

Joining a Church and Getting Baptized

Essentials for Following Jesus - Lesson 2

Read Acts 2:36-47. Discuss: What can we learn about joining a church and getting baptized in this passage?

Why You Need A Church Family

You need encouragement and accountability. *“You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing, but you should meet together and encourage each other. Do this even more as you see the day coming.” Hebrews 10:25 “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” Hebrews 3:13*

You have an important role to play. *“If the whole body were an eye, it would not be able to hear. If the whole body were an ear, it would not be able to smell. If each part of the body were the same part, there would be no body. But truly God put all the parts, each one of them, in the body as he wanted them. So then there are many parts, but only one body. 1 Corinthians 12:17–20 “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10*

What to look for in a Church

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:42–47 (NIV)

3 Things to Look for: 1. They preach God’s word accurately (42) 2. They share their lives willingly (42-47) 3. They welcome outsiders lovingly (47)

How to Know if You Should Be Baptized

Why should I be baptized?

- 1. To follow the Jesus’ example.** *“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river.” Mk 1:9*
- 2. Jesus commanded us to get baptized.** *“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. To demonstrate my faith in Jesus.** *“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” Acts 10:47*

What is the meaning of baptism?

- 1. It illustrates the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.** *“Christ died for our sins... He was buried... and He rose again. 1 Cor. 15:3-4 “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 your new life as a Christian.** *“The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!” 2 Cor. 5:17*

Does baptism make me a Christian?

Baptism does not make you a Christian. Baptism is a step you make after you have already invited Jesus into your life. Baptism does not save you. Baptism is a way to show that you are saved. It's like a wedding ring. It is an outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

How should I be baptized?

We should be baptized in the same way Jesus and the first believers were baptized. Every baptism in the Bible was done by immersing someone under the water and then bringing them back up out of the water. The word "baptize" means to immerse or dip under water.

*"As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water." Matthew 3:16
"Then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water..." Acts 8:38-39*

Who should be baptized?

Every person who has believed in Jesus should be baptized. *"Those who believed and accepted His message were baptized..." Acts 2:41*

When should I be baptized?

As soon as you have become a Christian and understand what baptism means. *"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 Philip baptized him." Acts 8:35-38

Should I be baptized more than once?

Baptism only needs to be done once. However, you should be baptized twice under a few circumstances. First, you should be baptized again if you were baptized before you genuinely became a Christian. Perhaps you were baptized at a very young age and looking back you now know that you actually did not understand what you were doing at the time. Second, if you were baptized as a baby then you should get baptized again. In the Bible we see that people were baptized after they had personally decided to become a Christian. A baby cannot understand what is happening to them when they get baptized.

Who will baptize me?

The Bible does not give any specific requirement for who should baptize you. Some churches only allow pastors to baptize people. Some churches allow any other Christian to baptize. The important thing is to follow the leadership of whatever church you are a part of.

Where should I be baptized?

Baptisms can be held at any body of water. Baptisms can be in a river, an ocean, a pool, a bathtub, or anything that can hold water! Be sure to be baptized with the support of a church because baptism is also a symbol of joining the worldwide church. Don't baptize yourself in your shower!

Action Step: Make plans to get baptized. Invite your friends and family to attend.