

**A GUIDE TO
WATER
BAPTISM**

THE PURPOSE OF WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism is one of the first steps of obedience for someone who has put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord, Savior and King. (Read Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:37-38.) Water baptism is the outward sign of the inward work of new birth in Jesus through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. And while water baptism does not save you, it is the fullest public profession of saving faith in Jesus Christ. It depicts the spiritual reality of identifying with and entering into the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus. (Read Romans 6:3-4; Titus 3:3-6.) If you have been born again, water baptism is one of your primary steps into kingdom fullness. (Read Acts 2:41.)

Perhaps you were baptized in water when you were younger but have come to realize you were not born again at the time. You might wonder then if you should be re-baptized. The answer is no. Instead, you need to be truly and genuinely baptized. Water baptism without new birth is an empty exercise linked to an empty experience. Water baptism following new birth is a real response to a righteous reality. Only after new birth is water baptism a dynamic declaration of devotion to the Savior.

THE PATTERN OF WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism is meant to be a Christian community event that should take place within the context of a local church that one is committed to. Water baptism is a rite of fully embracing and entering the family of God and the Body of Christ. As one follower of Jesus baptizes another, there is a witness to saving faith and a welcome into kingdom fellowship, where the one who has believed now belongs to the people of God. If you need to be baptized in water, find a pastor or leader and ask when the earliest opportunity to be baptized would be.

Water baptism is one of three main rites of the Church, which also includes the regular partaking of communion, or the Lord's Supper (which celebrates the Lord's body and blood broken and offered to all) and the laying on of hands (which serves to confer blessing, share authority and impart spiritual power). (Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Mark 16:18; Hebrews 6:2; Acts 19:5.) The pattern of water baptism consists of a declaration of faith and devotion to Jesus, being fully immersed in water by a designated minister as a sign of identifying with and entering into the death and burial of Christ, and coming up out of the water identifying with and entering into the resurrection of Christ and new spiritual life in Him.

THE PROCESS OF

MINISTERING WATER BAPTISM

1 Find a place with sufficient water for full-immersion water baptism. This could be a designated baptismal tank, a pool, a river, an ocean or a lake. Baptisms are always beautiful and blessed whether they are indoors or outdoors.

2 Take time to review one's profession of faith in Jesus as Savior, Lord and King. Once the person being baptized comes into the water, take time to briefly interview them, helping them to solidify their statement of surrender and salvation. Helpful questions might include:

“[Name], have you repented of your sins, self-righteousness and independence and have you put your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord and King?

Are you here today to make a public proclamation of the reality of your commitment to Christ?

Do you intend to be a follower of Jesus and a devoted disciple all the days of your life?”

3 Have them cross their arms as you firmly but gently grip their wrists and put your other hand in the small of their back. As you fully immerse and submerge them, firmly but gently bring them back up to their feet. As you do this, use this helpful and scriptural “baptismal formula:”

“[Name], by your profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life.”

4 Celebrate this important occasion roundly and soundly. Applause, shouts of joy and tears of gratitude for God's amazing grace are all appropriate expressions for such an awesome and auspicious occasion. The celebration of a public proclamation and demonstration of devotion to Jesus the King is one of the most beautiful moments in the life of a believer and a community of believers.

THE PROOFS OF WATER BAPTISM

- 1** Greater love for and obedience to Jesus in everything. Because water baptism is an act of love for and obedience to Jesus, it should produce a fuller expression and growth in these graces. (Read Romans 6:1-14.)
- 2** Greater love for and commitment to Jesus' mission to see souls saved and disciples made. Because what brings one to the waters of baptism is the past commitment of others to preach the gospel and see people find the way to salvation and new life in Jesus, it should increase one's commitment to want to see the same experienced by many others in the future. (Matthew 28:18-20.)
- 3** Greater love and compassion for the least and the lowest, the broken and the bound and the oppressed and the outcast. Water baptism proclaims a message of how the death-dealing effects of sin and Satan can be canceled and conquered by the victory of Jesus over death, hell and the grave. This should both sensitize and mobilize redeemed people to bring the ministry of redemption, reconciliation and restoration to the helpless, hopeless and hurting. (Read Luke 3:7-14.)
- 4** Greater love for and commitment to living under the rule of the King and by the rules of His kingdom. This step into kingdom fullness should better set one on a sacred path of journeying with Jesus wherever He desires according to the pattern He has designed. (Read Matthew 3:1-6.)