Paul sent to Ephesus for the **elders** of the church. When they arrived, he said to them...Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**. Be **pastors** of the church of God...” Acts 20:17-18, 28*

Session Three

The First Baptist Church Statements

“Let there be real harmony among you so there won’t be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.”

1 Corinthians 1:10 (LB)

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

Why We Exist as A Church

This purpose of our church is summarized in a sentence based on two key scriptures:

“WE BELIEVE A GREAT COMMITMENT TO THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE GREAT COMMANDMENT WILL GROW A GREAT CHURCH!”

The Great Commandment: *Jesus said, Love the Lord your God with all your heart...soul...and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”* Matt. 22:36-40

The Great Commission: *“Jesus said, Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”* Matt. 28: 19-20

- To “Love God with all your heart” is **“WORSHIP”**.
- To “Love your neighbor as yourself” is **“MINISTRY”**.
- To “Go...make disciples” is **“EVANGELISM”**.
- To “Baptize...” is to **“INCORPORATE INTO FELLOWSHIP”**.
- To “Teach them...all things” is **“DISCIPLESHIP”**.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH EXISTS:

1. To Reverence the name of Jesus (Worship)
2. To Serve others through ministry (Ministry)
3. To Inspire non-believers to follow Christ (Evangelism)
4. To Fellowship with other believers (Fellowship)
5. To Train and Teach believers to become more like Christ (Discipleship)

I. WE EXIST TO REVERENCE THE NAME OF JESUS

WORSHIP: Expressing my love to God

“Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.” Matt. 4:10

“The Father seeks worshippers...and His worshippers must worship Him in Spirit and in truth”
Jn 4:23-24

Expressions of Worship

- **Singing** (Eph.5:19)
- **Commitment** (Romans 12: 1-2)
- **Praying** (Ps. 95:6)

- **Hearing the Word** (John 17:17)
- **Giving** (1 Cor. 16: 1-2)
- **Baptism** (Romans 6: 3-4)
- **Meditating** (Hab, 2:20)
- **Lord's Supper** (Cor. 11: 23-26)

FBC Worship Style

“Celebration”

Psalm 122:1

“Inspiration”

Isaiah 40:31

“Preparation”

Eph 4: 11-12

II. WE EXIST TO INSPIRE NON-BELIEVERS TO FOLLOW CHRIST

EVANGELISM: Sharing the Good News with Others

“His intent was that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known...”
Eph. 3:10

“Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But who can ask Him to save them unless they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells him?” Rom. 10:13-14 (LB)

WHY OUR CHURCH MUST NEVER STOP GROWING

1. **Because God Loves People** *“The Lord...is patient, **not wanting anyone to perish**, but wants everyone to come to repentance.”* 2 Pet. 3:9 2 Cor.5:14, Luke 15:3-10, Matt. 9:12-13
2. **Because God Commands Us To Reach Out** *“Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in, **so that my House will be full.**”* Luke 14:23(LB) *“...you will be my witnesses...”* Acts 1:8
3. **Because Growth is God's Will**

*“Under Christ's control, the whole Body is nourished...and grows as **God wants it to grow.**”* Col. 2:19(GN)

“(Jesus) I will build my church.” Matt. 16:18

Unbiblical Excuses for Not Growing:

- *“God isn't interested in numbers.”*
- *“Our church wants quality not quantity.”*
- *“Large churches are impersonal.”*

III. WE EXIST TO TRAIN BELIEVERS TO BECOME MORE LIKE CHRIST

DISCIPLESHIP: Becoming spiritually mature

“Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity...” Heb. 6:1

“Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3: 18

“(God had given) ...some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all...become mature...like Christ.” Eph. 4:11-13

IV. WE EXIST TO SERVE OTHERS THROUGH MINISTRY

MINISTRY: Meeting needs with love

“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples – *that you have love for one another.*” John 13:35

1 John 3:16-17, Matt 25:34-40, Heb. 13:16, Rom. 12-13

“Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities...and there are different kinds of service to God (ministry)... *All of you together form the one Body of Christ and each of you is a separate and necessary part of it.*” 1 Cor. 12: 4-5, 27 (LB)

At FBC...

- Every member is a: minister.
- Every task is: important.
- Every member is a “10” in some area.

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

What We Believe

- **In essential beliefs – we have unity.**
“There is one Body and one Spirit...there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all...” Eph.4:4-6
- **In non-essential beliefs – we have liberty.**
“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else’s servant: To his own master he stands or falls... So, then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So, whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.” Romans 14: 1,4,12,22
- **In all our beliefs – we show charity.**
*“...If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains - -but have **no love**, I amount to nothing at all.” 1 Cor. 13:2 (Ph)*

THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE:

1. About God

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1,26,27, 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

2. About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven’s glory and will return someday to Earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22,23; Isaiah9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14-15.

