

DISCOVERING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP - CLASS 1 (class notes)

First Baptist Church

198 W. Central Ave., Winter Haven, FL 33880

(863) 294-4133 * office@firstwinterhaven.org * www.firstwinterhaven.org

PURPOSES OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Matthew 28:18-20 (HCSB)

(18) Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

(19) Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- Making _____ of Jesus Christ (disciples)
- Maturing _____ of Jesus Christ (disciples)

WHAT IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

The process of moving from . . .

_____ to _____,

_____ to _____,

_____ to _____

WHY CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

(1) In the Bible, the local church is considered God's _____.

Ephesians 2.19 (ESV) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God[.]

(Jn 1.12, Ro 8.14-17, 2 Co 6.18, Gal. 3.26, 6.10, 1 Jn 3.1)

(2) In the Bible, the local church is considered the _____ of _____.

Romans 12.4-5 (HCSB) [4] Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, [5] in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

(Eph 1:22-23, 1 Co 12.12-27, Eph 4.12, Eph 5.22-23, Col. 1.18, 1.24)

(3) Practically, there needs to be a clear _____ of moving from attending to belonging, from sitting to serving, from receiving to giving.

THREE PREREQUISITES FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

(1) Personal _____ (_____) in Jesus Christ

(2) Believers' water _____ by _____

(3) Leadership of _____ to the right _____

BELIEF STATEMENT

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. (Genesis 1:1,26,27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Corinthians 13:14)

Man is made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. He is the supreme object of God's creation. Although man has tremendous potential for good, he is marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called sin. This attitude separates man from God. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1,2)

Man's soul was created to exist forever. He will either exist eternally separated from God by sin or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are places of eternal existence. (John 3:16; John 2:25; 1 John 5:11-13; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15; Matthew 8:11; Matthew 24:44)

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is coequal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. (Matthew 1:22,23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14,15; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14,15; Titus 2:13)

Salvation is a gift from God to man. Man can never make up for his sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can man be saved from sin's penalty. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1)

Because God gives man eternal life through Jesus Christ, the believer is secure in the salvation for eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives this security. (John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 10:10,14; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living,

understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His control daily. (2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16,17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:1)

The Bible is God's word to all men. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105,160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5)

The Scriptures . . . The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.

God . . . There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

Man . . . Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.

Salvation . . . Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Salvation is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

The Church . . . A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper . . . Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Last Things . . . God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Evangelism and Missions . . . It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the

duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Stewardship . . . God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Cooperation . . . Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

The Christian and the Social Order . . . All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

Religious Liberty . . . God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

The Family . . . God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Human Sexuality . . . God's plan for sexual expression is between one man and one woman for life in the context of holy matrimony. Consequently, any form of sexual participation outside of holy matrimony is a deviation from God's plan and purpose and a perversion of God's design. Examples of perversion of God's plan for human sexuality include, but are not limited to, adultery, fornication, polygamy, homosexuality, and pornography. First Baptist Church teaches that all people are to be loved with the love of Christ regardless of their backgrounds or lifestyle choices; however, First Baptist also affirms that each believer, like Christ, must speak the "truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). Consequently, acceptance of a person is not equivalent to approval of lifestyle choices.

AFFILIATIONS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

_____ Baptist Association (64 congregations) . . . www.myridgebaptist.com

_____ Baptist Convention (2,800 congregations) . . . www.flbaptist.org

_____ Baptist Convention (48,000 congregations) . . . www.sbc.net

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE FROM FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

- A warm, friendly place to worship God
- A place to build and cultivate true friendships with other Christians
- A group of Christian friends who will pray for you when you need it
- Instruction from the Bible which is clear and practical
- Help and ministry when you have a difficulty or crisis
- A place to grow in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- A place to be involved in helping other people come to a relationship with Jesus Christ

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

- (1) A commitment to _____ in your personal _____ with Jesus Christ and to help other people grow in their faith

2 Peter 3:18 (HCSB) But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

- (2) A commitment to be involved in helping other people come to a personal _____ with Jesus Christ in ways that work within your _____, spiritual giftedness, and _____ of God.

Matthew 28:19 (ESV) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit[.]

- (3) A commitment to attend church as _____ as you can.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV) (24) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

- (4) A commitment to _____ in at least one ministry of the church.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (GW) (4) There are different spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. (5) There are different ways of serving, and yet the same Lord is served. (6) There are different types of work to do, but the same God produces every gift in every person. (7) The evidence of the Spirit's presence is given to each person for the common good of everyone.

(5) A faithfulness in giving _____ to the work of the Lord at First Baptist

Lev. 27.30-32 teaches that a tenth of all my income is to be returned to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (ESV) The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (7) Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

(6) A _____ lifestyle that does not reflect _____ upon First Baptist Church and Jesus Christ

Matthew 18:15-17 (ESV) (15) "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. (16) But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. (17) If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

(7) A commitment to _____ the _____ of First Baptist Church by refusing to gossip and by following the leaders

Ephesians 4:29 (NASB) Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Hebrews 13:17 (ESV) Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

THREE PREREQUISITES

- 1) Personal _____ (_____) in Jesus Christ
- 2) Believers' water _____ by _____
- 3) Leadership of _____ to the right _____

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, Winter Haven, FL
MEMBERSHIP ASSESSMENT

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Part 1 - Salvation

When?

Where?

How? Please briefly explain what happened.

Part 2 - Baptism

When?

Where? What church administrated your baptism?

What kind of church is it?

Where is it located?

Church website if available –

Church address and phone –

How? By immersion (dunking) By sprinkling Other

Part 3 – Last Church Membership

What is the name of the last church of which you have been a member?

What kind of church is it?

Where is it located?

Church website if available –

Church address and phone –

- ✦ Did you attend faithfully (*Hebrews 10:24-25*)? yes no somewhat
- ✦ Are you under discipline from any church congregation (*Matthew 18:15-17*)? yes no
- ✦ Did you submit to and support the Pastor and spiritual leadership of your congregation (*Hebrews 13:17*)? yes no somewhat
- ✦ Did you engage in hurtful talk or gossip for which you have not repented (*Ephesians 4:29*)? yes no somewhat
- ✦ Did you “leave well” without causing controversy or disruption to your congregation (*Ephesians 4:1-3*)? yes no somewhat

What prompted your decision to consider moving to another congregation?

First Baptist Church Winter Haven Membership Covenant

Having read the expectations for membership, it is my desire to covenant together with the people of The First Baptist Family in faithfully executing the responsibilities of membership. I understand that as a member, I am to . . .

- 1) Have a commitment to grow in my personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to help other believers grow,
- 2) Have a commitment to help others come to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ,
- 3) Be faithful in my attendance to church,
- 4) Commit to at least one ministry,
- 5) Be faithful in giving regularly,
- 6) Live a lifestyle that does not reflect negatively upon my church family or Jesus Christ,
- 7) Guard the unity of my church family by refusing to gossip and by following the leaders.

This is my desire.

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

ADDRESS

PHONE

EMAIL