

# BAPTISM

The People's Church

**Baptism is a public statement that a person has come to Christ, wishes to identify with Christ and would like to publically testify of this commitment.**



## THE PEOPLE'S CHURCH

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## BAPTISM: Identifying with Christ



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## What is Baptism?

Baptism, according to the Bible and New Testament practice, is an outward demonstration and testimony of what has occurred inwardly in a believer's life. Baptism does not bring salvation or add to one's salvation in any way. It pictures a believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. (Rom. 6:1-4) It is a public statement that a person has come to Christ, wishes to identify with Christ and would like to publically testify of this commitment. So, baptism has two purposes. First, the believer is identifying with Christ, stating that he has trusted in Christ alone for salvation. Second, it is declaring to others that I am now following Christ and will be loyal to Christ

## Why Should I be Baptized?

Every believer should be baptized simply because Jesus commanded baptism.

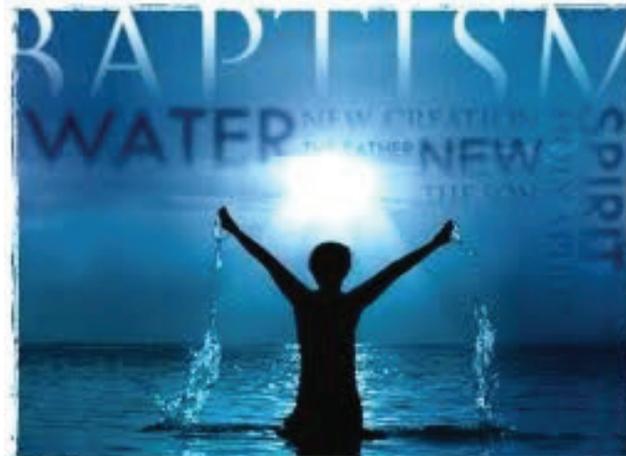
Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

*Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

So, every believer should be baptized as an act of obedience to Christ. Baptism is also a wonderful opportunity for you to declare to family and friends your commitment to Christ.

## When Should I be Baptized?

Because baptism is an outward testimony of what has occurred inwardly, in scripture, regeneration (salvation) always comes before baptism (Acts 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47), and baptism always follows belief. So, you must first come to faith in Christ and then, when you understand the significance of baptism you are ready to be baptized. In Scripture, baptism always follows right after salvation.



## Should My Child be Baptized?

The baptism of children should be considered with two cautions. Because baptism is for believers, we want to be very certain the child is truly saved. Second, we would want to assure that the child accurately understands the meaning of baptism and wants to be baptized. If these conditions are met, then the child should be baptized.

## How Should I be Baptized?

We believe Scripture teaches baptism by immersion. This means the person being baptized is fully immersed in the water.

Immersion is supported by the common meaning of baptizo, the Greek word for baptism which means to immerse, submerge and emerge. This word was used for the process of dyeing a piece of cloth.

Immersion most closely pictures the work of salvation (Rom. 6:1-4). The action of being immersed in the water pictures being buried with Christ. The action of coming out of the water pictures Christ's resurrection. As a result, baptism by immersion is the only method of baptism which illustrates being buried with Christ, and being raised with Him.

Immersion also fits best with New Testament accounts of baptism in that it occurred in rivers (Mt. 3:6, 16), where there was "much water" (Jn. 3:23), and that individuals went "down into" and "up out of" the water (Acts 8:38-39).

## Where Should I be Baptized?

Some churches baptize in the church, others prefer to baptize in a more public place. Though Scripture does not tell us where to be baptized, because there were no church buildings, the New Testament practice was always to baptize in a public place.

At The People's Church, we typically baptize in the church building but may also arrange for you to be baptized in a public place.

Whichever place you prefer, it is important that your family, friends, and acquaintances feel comfortable attending. Because baptism is primarily for the purpose of communicating publicly your identification with Christ, you want as many people to attend as possible. In some cases this may mean having it in a neutral, public location.