



Prospective New Members Guide

Welcome

Welcome to the Bentonville Church of Christ! We're glad you have chosen to learn more about the Bentonville Church of Christ. The Prospective New Members Guide gives us an opportunity to share with you a little about who we are and what we are about. We are privileged to have people attend from many different church backgrounds; therefore we have designed this guide to clarify some of our beliefs and practices as a church family.

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Our Mission

Our stated mission is “To make and mature followers of Jesus”. You will see displayed in many ways a shortened version of that as “Follow Jesus”. We believe this is God’s will for us and is taken directly from Jesus’ words in Matthew 28:18-20.

“All authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

We have identified five parts that we believe are critical to that mission. They are **Lift**, **Serve**, **Connect**, **Reach** and **Grow**.



Lift describes our worship to God.



Serve is what we wish to do for each other and all those around us.



Connect describes our desire to establish relationships with each other and those we come in contact with.



Reach is about our desire to reach out to the lost with the saving word and grace of our Lord.



Grow is what we are constantly trying to do both in number of people in this mission and in our personal, individual walk with God.

We are trying to bring every effort of the Bentonville church into a focus on this mission. We are looking for others who have a passion for God to join us in this focus to the glory of God.

We are also committed to try to live out in every way what Jesus described as the greatest commandments. Jesus said,

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart...soul...and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40)

We are committed to focusing on God and others in all we do.

Expectations

It is only fair that we make clear our expectations of those who are considering becoming members of the Bentonville Church of Christ. New members should be able to expect certain things from those who are already members and members should be able to expect certain things from new members. Below are some of those expectations we have identified.

New converts – If you have just been baptized into Jesus.

What you can expect of us:

- We will not just drop you now.
- We will offer continued teaching for your growth.
- We will offer you groups to be a part of.
- We will offer you continued spiritual help.
- We will try to provide physical help and support when needed.
- We will try to find a place for you to get involved.
- We will provide a quick response to you when you feel we have violated your expectations and will answer questions, teach and support you.

What we expect of you:

- We ask you to let us help you.
- We ask you to let us continue teaching you.
- We ask you to make an effort to connect with a group.
- We ask you to make an effort to get involved.
- We ask you to let us know when your expectations have not been met or you are discouraged, angry, hurting, etc.

New members – If you are already a member of the church of Christ and want now to work and worship with us here in Bentonville.

What you can expect of us:

- Help for your continued growth (shepherding).
- Meaningful worship opportunities each week.

- Faith maturing classes on Sunday and Wednesday.
- A small group you can feel a part of and grow in.
- Ways and opportunities for you to be involved in meaningful ministry.
- Help for you when you are hurting or in need with family or marriage struggles, illness, physical problems or mourning, spiritual struggles, or financial struggles or setbacks.
- When your expectations are not met we will try to listen to you, answer questions, clarify expectations, teach, and try to respond to your need in any way we can.
- Someone checking with you periodically to see how you/we are doing.

What we expect of you:

- Commitment to this congregation emotionally, physically, and financially.
- Regular participation in worship opportunities, classes, small groups, and ministry.
- To tell us when you are hurting, struggling, disappointed, or in some other way your expectations have been violated so we can respond to you.
- Be open with those who call to check on you.

“Our Statement of Faith”

STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. We believe in one God.

[Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:1-3; John 1:1]

2. We believe God is the Almighty Father, Creator of all things visible and invisible.

[Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:24-28; Hebrews 11:3]

3. We believe God manifests Himself in three Persons (Trinity) – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Father: [Matthew 5:16; 6:1,4,8,9; John 14:9]

Son: [Matthew 27:54; John 1:14; 3:16; 14:16-20; I John 4:9]

Holy Spirit: [Matthew 3:11; John 4:24; 14:26; Acts 2:38]

4. We believe that Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, is our Lord and Savior.

[John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 10:9,10,13]

