

PREPARING FOR WATER BAPTISM:

Water baptism is the spiritual act of publically declaring that we belong to Christ and that His blood has purchased us and cleansed us. When we are submerged in the waters of baptism, we die to self and everything else that has corrupted us. When we emerge from the water, we are entering into our new lives in Christ Jesus.

Baptism is a celebration of salvation and our new direction for life in Christ Jesus. However, we must be very clear that baptism is not simply a ceremony. It is so much more than an outward expression of our faith in Jesus. It is a time when God actually transfers His grace, puts His power on our lives, and breaks the stronghold of the evil one off of us. Furthermore, baptism is a time when the Holy Spirit comes upon us in power.

Baptism is depicted throughout the New Testament as a significant and important act. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus Himself was baptized – Read Matthew 3:13-17.

Why was Jesus baptized?

1. **Identification** – He wanted to identify with the people He came to deliver.
2. **Consecration** – He wanted to publically consecrate Himself to do the will of His Father in Heaven.

At the very end of His ministry, Jesus commanded His disciples (the church) to baptize people. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Therefore, baptism is an act of obedience to our Savior.

4 THINGS THAT BAPTISM IS:

1. **Confession** of faith in Christ – Read Acts 2:37-41.
 - If you believe with all of your heart, you may be baptized (you must believe).
2. **Communion** with Christ – Read Romans 6:3-10 (identifying with Christ)
 - It is an expression of our life wrapped up with Jesus Christ.
3. **Consecration** to Christ – Setting ourselves apart for Christ and His kingdom.
4. **Consummation** with Christ - looking forward to eternal life with Him – Read Romans 6:22.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Read Acts 2:37-41 again. Those who have accepted the message of Christ (The Gospel) were baptized. Examples: Acts 8:12; Acts 8:35-38; Acts 9:17-19; Acts 10:47

The practice of the New Testament church was to baptize those who believed! It follows upon profession of faith and repentance. If you have not been baptized since becoming a fully-devoted follower of Christ, then it is time for you to be baptized.

THE PLEDGE:

Read 1 Peter 3:18-22 (NIV). Notice that the Apostle Peter uses the word PLEDGE to describe baptism. A pledge is used in sealing a business contract. With this in mind, baptism is an acceptance of God's terms for your life.

1. Do you accept the terms of serving Christ? (Dying to self. No longer living for yourself, but instead for Christ Jesus your Savior and Lord)
2. Do you accept the responsibilities and the demands? (Submitting every area of your life to Him. Obeying all of His commands. Forsaking all others. Helping those in need, making disciples, and sharing the Good News)
3. Do you accept the privileges also incorporated with Christ? (Eternal life with God. Freedom, grace, mercy, and a changed life.)

If your answer is yes to these questions, then it is time for you to be baptized.

OUR NEWNESS OF LIFE:

When we are submerged in the waters of baptism, we symbolize that we have died as Jesus died. And we are buried in the waters as He was buried in a tomb. And when Jesus arose from the dead, we are to see that we too are arising to new life when we come up from the water. Our old self is to be considered dead. Our new self as His disciples is to live with Him for all eternity.

A traditional statement is often said when a person being baptized in water is going down under the water and then raised up out of the water: "**Buried in the likeness of His death, raised to walk in newness of life**".

LOGISTICS:

1. Come to church dressed for water baptism. Wear **darker** clothes that you don't mind getting wet and bring a change of dry clothing for afterwards. Ladies, we do not suggest wearing a dress for your baptism. Everyone should bring along a suitable number of towels to dry off with and perhaps have friends or family members on hand to wrap a towel around you as you exit the baptismal.
2. Let family and friends know that they are welcome to come forward to take pictures of your blessed event.
3. You will be asked these 2 questions by the pastor: (1) Is Jesus your Lord and Savior? (2) What differences has Jesus already made in your life?
4. You will be called forward by name to enter the baptismal. Be careful as you walk down the few steps and not slip and fall. Others will lend you a hand to keep you stable.
5. Sit down in the water and put one hand across your midsection and the other hand to lightly pinch your nose shut so you won't breathe in water as you will be totally immersed. Relax and expect a touch from the Holy Spirit as you go down in the water and are lifted back up by the pastor who will be with you every second.
6. Exit the tank carefully. Someone will hand you one of your towels to wrap around yourself as you watch others being baptized.
7. Remain in place in the front after you are baptized as the congregation will be asked to come forward to pray over you and perhaps deliver to you a beautiful prophesy from the Lord who is very pleased with your obedience this day.
8. Don't forget this moment. It is a spiritual reality. The *old you* has died. The new you is freed from all sin and is now walking in fellowship with the living God.

CONCLUSION:

Should you choose to follow Christ's example and His commandment of water baptism, we believe that the Holy Spirit will come upon you in power as the grace of Jesus Christ is increased in your life.