

How do I prepare for baptism?

One of the pastors runs a short series of three seminars regularly to help people understand more about baptism and help them make the decision that is right for them. You can attend these classes without committing yourself to being baptised and we will not put pressure on you to do so. If you are interested, please ask when the next series is due to begin.

Do I have to stand up and give my testimony?

Most people welcome the opportunity to do so even though we are naturally nervous about facing so many people in church. You will probably discover that it is an occasion when you can prove the Holy Spirit's power to witness for the Lord. If, however, you feel unhappy about this there are alternatives which we can discuss with you at the time. So there's no need to worry about it!



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**HERTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH**

# **BELIEVER'S BAPTISM**

**Some questions answered**

## What is it?

Baptism is one of two special ways (sacraments) in which Jesus commanded us to declare our faith in him. (The other is Communion.) It is simply an outward act - being immersed in water - that displays an inward attitude - "I want to follow Christ for the rest of my life".

## Why should I?

- **because Jesus was baptised**

Although he did not need John's baptism of repentance for himself, he was baptised to show his solidarity with sinful men and women and as an act of obedience to his Father's will (Matthew 3:13-17). We are called to follow his example.

- **because Jesus commanded it**

His last instructions to his disciples were unmistakable: "Go and make disciples - baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20). We demonstrate our love for Jesus in obeying his command.

- **because the early Christians practised it**

In the book of Acts there are several examples to show that when people became Christians they were baptised (e.g. Acts 2:38, 8:36-38, 10:47-48, 16:14-15, 31-33). We do not believe there is evidence of infant baptism in the New Testament, but that this only became widespread practise in later centuries.

## What does it mean?

- **it is a picture of cleansing**

It graphically illustrates that through the death of Christ our sins can be forgiven and our lives cleansed (Acts 22:16).

- **it is a picture of burying**

In the same way that Jesus died and rose again, so by being baptised (buried under the water) we show that we want to die to our old sinful ways and come alive to the new way in Jesus (Romans 6:1-4, Colossians 2:12).

- **it is a picture of empowering**

Just as the baptism of Jesus was a moment of empowering for his future ministry, so our baptism signifies God's desire to fill us with his Spirit and empower us to live for him (Acts 2:38, 1 Corinthians 12:13).

- **it is a picture of belonging**

Through our baptism we demonstrate our need to belong to God's family, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). To put this truth into practice we normally expect those being baptised to become church members here.

## When should I?

Baptism in the New Testament is always a sign of beginning, so it is good for it to come in the early stage of your Christian journey. However, some come to baptism much later in their spiritual journey. It then becomes a marker of all that has gone before, as well as a renewed commitment for the future.

## What if I was christened (baptised) as a baby?

This is not a barrier to being baptised if you feel God is calling you to make a personal confession of your faith in Jesus - something you could not do as a baby.