1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1: 3,4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14,15; Titus 2:13

3. About the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives

every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under his control daily.

2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16,17; Acts 1: 8.

1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18

4. About the Bible

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105,160, 12: 6;
Proverbs 30: 5

5. About Human Beings

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin". This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53: 6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59: 1,2

6. About Salvation

Salvation is God's gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sins by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith.

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6; 1:12; Titus 3:5

7. About Eternal Security

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security.

John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 10:10,14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

8. About Eternity

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15.

1 Cor. 2:7-9.

OUR LIFESTYLE STATEMENT

What We Practice

Beliefs are not worth much unless they are translated into actions. Based on what the Bible teaches, we feel very strongly about the following seven practices:

THE BIBLE AS OUR SOLE AUTHORITY

“The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us to do what is right.” 2 Tim. 3:15

Since God’s Word is the only completely reliable and truthful authority, we accept the Bible as our manual for living. Our first question when faced with a decision is “What does the Bible say?” We practice daily Bible reading, Bible study, and Bible memorization. The Bible is the basis for all we believe.

AUTONOMY OF EACH LOCAL CHURCH

“Christ is the head of His Body, the church. He is the source of the Body’s life...” Col. 1:18 (GN)

Christ is the recognized head of our church, not any person, group, or religious organization. While recognizing the value of associating and cooperating with other groups of Christians, we believe every local church should be self-governing and independent from any denominational control. With our “daughter churches” that we sponsor, we encourage each congregation to determine its strategy, structure, and style.

PRIESTHOOD OF EVERY BELIEVER

“Christ loves us, and by His death, He has freed us from our sins and made us a Kingdom of priests to serve God...” Rev. 1:6 (GN) ***“You are...the King’s priests...God’s own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God.”*** 1 Pet. 2:9 (GN)

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to “full-time” Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every member to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading.

TITHING

A tithe of everything you produce belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.” Lev. 26:30

At First Baptist, we practice tithing for the support of Christ's body, the church, as God commands. We recognize that giving 10% of our income is the Biblical standard of giving.

IMMERSION

“For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism, you were also raised with Christ...” Col. 2:12 (GN)

We practice baptism by immersion under water – the way Jesus was baptized, and the way the Bible commands.

SPIRIT-LED LIVING

(Jesus said), “I am the Vine, you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; but apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

We believe the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God's power within us. So, we seek to practice a daily dependence on God's Spirit to enable us to do what is right.

Phil.2:13, Eph. 5:18

TELLING OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” 1 Peter 3:15

It is the responsibility of every Christian to share the Good News with those with whom God brings us into contact. We practice personal sharing by telling others about Christ and inviting friends to church.

Session Four

Our Salvation

“For now, we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and we who have been baptized into union with Christ are enveloped by Him. We are no longer Jews or Gentiles, or slaves of free men, or even merely men or women, but we are all the same--we are Christians; we are one in Jesus Christ.”

Galatians 3:26-28 (LB)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing why they were born. They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God's purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, "*What is the meaning of life?*"

Everyone wants to be happy. People seek happiness in many ways:

...Some look for happiness by **acquiring possessions.**

...Some look for happiness by **experiencing pleasure.**

...Some look for happiness by **gaining prestige and power.**

But real happiness comes from understanding my **Purpose in Life**

I. WHY AM I HERE?

1. GOD MADE ME TO **LOVE** ME!

God says, "*I have loved you with an everlasting love!* Jer. 31:3

*Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ...**because of His love.** God had already decided that through Jesus Christ, He would make us His children----this was God's pleasure and purpose." Eph 1:4-5 (GN)*

2. WE WERE CREATED TO **ENJOY** A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND TO **MANAGE** ALL OF THE REST OF GOD'S CREATION! THIS MAKES US SPECIAL!

"So, God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said, live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge. "Gen. 1:27-28 (LB)

"God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." 1 Tim.6:17

Jesus said, "*I have come in order that you live life---life in all its fullness!*" John 10:10

3. WHEN WE KNOW AND LOVE GOD, AND LIVE IN HARMONY WITH HIS PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES, IT PRODUCES TREMENDOUS BENEFITS IN OUR LIVES:

Clear Conscience Rom. 8:1	Life & Peace Rom 8:6	Help with Weakness Rom. 8:26
Purpose Rom. 8:28	Confidence Rom. 8:31	Security Rom. 8:39
Power & Strength Phil. 4:13	Fulfillment Phil. 4:19	Freedom John 8:32, 36

II. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Man has a natural desire to **be the boss** and to ignore God's principles for living.

"Look out for #1. Do your own thing."

