



ELDER'S STATEMENT ON BAPTISM

Trying to overly define the sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper) has been a source of unhappy division among Christians for hundreds of years. The elders of Bay Pointe Community Church are committed to address such matters with a tone of graciousness and humility, acknowledging that other Christian communities will differ in their understanding of biblical teaching. As important as the issue of baptism is to the life of the church, it is a gift God has given to the church to assure us of his love and forgiveness, not something with which to attack one another's doctrine.

Though denominations differ on many aspects, all Christian churches agree on two essential truths: First, baptism is the direct fulfillment of Jesus' command to his apostles to make disciples and baptize them (Matthew 28:19). Second, baptism represents both a public identification with Jesus as Lord and a commitment to his body, the church—his redemptive presence on earth.

The New Testament also teaches that baptism signifies cleansing from sin (1 Corinthians 6:11), dying and rising with Christ to a new life (Romans 6:3-5, Colossians 2:12), and the living water that the Holy Spirit brings to our lives (1 Corinthians 12:13). In summary, baptism represents an outward sign of the inner work of God's grace.

While the baptism of children is (and has been) widely practiced in the church, the elders of Bay Pointe have determined that baptism will be offered to those who have made a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. While we believe that children of believers are part of God's covenantal family by virtue of the relationship the parent(s) have with Jesus Christ, we believe it is best to reserve baptizing people until they have personally responded to Christ. We have arrived at this position for the following two reasons:

1. The baptism of believers is the clearly revealed pattern in the New Testament (see Acts 2:38-40, 8:12, 26-38; 10:47-48; 16:31-33; 18:8).
2. Bay Pointe has determined that it would more true to the spirit of biblical practice to wait until faith in Jesus Christ is personally understood and appropriated into their lives.

Finally, baptism is not a "suggestion." It is commanded by Jesus himself. A baptism packet, including a DVD teaching on baptism, is available through the Bay Pointe office.

