

What about

# BAPTISM



## **What does Life Church Petersfield believe about baptism?**

The first story we read in the gospels about Jesus as an adult is His baptism. The last thing Jesus said to His disciples before ascending into heaven was that they should go into all the world & make disciples and baptising them. Baptism is obviously a very important activity in the New Testament.

Let us answer some questions that you may have.



## Why should I be baptised?

1. You don't need to be baptised to be saved. The New Testament teaches that a person is saved by repentance from sin and faith in Christ. "Repent and be baptised, 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." (Acts 1:38) In Luke 23, the thief on the cross recognized who Jesus was, reached out to Him, and Jesus promised him salvation. That dying thief had no opportunity to be baptised.
2. You do need to be baptised to be obedient to Jesus. We are commanded to be baptised as a part of being His disciple. "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." (Mt. 28:19) Thus, we don't get baptised when we "feel like it," or when we "get around to it" or when we are "led to it by the Lord." Baptism is one of only two ordinances or rituals that Jesus commands us to observe for all time. The other is The Lord's Table, or what is often called communion.
3. Baptism is a public profession of your faith. Baptism is done before a group of people who witness your confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is not the only way we profess to be a Christian, but it is an important way.
4. Baptism symbolises your cleansing from sin. Baptism throughout the New Testament indicated that a person had "repented" or turned away from sin. The apostles often referred to the fact that believers were 'washed from sin'. Peter stated that the water in baptism symbolised not the cleansing of the body from dirt, but the cleansing of the conscience. (1 Peter 3:21)
5. Baptism symbolises your union with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection. When you become a Christian, you die to sin and your old way of life and you begin a whole new life. Romans 6:8 states, "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him." The very act of baptism (being immersed in the water and coming up out of the water) is a picture of what happens to you spiritually.

## How should I be baptised?

Ideally, you should be baptised as soon as possible after you have personally trusted Christ for salvation and been "born again." Remember, you are not baptised in order to become a Christian. You are baptised because you are a Christian. We should not put off baptism, since it is a command of Jesus. Life Church Petersfield holds baptisms throughout the year. You can call the church office on 01730 231400 to find out when the next one is arranged.

## **What if I was baptised as an infant?**

Among orthodox Christians there are different perspectives on infant baptism. Some denominations and traditions (such as Church of England, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Catholic) baptise infants while others (such as Baptists & Pentecostals) do not. Perhaps you were baptised as an infant. How should you view that baptism? You certainly want to show respect to your parents and their viewpoints, as well as be grateful to God for any spiritual influence they had in your life. However, our understanding of what the Bible teaches is that baptism is an action that follows conversion. So, if you have not been baptised since you have made a decision for Christ, we would recommend that you get baptised by full immersion.

At Life Church Petersfield we do not baptise infants as do some denominations and traditions. Instead, we dedicate infants to the Lord and call parents to commit themselves to raise their children for Christ. We do this based on the model seen in scripture of infants being dedicated to the Lord: Samuel in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 1:21-29) and Jesus in the New Testament (Luke 2:21-24).

## **Should I be re-baptised if I was baptised at another church?**

As long as you were born again when you were baptised, and as long as the other church was a Christian church, then you should not be re-baptised. If, however, your baptism was merely a church ritual done prior to your conversion or if the church was outside of the mainstream of Christianity, then we would encourage you to be validly baptised for the first time.

## **Can my children be baptised?**

Absolutely, as long as they thoroughly understand what they are doing. Life Church Petersfield requires that you wait until your children are at least at secondary school age (preferably older) so they can make an intelligent profession of faith that is their own. We certainly believe that a young child can be saved, but the older a child is, the more they will understand and the more meaningful baptism will be for them. Remember, they do not need to be baptised in order to be Christians.

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## **What should I do if I want to be baptised?**

If you decide you want to be baptised at Life Church Petersfield you will need to speak initially with one of the Leadership Team. They will arrange for you to have some time to talk through your decision and answer any questions that you may have. They will give you an indication as to our next Baptismal meeting. We would encourage you to invite family and friends, since it is a wonderful opportunity to bear witness to Jesus.

Please contact a member of the Leadership Team if you have any other questions about baptism.



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