"If it feels good, do it regardless of what God says about it."

"It's my life and I'll do what I please."

THE BIBLE CALLS THIS ATTITUDE: **SIN**

"All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned his own way." Isaiah 53:6

"If we say that we never sin, we are fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth."

1 John 1:18

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside His Will.

"The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God." Isaiah 59:2(LB)

"All have sinned and fallen short of God's glorious ideal." Romans 3:23

When our relationship with God is not right, it causes PROBLEMS in every area of our lives- marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

WHEN PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS, THEY OFTEN TRY MANY DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING BEFORE TURNING TO GOD

"There are ways that SEEM right to man, but they only end in death." Proverbs 16:25

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:

- "My mother was a Christian so..."
- "It doesn't matter what you believe, just be sincere."
- "I'll give up all my bad habits."
- "I'll work hard and earn it."
- "I'll be religious and go to church."

III. WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Jesus Christ said, *"I AM THE WAY, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except THROUGH ME!"* John 14:6

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have come. The Way is a Person! Jesus Christ.

JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEM!

“The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
Rom. 6:23

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

“God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5:8

“God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind.” 1 Tim. 2:5

God has already done His part to restore our relationship with Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us.

IV. WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

1. ADMIT THAT GOD HAS NOT BEEN FIRST PLACE IN YOUR LIFE AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE YOUR SINS.

*“If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from every wrong.”* 1 John 1:9

2. BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED TO PAY FOR YOUR SINS AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN AND IS ALIVE TODAY.

*“If you confess that Jesus is your Lord, and you **believe in your heart** that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”* Romans 10:9

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name (Jesus) by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

3. ACCEPT GOD’S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION. DON’T TRY TO EARN IT.

*“For it is by grace you are saved, through faith---and this not from yourselves, it is the **gift of God**—not by works, so that no one can boast.”* Ephesians 2:8,9

Our relationship with God is not restored by anything we do but based on what Jesus already did for us!

4. INVITE JESUS CHRIST TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE AND BE THE DIRECTOR (LORD) OF YOUR LIFE.

*“To all who **receive** Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who **believe** this are reborn! —not a physical rebirth...but from the will of God!* John 1:12-13

“Jesus says, ‘Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...’” Rev. 3:30

YOU CAN TAKE THESE STEPS BY PRAYING A SIMPLE PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO GOD:

“Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I’m sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian.”

“Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” Romans 10:13

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BAPTIZED

I. WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

1. TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE SET BY JESUS.

“At the time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river.” Mark 1:9

2. BECAUSE CHRIST COMMANDS IT.

*“Jesus said, ‘Go then to all people everywhere and **make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and then teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.**”* Matt. 28: 19-20

3. IT DEMONSTRATES THAT I AM A BELIEVER

*“...many of the people who heard him **believed and were baptized.**”* Acts 18:8

*“We know that we have come to know Him If we **obey His commands.**”* 1 John 2

II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

1. BAPTISM ILLUSTRATES CHRIST’S DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

“Christ died for our sins... He was buried...and He rose again.” 1 Cor. 5:3-4

*“For when you are **baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism, you were also raised with Christ.**”* Col. 2:12

2. IT ILLUSTRATES MY NEW LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN.

“When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand-new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!” 2 Cor. 5:17

*“By our **baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...so also we may live a new life!**”* Rom. 6:4

Baptism doesn't make you a believer – it shows that **you already believe**. Baptism does not “save” you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring – it's the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith...**it is the gift of God – not by works so that no one can boast.”* Ephesians 2:8-9

III. WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

BECAUSE JESUS WAS BAPTIZED THAT WAY.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water.” Matthew 3:16

EVERY BAPTISM IN THE BIBLE WAS BY IMMERSION.

(Example) *“...then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Phillip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...”* Acts 8: 38-39

THE WORD “BAPTIZE” MEANS “TO DIP UNDER WATER”.

The Greek word “*baptizo*” means, “to immerse or dip under water”.

IT BEST SYMBOLIZES A BURIAL AND RESURRECTION!

The founders of denominations agree:

Martin Luther... “I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

John Calvin... “The word ‘baptize’ signifies” to immerse”. “It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

John Wesley... “Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”

IV. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

EVERY PERSON WHO HAS BELIEVED IN CHRIST.

*“Those who believed and accepted His message were **baptized...**”* Acts 2: 41

*“Simon himself **believed** and was **baptized...**”* Acts 8: 13

*“But **when they believed** Philip as he preached the Good News...and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptized**, both men and women.”* Acts 8: 12

At First Baptist, we wait until our children are old enough to **believe** and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

Some churches practice a “*baptism of confirmation*” for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his

confession of Christ. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed. **This differs from the baptism in the Bible**, which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose is to publicly confess your commitment to Christ.