- In his nature he was both fully human and fully divine, born Jesus of Nazareth, yet existing eternally with the Father. [Matthew 21:11; John 19:19; Colossians 2:9; I John 1:1; John 10:30]
- He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. [Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26-38]
- He suffered and was crucified. [Luke 23:1-46]
- He died, was buried and rose again bodily from the dead on the third day. [Luke 23:44-24:8; John 20:24-29; I Corinthians 15:3-8]
- He ascended into Heaven and now sits at the right hand of the Father. [Luke 22:69; Acts 1:1-9; Colossians 3:1]
- He will come again to judge the living and the dead. [Matthew 24:36-42; John 14:1-3; I Peter 4:5]

5. We believe the Holy Spirit is active and indwells every Christian.

[John 16:5-5-15; Romans 8:26-27; I Corinthians 3:16; II Timothy 1:14]

6. We believe the Bible is inspired by God, written without error, and is God's Holy word (Scripture).
[Mark 12:36; I Corinthians 2:12-13; II Timothy 3:14-16; II Peter 1:20-21]

7. We believe the Bible to be the sole and final authority for all matters of faith and practice.
[Isaiah 40:8; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 4:12]

8. We believe the Bible teaches that man, created by God, willfully sinned against God and because of this is lost and without hope apart from Jesus Christ.
[Acts 4:12; Romans 3:23]

9. We believe the Bible teaches that salvation – the forgiveness of sin – is only by grace through the blood of Jesus Christ.
[Matthew 26:28; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 2:8-9; I Peter 1:18-19]

10. We believe the Bible teaches that God's grace is received by putting faith in Christ, repenting of sin, confessing Christ as Lord, and immersion into Christ for the remission of sin.
[Matthew 10:32; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; Romans 5:1-2; 6:1-7; 10:9; Galatians 3:27; Philippians 2:11; Colossians 2:12; I Peter 3:21; II Peter 3:9; I John 4:15]

11. We believe the Church of Jesus Christ was founded on the Day of Pentecost and consists of all Christians everywhere.
[Matthew 16:13-18; Acts 2:14-47]

12. We believe the Bible teaches that the elders are to exercise authority over the local congregation.
[Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4]

What It Means to Be a Member

The difference between “attenders” and “members” is a matter of commitment. At the Bentonville Church of Christ we recognize the need for formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for the following reasons:

- A Biblical reason: Christ is committed to the church and we believe we should be also.
 - “...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” (Ephesians 5:25)
- A Cultural reason: It is an antidote to our society. We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything. Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer religion”. It is an unselfish decision.
- A Practical reason: It defines who can be counted on. Every team must have a roster, every school an enrollment, every business a payroll, and every army an enlistment. Membership identifies our family.
- A Personal reason: It produces spiritual growth. The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. Your commitment to our church family makes us accountable to you and you to us.
- A Spiritual reason: We give primary shepherding care and first assistance to individuals and families who are members of the Bentonville Church of Christ.

TO BE A MEMBER

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

1. Read this Prospective New Member Guide carefully. We believe it is important that you have a full understanding of who and what our congregation is before you commit to it. This guide has been designed to give you this orientation.
2. Be baptized as a believer by immersion for the forgiveness of your sins. We recognize this kind of baptism from other places. Unfortunately, many have been baptized
 - a. through some different mode (i.e. sprinkling, pouring, christening)
 - b. for a different reason (i.e. to join a church, without your own faith, as an infant, to please someone)

If you have any questions about this teaching, please let us know. We would consider it a privilege to sit down and study the Bible with you on this matter.

3. Begin participating in the opportunities for you to grow and become involved in the work of this church.
4. Let us know your desire to become a member and fill out an information sheet that you can get from William Spurlock or Walton Hook. We would love to have a family photo of you for our directory. You will be introduced to the congregation as soon as possible after we have this information.

We are here to assist you to the best of our ability. If you need clarification on anything in this guide or have additional questions please contact me.

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BECOMING A MEMBER