

✚ It is a sign of a 'death' and a 'resurrection'

When we are baptised we are identifying with the death of Jesus – through baptism we are symbolically 'buried' with Him and 'raised to life' as we come up from the water. In Romans 6: 3 Paul puts it like this: *'Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life'*.

✚ It is a sign of the end to your old life, the beginning of your new life

When we are baptised it marks the beginning of our new relationship with God – the ways and attitudes of our pre-baptismal life are to be replaced by God's ways after our baptism. Colossians 3:1-4 says: *'Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.'*

✚ It is a sign of an agreement with God

Through baptism we are declaring to God our choice to live according to His ways. We commit ourselves to a life with God – living for, and serving Him.

✚ It is a sign to others of what you believe

When we go through baptism it is a sign to other people that we are no longer living our way but God's way – this should be reflected by the way we talk, think, behave and relate to others. From the beginning, baptism was always the way of 'nailing your colours to the mast' and declaring that you belong to Christ and His people, the Church.



If you believe and trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, what is there to keep you from being baptised? If you wait until you feel that you are ready you may wait all your life. God will give you the courage and the strength that you need.



**Highams Park
Baptist Church**

A Guide to Baptism



Baptism

From the Beginning:

Jesus began to establish His Church by the gathering together of His disciples. He promised that He would build His Church and that the gates of Hell would not prevail against it (Matthew 16: 18). As Israel had been the people of God in the Old Testament, now the Church, made up of people from all nations came to full birth on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came as Jesus promised (Acts 2). We read how the early Christians devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the Lord's Supper and to prayer (Acts 2: 42). Immediately, the Church began to grow at an enormous rate and many people were baptised as believers.

The Fundamental Thing:

When a person is thinking about being baptised, the fundamental requirement is that they believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of their life. Along with every other Christian Church of every denomination we believe in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teach that Jesus died for us and rose again that we might have eternal life.

Believers' Baptism:

While we acknowledge and respect the different practices for baptism across the community of Churches, Baptists believe, along with many other Christians, that baptism was always intended to be reserved for people old enough to make up their own mind about following Jesus. Baptism is most likely by total immersion, a sign that God's love is total and His cleansing complete but it was also the most likely form of baptism in New Testament days. Infant baptism and confirmation that some may have experienced are different from believers' baptism and certainly do not prevent people from being baptised as a believer if they feel it to be the right thing. We try to avoid setting a minimum age and there is certainly no maximum age!

'Believer's baptism is a public confession that you have already come to saving faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Faith must come first.' Rob Warner

Why be Baptised?

✚ Jesus was baptised - He set an example

Jesus Himself was baptised by John the Baptist in the river Jordan (Matthew 3: 13-17). He set us an example that we might follow in His footsteps, even through baptism.

If the Son of God was willing to be baptised to show His obedience to God then so too should we be baptised to show our obedience to God. In the first place, baptism is not dependent on feelings but rather an act of obedience and surrender to God.

✚ Jesus taught about baptism

As He was about to return to Heaven, Jesus gave the 'Great Commission':

'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you'

(Matthew 28: 18-20)

When we become true followers of Jesus then He, through the words of the great commission, tells us that we are to be baptised.

✚ The Apostles / early Church taught about baptism, and baptised people

The first Christians took Jesus' command seriously and all the way through the book of Acts (of the Apostles) we read of how people were converted and then baptised (Acts 2: 37, 8: 26-40, 9:1-19, 16: 11-15, 16: 25-34).

What does it mean to be Baptised?

✚ It is a sign of being 'washed clean'

The water is a symbol of the truth that God washes away our sin, cleanses us within and forgives us. Of course, it's not the actual water that washes away sin, but rather our faith in Jesus. The Baptistry is like a bath in which we can know again that God forgives us completely.

Ananias said to Paul: *'Get up and be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name'*. (Acts 22: 16)