



Baptism Information Packet



Grace Gathering: Baptism Study

Because various church denominations handle baptism differently, many people are left with more questions than answers when it comes to the issue of baptism. Instead of teaching what a specific denomination believes about baptism, let's let the Bible speak for itself as we look at several passages recorded in the early church on this subject. As you read these verses, see if you can glean some general truths about the practice of baptism.

Mark 16:15-16 He (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Matthew 28:19 (Jesus said) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Acts 2:38-41 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 16:33-34 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God--he and his whole family.

Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

1. Record some of your first impressions on the practice of baptism as you read these verses. _____

2. Does anyone ever get baptized apart from believing in Jesus? _____

3. When does baptism take place? Is it before or after someone believes? _____

4. How much time elapses between belief in Jesus and baptism? _____

5. If a believer does not get baptized, will he or she be eternally condemned to hell? According to Mark 16:15-16 what is the only thing that will eternally condemn a person? _____

6. According to Acts 22:16, what does baptism symbolize? _____

7. According to Matthew 28:19, is baptism an option or a command by God? _____

Here are other passages of Scripture on the subject of baptism for further study: Luke 3:21, Acts 8:38, 9:18, 16:15, Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:12. If you would like an even deeper study of baptism ask your facilitator for more resources.

Baptism is extremely important. God completely washes us clean when we repent and place faith in Jesus. God gives us a physical symbol to represent this spiritual cleansing. This symbol is the water of baptism. If you are a new follower of Christ, or even if you have been a follower of Christ for some time (and have not been baptized or understood baptism), God commands you to get baptized. God never made baptism an option. It is to be the first act of obedience for the follower of Christ, and God will certainly bless your obedience. Pursue the first opportunity you have to get baptized. Baptism is a beautiful gift from God, and it will be a tremendous blessing in your life. Go and symbolize the washing away of your sins. It will certainly be one of the most meaningful experiences in your life.

8. Have you been baptized since your conversion to Christ? _____

9. If you haven't, are you ready to get baptized now? _____

Baptism Information Sheet

The most important decision a person will ever make is the decision to become a follower of Christ. This decision leads to the forgiveness of God and eternal life with God. Throughout the New Testament, whenever people made the decision to become a follower of Christ, that decision was followed by the decision to be baptized. The forgiveness and spiritual cleansing a new believer receives is symbolized by the water of baptism. The Scriptures never communicate a circumstance where a person wants to be a follower of Christ but is then unwilling to be baptized in the name of Christ. The two always went hand in hand.

While baptism doesn't save anyone and is not essential for true forgiveness in Christ, it is essential as it pertains to one's obedience to Christ. It is an honor and privilege to be baptized, and God always blesses the obedience of his word. Baptism is a very meaningful event in one's spiritual life.

Grace Gathering takes baptism seriously and considers it one of the most joyous times in the life of the church. If you have made the decision to be a follower of Christ, the Bible says baptism is for you. Instead of giving you the church's official teaching on baptism, our desire is that you will look up the passages on baptism and draw your own conclusions.

There are two predominant venues for people to get baptized at Grace. We offer baptisms in our corporate gatherings or within our house churches. Our recommendation is that most will get baptized in a house church where the smaller setting can be more intimate and where deeper relationships can be experienced. There are further instructions on house church baptisms available on the web. For those preferring baptism in a corporate service see the following instructions below:

If you desire to obey Jesus' command to be baptized, here are the following things you should do to prepare for this special day:

- 1) Make sure you have a good understanding of the gospel and that you have made the decision to become a follower of Christ. If you need further clarification on this we recommend going through the "Seeking God and Finding Him" Bible study so that you can make sure you are ready. Contact the office and request information on this study.
- 2) Complete the two page study on baptism and answer the questions.
- 3) Fill out the baptism questionnaire and turn it in at least two weeks before the baptism date. (this can be e-mailed to Sue Heckley at sheckley@gracegathering.com or given to the welcome center at a Sunday service)
- 4) Decide if you would like to get baptized during The Blend service or The Edge service. We recommend you get baptized in the service you most regularly attend. (We do make exceptions on occasion for those who want to get baptized privately due to unique circumstances.)
- 5) Decide who you would like to baptize you. Here you have two options. You can ask the person who was most instrumental in your decision to become a follower of Christ to baptize you (this person must be a growing Christian), or one of the church pastors will baptize you.
- 6) Decide if you would like to give a brief testimony. Giving a testimony is the act of telling the story of how God has worked in your life in your spiritual journey. This could be a short paragraph or up to one-half page (no more than 1 minute due to time). If you would like to give a brief testimony of how God has worked in your life, someone will be designated to read this testimony while you are being baptized. Giving a testimony can be very powerful and spiritually rewarding. They are to be turned in two weeks prior along with the questionnaire. Testimonies are optional but must be turned in two weeks before baptism.

Baptism Questionnaire

Name: _____ **Email:** _____ **Phone #** _____

1. Give a brief summary of how a person becomes a follower of Christ (how someone is converted to Christ):

2. This is how I lived before I came to Christ:

3. This is when and how I made the decision to become a follower of Christ:

4. These are the changes I have seen since converting to Christ:

5. Give a brief summary of the purpose of baptism:

6. I would like to get baptized in The Blend (9:00 a.m.) _____ (check one)
I would like to get baptized in The Edge (11:15 a.m.) _____
I would like to get baptized privately as I have a unique circumstance (explain circumstance):

7. I would like the following person baptize me: _____(relationship)
I would like to be assigned one of the pastors to baptize me _____ (check here)

8. I would like to give a testimonial Yes No (circle) (if yes include with questionnaire)
One brief paragraph typed. This cannot be any longer than 1 minute when read.

9. I have filled out and completed the baptism study: Yes No (circle)

10. I have the following questions I would like answered:

(please submit this questionnaire at least two Sundays before baptism Sunday to sheckley@gracegathering.com or at the Welcome Center)

Baptism Day Reminder List

This will be a very exciting and meaningful day for you. Praise God for your desire to obey the command to be baptized. Baptism is a special gift from God. We encourage you to invite as many friends and family members as you can to witness your baptism. Particularly invite those who have yet made the decision to follow Christ in life. Your baptism will be a wonderful opportunity for God to speak to them about his desire for their life. Here are a few logistical items to remember on the day of your baptism.

- 1) There will be a brief 10 minute informational meeting the day of the baptism. Everyone getting baptized will be asked to meet 30 minutes prior to the service in the right backstage room of the Great Room. If you are getting baptized in the Blend please be in that backstage room by 8:30. If you are getting baptized in the Edge please be in that room by 10:45.
- 2) For women you will change into a bathing suit as well as shorts and a dark T-shirt.
- 3) For men you will change into a bathing suit and dark T-shirt.
- 4) Bring a towel and bag or duffel bag for your wet clothes.
- 5) There will be private changing areas for men and women in different rooms.