

NEWCOMERS CLASS

Ordinances & Membership

Ordinances

- ▶ Two ordinances are given to the church by Christ – Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
- ▶ These ordinances are expectations, not options, for faithful Christians (commanded and modeled in the NT).
- ▶ These ordinances are not salvific, but essential aspects of our worship and obedience.
- ▶ In the ordinances, the GOSPEL is made visible. If we value the gospel, then we will have high regard for these two symbols.

The Lord's Supper

- ▶ Commanded by Christ (Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor 11).
- ▶ A shared celebration that:
 - 1) Reminds us of what Christ accomplished
 - 2) Expresses our continued dependence on His work
 - 3) Reinforces unity in the gospel

1. The Lord's Supper is not a mystical eating of Christ's actual body and blood. (John 6 is about belief).
2. The Lord's Supper is not a superstitious "power up." It is spiritually strengthening for us to reflect on the gospel, but the elements do not impart grace (Christ does).
3. Symbolic. It does not save, but is for those who have been saved (like wearing a wedding ring).

Clarifications

Baptism

A declaration of faith that depicts salvation, identifying with Christ and his church (Matt. 28:18-20).

- ▶ ***Baptism illustrates what salvation is*** - being united by faith with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.
- ▶ ***Baptism illustrates what salvation does*** - we are cleansed from sin through the washing of regeneration.
- ▶ ***Baptism illustrates what salvation requires*** – submission to the Lordship of Christ. An outward profession of inward faith.

Problems with other modes

1. Sprinkling/pouring fails to match the biblical word (*baptizo*= immerse or submerge under water)
2. Sprinkling/pouring fails to follow biblical examples
3. Sprinkling/pouring fails to illustrate biblical truths (union with Christ, cleansing from sin)

**Does mode
matter?**

Problems with Infant Baptism

1. Infant baptism is nowhere commanded or modeled in scripture
2. Baptism is not a future-tense sign, but a present tense declaration
3. Baptism is voluntary. A command to be obeyed, not something parents choose for their children.
4. Baptizing infants applies the sign of union with Christ to those who aren't. Cleansing for those who aren't.
5. Infant baptism blurs the distinction between physical birth and spiritual birth, and results in an impure church.

**Does moment
matter?**

QUESTIONS

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of teal and blue. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a layered, modern aesthetic. The colors range from light, airy blues to deep, saturated teals and blues. The overall composition is clean and professional, typical of a corporate or academic presentation slide.

Membership

A biblical expectation ...

- ▶ Implied by the metaphors: family, body, temple
- ▶ Necessary for discipline (Matt 18; 1 Cor 5)
- ▶ Observed in NT - counting in Acts, lists in 1 Tim, assumed in instruction to pastors

Biblical Requirements

- ▶ Regeneration – only believers belong
- ▶ Baptism – publicly identifying with Christ and his church

Biblical Responsibilities

- ▶ Members are accountable to and responsible for church discipline
 - For the purity of the church / for the protection of the believer
- ▶ Members are responsible to make provision for the church family and eligible to benefit from the provision of the church
- ▶ Members are responsible to minister and benefit from the ministry of others
- ▶ Members benefit from the ministry of leadership and are responsible to that leadership.

Privileges of Membership

Summed up in one word: *participation*

1. Voting on congregational matters
2. Serving in formal capacities
3. The committed care of the body
4. The spiritual blessings of obedience

Process for Membership

1. Pastoral interview
 2. Signing of church covenant
 3. Presentation to congregation
- ▶ *We make provision for “dual membership” for college students, temporary residents*
 - ▶ *Children of members who are younger than 18 enjoy the privileges of membership, though they do not vote.*

Church Covenant

- ▶ Personal profession of faith in Christ
- ▶ Commitment to the church body
- ▶ Affirmation of essential doctrines
- ▶ Commitment to uphold distinctives
- ▶ Recognition of church leadership
- ▶ Commitment to participation in ministry
- ▶ Submission to accountability from fellow members and leaders

Ending Membership

1. Resignation for appropriate reasons (doctrine, moving away, marriage etc)
2. Removal of membership (discipline)
3. Absence of 6 months (exceptions for illness, school, military)

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