



PREPARATION FOR WATER BAPTISM

***Preparation for Water Baptism***

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# I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Board of Elders has prepared this explanatory booklet to help prospective baptismal candidates understand the implications of being a baptized believer. The following statement reflects the position of Indian Hills Community Church on the ordinance of baptism:

The Board of Elders urges those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, understanding the cost and commitment of being a disciple, to be baptized.

Baptism is performed only for people who have, according to the above statement, “*placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, understanding the cost and commitment of being a disciple.*”

Since salvation is pictured in water baptism, the section from the church constitution detailing the topic of salvation states:

We believe that salvation is the gift<sup>1</sup> of God’s grace given to all who God has elected to salvation. It includes all that God does in saving the elect from the penalty, power and presence of sin and in restoring him to a right relationship with God. As such it is solely the work of God from initiation to completion. It cannot be gained or earned by good works,<sup>2</sup> but is a free gift for all who put their trust in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. All who so trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are forgiven<sup>3</sup> and saved from their sins and made righteous before God and born into the family of God by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. God’s purpose for saving His elect is that they bring glory to Him by their lives (Eph. 1:7; 2:8,9; John 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 1:6; Titus 2:11-14).

<sup>1</sup> **Gift:** Because of man’s depravity, blindness, and rebellious nature, salvation is possible only as a gift given without merit (see Eph. 2:8-9).

<sup>2</sup> **Good Works:** It would include those works that God “may see” in the future. This precludes the idea of an election based on God’s view of the future where He is “seeing the faith” thereby granting salvation on those terms (see Titus 3:5).

<sup>3</sup> **Forgiven:** Total forgiveness is granted by God based on the substitutional death of Christ on behalf of the believer. All believers acknowledge their sinful condition and trust in the death of Christ to pay the penalty of sin past, present and future (1 John 1:9). To acknowledge sin as sin is a confession that characterizes believers. The responsibility of believers is to flee all unrighteousness (see 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22), having an appreciation for the cleansing ministry of Jesus Christ (see 1 John 2:1-2).

# P R O C E D U R E S

Outline of the basic requirements for water baptism.

1. Read this booklet, *Preparation for Water Baptism*.
2. Read the *Statement of Faith* brochure.
3. Write (or type if possible) a personal testimony relating how you became a Christian and bring it with you to the baptism interview. Suggested length is 250 words.
4. Call the church office, 483-4541, and ask Mark Pedersen to schedule a baptism interview with two elders/pastors of the church.

## **Supplemental literature and information**

1. Booklet: *Baptism* by Gil Rugh
2. Audio tapes of messages preached by Pastor Gil Rugh: *Indian Hills' Position on Baptism*, Tape GRM404 and GRM356.

## **Details of the procedures.**

The baptism interview is with the elders/pastors (usually two will be present). The suggested appointment times are on the half hours between 4 and 5:30 p.m. Sunday. Other times may be arranged. Plan 30 minutes for this interview. Please ask questions about any issue, doctrine or church practice. *The interview must be conducted a minimum of one week in advance of the baptism service.* The dates of the baptism services are listed each week in *The Hills Newsletter*.

- The interview: Be prepared to share your testimony. Typical questions are:
  - When did you trust Christ for salvation?
  - What evidences are present in your life that you truly are born again?
  - Do you understand your relationship with Jesus Christ and how would you describe your commitment to Jesus Christ?
  - What do you understand about the command of Scripture to be baptized?

Based on your testimony, the elders will either encourage you to be baptized or recommend a delay for reasons they will give.

- Indian Hills Community Church practices baptism by immersion. The water is waist deep and heated. Any physical disability questions should be discussed with the elders. In order to protect

the health of others, individuals suffering from any communicable disease cannot be baptized until the condition is corrected.

- Baptisms are usually conducted during the Sunday evening service (6 p.m.).
- If you are to be baptized, please note the following:
  - Arrive at the church by 5 p.m. (one hour before the service).
  - The individuals to be baptized will meet together (check front desk for location) for instructions. All baptism procedures will be discussed and demonstrated before the service.
  - Personal articles needed for baptism: A swim suit or under-clothing, a towel and hair dryer. The church provides the baptismal robe.
  - After the evening service, the ones baptized are asked to come forward to the front of the auditorium to be greeted by the elders and the congregation. This will be announced before the closing hymn.
  - Invite your friends and family to your baptism. Your testimony as a baptized believer will give you an additional opportunity to share your faith in Jesus Christ.

# SCRIPTURES DEALING WITH DISCIPLESHIP

Following is a review of the Scriptures that deal with discipleship. A disciple, as used here, is synonymous with the term “believer.” A “Christian” we would say (see Acts 11:26). Therefore, what is true of a disciple, must then be true of one who has true faith.

Matthew 28:18-20 states all persons should be made disciples and be baptized.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and ***make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit***, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (emphasis added).