At First Baptist, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though many of us were “confirmed” as children.

V. WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

AS SOON AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED!

“Those who believed...were baptized...that day!” Acts 2:41

“Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, ‘Look, here is water! Why shouldn’t I be baptized right now?’ Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ The man answered, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So they went down into the water and Phillip baptized him.” Acts 8: 35-38

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are “perfect”, you’ll never feel “good enough”!

CAN MY FAMILY BE BAPTIZED TOGETHER?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment. Young children who wish to be baptized are asked to meet with our Minister of Children for a pre-baptism conversation.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a *personal* statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting for other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts undue pressure on them and delays *your* obedience.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR WHEN I AM BAPTIZED?

Women should wear white pants and a white T-shirt with an undergarment. Men may wear a white shirt and white pants. Bring a change of clothes, a towel, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. We provide changing rooms and clothes for baptism if necessary.

WILL I HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING?

No. At the beginning of the service, Pastor Thomas will briefly explain the meaning of baptism. You will wait at the edge of the pool for your turn to be baptized. Pastor Thomas or another

minister will introduce you, briefly lower you just under the water, and then you can leave the pool, dry off, and watch the others. Later you will receive a certificate of your baptism. We encourage you to invite all your relatives and friends to attend our baptism.

SPECIAL NEEDS?

All our ministers can perform a private baptism in special circumstances.

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called “*ordinances*”) as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

I. WHAT IS THE LORD’S SUPPER? (1COR. 11: 23-26)

1. IT IS A SIMPLE ACT

*“The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, **took bread...**” (vs.23)*

2. IT IS A REMINDER

*“And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is my body which is for you; eat it **in remembrance** of me.’” (vs. 24)*

3. IT IS A SYMBOL

*In the same way, He took the cup, saying, ‘**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood; drink it to remember me.’” (vs. 25)*

4. IT IS A STATEMENT OF FAITH

*“For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, **you proclaim the Lord’s death** until He comes back.” (vs. 26)*

II. WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LORD’S SUPPER?

Only those who are already **believers** (Mark 14: 22-26)

“For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment upon himself.” 2 Cor. 11:29

III. HOW DO I PREPARE MYSELF FOR THE LORD’S SUPPER?

“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A person ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” 1 Cor. 11: 27-28

By...

1. **Self-Examination** 1 Cor. 11:27
2. **Confessing My Sins** 1 John 1:9
3. **Recommitment** Rom. 12:1
4. **Restoring Relationships** Matt 5: 23-24

IV. WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

There is no clear command in Scripture as to how often we should observe the Lord's Supper. The important thing is when we do partake of the Holy Communion, we do it in remembrance of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and Savior.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER

The difference between "attenders" and "members" can be summed up in one word: **commitment.**

At First Baptist, we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for four reasons:

- I. A BIBLICAL REASON:
CHRIST IS COMMITTED TO THE CHURCH**
"...Christ loved the church, and he gave his life for it." Eph. 5: 25
- II. A CULTURAL REASON:
IT IS AN ANTIDOTE TO OUR SOCIETY**

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything...a job...a marriage...our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of "church shoppers and hoppers". Membership swims against the current of America's "consumer religion." It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

- III. A PRACTICAL REASON:
IT DEFINES WHO CAN BE COUNTED ON**

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family.

IV. A PERSONAL REASON: IT PRODUCES SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you're not committed to any specific church family.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MEMBER?

At First Baptist, we never ask our members to do more than the Bible teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Covenant.

I. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

...By acting in love toward other members.

...By refusing to gossip.

...By following the leaders.

“So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together.” Rom. 15: 19 (Ph)

“Live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ toward each other.” Rom. 15: 5 (LB)

“Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts.” 1 Peter 1: 22 (GN)

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...” Eph. 4: 29

“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you.” Heb. 13: 17

II. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

...By praying for its growth.

...By inviting the unchurched to attend.

...By warmly welcoming those who visit.

“To the church...we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly.” 1 Thess. 1: 2

“Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in so that My House will be full.”
Luke 14: 23 (LB)

“So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified.” Rom. 15:

III. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

...By discovering my gifts and talents.

...By being equipped to serve by my pastors.

...By developing a servant’s heart.

“Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you...” 1 Peter 4:10 (Ph)

“God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up...” Eph. 4:11-12

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant...”
Phil 2:3-4,7.

IV. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

...By attending faithfully.

...By living a godly life.

...By giving regularly.

“Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another.” Heb. 10:25

“But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ.”
Phil. 1:27 (Ph)

“Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for offering.” 1 Cor. 16:2

“A tenth of all you produce is the Lord’s, and it is holy.” Lev. 27:30