



Brookside Church Baptism: In Case You're Interested

Baptism: What's next?

After baptism, your trajectory of following Jesus (discipleship) should continue! Below are a few important ways you can continue to follow Jesus, that we'd encourage you towards:

1. **Read your Bible and pray.** These important spiritual disciplines keep us focused on God, and learning more and more about who He is and how we live in a way that honors Him.
2. **Get involved in Brookside's "3 Priorities": Worship Christ, In Community, On Mission.** Each of these priorities finds a primary expression, respectively, in (1) Sunday morning worship services, (2) Community Groups, and (3) numerous serving opportunities. These three priorities are the best ongoing ministries that can help you grow towards increasing spiritual maturity. Find out more about any of them at www.brookside.net.
3. **Read a book.** There are a ton of great books that can help you grow in your life with Jesus. The place we'd point you first is to choose either of these recommendations and work through it at your own pace:
 - ▶ C. Michael Patton, *Now That I'm a Christian: What It Means to Follow Jesus*. Crossway, 2014.
 - ▶ Stephen Smallman, *The Walk: Steps for New and Renewed Followers of Jesus*. P&R Publishing, 2009.
4. **Take a class.** Brookside offers a number of short term group and class options, including Explore for those who want a conversational group environment to ask questions about Christianity, and Brookside Institute classes that dig deeply into the Bible and theology in more of a classroom environment.
5. **Pursue membership.** Brookside's membership class gives you a chance to learn more about our church family - what we believe, what goes on here, why we do what we do, etc. This class will also invite you to prayerfully consider & pursue membership where you commit more intentionally to involvement with and support of Brookside.

Baptism: FAQs

▶ **Do you baptize infants?**

At Brookside we do not baptize infants, because of our biblically-informed conviction that baptism follows faith in the New Testament and does not precede it. However, several times each year we hold “parent-child dedications” where we celebrate the gift of little kids and create an opportunity for parents to publicly declare their role as the primary disciplers of their kids.

▶ **Will you re-baptize someone?**

If someone was initially baptized before they personally made a decision to follow Jesus, we will re-baptize them. There are times when an individual was baptized as a Christian and wants to be re-baptized (either following a period of turning away from Jesus, or after a period of significant growth). In this latter case, we do not re-baptize. We have no New Testament examples of this sort of re-baptism, and believe it misconstrues the meaning of baptism as an initiatory rite. In other words, ups and downs will likely follow the baptism of a believer; the appropriate response to these ups and downs is renewed or continued faith (including repentance, if needed). This renewed or bolstered faith is best expressed through a testimony, perhaps, and not re-baptism.

▶ **What is the “mode of baptism” used at Brookside?**

Brookside practices baptism by immersion (you get dunked). This seems most consistent with the New Testament practice of baptism and the use of the Greek word for baptism, *baptizo*.

▶ **Does baptism help accomplish or contribute to my salvation?**

When many people ask this question, they want to know if baptism helps them earn right standing before God. In theological jargon, they’re asking if baptism contributes to their *justification*. When asked this way, our response is “no” - baptism in no way contributes to justification, or right standing before God. Only Jesus’ finished work for us on the cross, personally appropriated through our faith, effects our salvation/justification.

However, salvation in the New Testament can also be used more broadly and describe the ongoing process of our living for Jesus and growing in Christlikeness (the theological word for this is *sanctification*). Understood in this way, baptism does contribute to our sanctification as an act of obedience and a public declaration of the new life we’ve received because of Jesus.

- ▶ **Do I receive the Holy Spirit when I'm baptized?**
At Brookside, we believe Christians receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion. An initial (or second) giving of the Spirit does not happen at water baptism.

- ▶ **Do I need to be baptized if I'm pursuing membership at Brookside?**
Believer's baptism is strongly recommended for those who are interested in becoming members of Brookside. This priority helps further ensure (insofar as we are able) the identity of our members as Christ-followers and evidences their commitment to the local church. However, you do not need to be baptized *at* Brookside - believers baptism, even if performed in another church (a church you attended in another state or the church you grew up in, for e.g.), is sufficient.

- ▶ **I've been a Christian for years - is baptism still something I should consider?**
Yes! Even though the New Testament presents baptism in such a way that it shortly follows conversion, that shouldn't dissuade us from taking this step of obedience if we've been a believer for years or decades. It's never too late to obey and shine the "spotlight of the gospel" on your life!

Baptism: Additional Resources

Interested in digging a little more deeply into baptism? Here are a few resources we invite you to look into.

Audio/video resources

Chandler, Matt. "A Shadow of Significant Realities." Sermon preached at the Village Church (TX) on Oct 16, 2011. Available online at <http://thevillagechurch.net/resources/sermons/detail/a-shadow-of-significant-realities/> (last accessed May 2016).

Stanley, Andy. "Going Public: A Message About Baptism." Available online at <https://vimeo.com/107147743> (last accessed March 2017).

Shorter resources (or smaller sections within larger works)

Allison, Gregg R. "Baptism" in his *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church*. Crossway, 2012. pp. 321-64.

Erickson, Millard. "The Initiatory Rite of the Church" in *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. Baker Academic, 1998. pp. 1098-1114.

Grudem, Wayne. "Baptism" in *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Zondervan, 1994. pp. 966-87.

Wiebe, Tim. "Wading into Christian Baptism." Posted at The Brookside Institute on October 3, 2015. Available online at <http://www.thebrooksideinstitute.net/blog/wading-into-christian-baptism> (last accessed May 2016)

Longer resources (if you really want to dig deep)

Demarest, Bruce. *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*. Crossway, 1997.

Schreiner, Thomas R. and Shawn D. Wright, eds. *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*. B&H Academic, 2006.