

BAPTISM FAQs

1. What is baptism?

Baptism is a symbolic event that allows a person to express publicly that he is a follower of Jesus.

2. What is the purpose of baptism?

Baptism symbolizes what happens to us when we become a Christian. Entering the pool represents leaving your old life behind. To the ancients, water symbolized death, so being fully immersed under the water represents that you have died to your old life. You are raised up out of the water, which symbolizes your resurrection with Christ, and you exit to walk and lead a new life in Christ.

3. Why get baptized?

When we become a Christian, we give control of our lives to God. In doing so, we agree to follow his lead and do what he asks us to do. Getting baptized was not only something Jesus did, but something that he asks all believers to do. In fact, in the verses known as 'The Great Commission,' Jesus, after his resurrection from the dead, instructed his followers that they were to go to all the world, teaching people about him and the gospel, and baptizing them. God wants us to be baptized to publicly profess our belief in him and decision to follow him. (Matthew 28:19-20)

4. I was baptized as a baby. What's the difference?

We believe that the decision to be baptized needs to be made by the individual being baptized. We believe that infant baptism has the same effect as River Pointe's Parent-Child dedication. It is a significant event through which the parents declare to God and the church their desire to raise their child(ren) to follow Jesus. This decision is made by the parents for the child. The decision to be baptized, on the other hand, is a decision that an individual should make for himself after he commits his life to Christ.

5. Do I have to be baptized to be a Christian?

Absolutely not. The only thing that makes anyone a Christian is their faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is simply, yet importantly, an act of obedience to Jesus. Much like a person remains married whether or not she wears her wedding ring, so a Christian is a Christian regardless of whether she gets baptized. However, as a follower of Christ, every believer should be baptized in obedience to his command.

6. I've been a Christian for years. Doesn't getting baptized now tell people that I really wasn't a Christian?

No, not at all. Deciding to get baptized and following God's command is just like following any of God's other commands. However, baptism is the way the Bible provides for us to tell the world publicly that we

follow Christ. Deciding to follow Jesus is an important, inward decision. Deciding to obey his commands and be baptized is an important decision that expresses the inward change that has already occurred in us.

7. *When should someone get baptized?*

In the New Testament, whenever someone decided to follow Jesus, they almost immediately got baptized. Since being baptized is a decision that should be made after someone becomes a Christian, we believe that baptism should happen as soon thereafter as possible.

8. *I've already been baptized at another church. Does that count?*

Probably. The key biblical point about baptism is that it was a decision that you made for yourself after you decided to follow Christ. At River Pointe, we're not all that concerned with how the baptism was undertaken, but do believe it should be done at the decision of the individual after that person has made a personal decision to follow Jesus.

9. *Why immersion instead of pouring or sprinkling?*

We believe that the baptism practiced in the New Testament and the baptism that Jesus experienced was by immersion, which means a person is taken completely under the water. In fact, our English word for *baptism* comes from the Greek work *baptizo*, which literally means "to dip or plunge under water."

10. *How does River Pointe do baptisms?*

At River Pointe, we hold baptisms at the baptistery outside of the sanctuary. This is a very celebratory experience and is an exciting time for all involved. You wear a bathing suit and t-shirt and are taken completely under the water. Everyone in attendance celebrates.

11. *Do I have to get baptized to be a member of River Pointe?*

No. We do believe that God commands every believer in Jesus Christ to be baptized, and we teach this truth accordingly, but it is not required to be a member at River Pointe.

12. *Can I be baptized again?*

Of course. There are many reasons you may want to be baptized again. You may want to be baptized with a family member. You may want to be baptized by immersion. You may have wandered away from following God and desire to be baptized again to express your recommitment to him. Again, baptism is simply an obedient step taken by a believer in Jesus that demonstrates to others the spiritual change that has occurred inside his life.

*For more information about River Pointe's next scheduled baptism,
or to talk with someone about any questions you may have about baptism,
please contact Terrace Clayton at 281-277-6767 or terracec@riverpointe.org*