There are *two pronouncements connected with baptism*. These are to be made by those who are willing and able to carry out the implications of their declaration.

**1. IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST.** The basic requirement for baptism is salvation. Salvation is the result of believing the Gospel. (Man is a sinner and the penalty for sin is death. Jesus Christ, God’s Son, came to die on the cross to pay that penalty for mankind. They who place their faith and trust in Him as Savior and Lord receive Him and the forgiveness of sin He provides.)

A disciple is identified with the Master and is not “above” or exempt from being like his Master.

***A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the slave as his master.*** If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear *whispered* in your ear, proclaim

upon the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matthew 10:24-28; emphasis added).

**2. COMMITMENT TO CHRIST.** A person truly trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ is born again. However, while many verbally agree to the terms expressed in the Gospel, their acknowledgement has not addressed the question of commitment to Christ. The following sections and Scriptures give the tests of (discipleship) faith.

- **ALLEGIANCE TO GOD, NOT OTHERS** is required in discipleship. One's allegiance to the Lord does not demand separation from loved ones for separation's sake, but may be required because the Lord Jesus Christ will not share His rightful spot with anyone.

Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it* (Matthew 10:34-39; emphasis added).

- **THE OWNERSHIP OF SELF** is transferred to God. This is expressed as a denial of self. Only Christ shall own our heart, our life, our affection and our allegiance.

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matthew 16:24-26; emphasis added).

- A **SUMMARY** in the form of a general challenge. Each person is to **count the cost** in denying others, self, and material possessions.

One or more of these may compete for Christ's rightful place. In the following passage, Jesus senses that some are following Him for the wrong or superficial reasons. He stresses a high standard for discipleship and emphasizes the Gospel's conditions in the strongest terms.

Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them (Luke 14:25):

- OTHERS AND SELF. "*If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple*" (Luke 14:26; emphasis added).
- PAYING THE PRICE REQUIRED. "*Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple*" (Luke 14:27; emphasis added).
- EVALUATING THE COST TO FOLLOW. "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not *first sit down and calculate the cost*, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish' " (Luke:14:28-30; emphasis added).
- TESTING THE WILLINGNESS TO PAY THE PRICE. "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not *first sit down and take counsel* whether he is strong enough with ten thousand *men* to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace. *So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions*" (Luke 14:31-33; emphasis added).

# PERSONAL RESPONSE

Consider these questions as you evaluate the genuineness of your faith and your decision to be baptized:

- What are some life affecting implications if you were to be closely identified with Jesus Christ as a baptized disciple?
- Have you considered the “cost of discipleship?” Is there anything that stands between you and Jesus Christ that may distract from a pure devotion to Him?
- Do you understand and accept the conditions of discipleship?
  - I am willing to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - I am willing to pay whatever relational and material price that may be demanded of me as a follower of Him.

*This section of the church constitution defining membership is included for your information. Any person who is baptized by Indian Hills Community Church is considered a member of this church according to the provisions of the constitution.*

## **APPENDIX A**

### **VIII ARTICLE: MEMBERSHIP (From the church constitution)**

#### **A. Qualifications for Membership**

Any person who has trusted Christ as personal Savior and attends Indian Hills Community Church is considered a member of the local assembly. He is encouraged to examine the *Statement of Faith*, the *Constitution* and to discuss with the Elders or pastoral staff any matter he does not understand.

The Elders accept the responsibility for the spiritual oversight of those who have believed in Christ and identify with this local body by their attendance.

The person, who is a professed believer, by his attendance states that he accepts the privilege of local church affiliation and submits himself to the Elders' leadership and loving discipline. He shall accept the responsibility of exercising his gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of the body.

Membership may be withdrawn at any time by simply notifying the church of intent, provided that the withdrawal is during a time when the member is in good standing with the church. Good standing of a member is lost when:

1. A known and unrepentant sin continues to be practiced by the member.
2. When teaching doctrines that are contrary to the *Statement of Faith*. Those accused of teaching a false doctrine may appeal to the Board of Elders to present their view. The Board of Elders has ultimate authority in deciding whether a teaching is in error.

## **B. Voting Rights**

No member shall have any voting rights on any matter pertaining to the church.

## **C. Discipline of Membership**

To maintain the peace and purity of the church, Scripture directs the disciplining of any person by restricting active participation and membership in the local church. Discipline shall be imposed whenever there is uncorrected, deliberate sin, whether it be in doctrine or in practice (see Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 2:16-21). Matthew chapter 18 states the procedure in a step wise fashion. The following presents a listing of these steps.

**Step 1:** Reasonable efforts shall be made, by those who have first-hand knowledge of the doctrinal error or sin, to attempt to correct the offender and encourage him to practice the truth and cease from sin (see Luke 17:3; Gal. 6:1).

**Step 2:** If private reproof fails, the matter shall be brought to the offender by one or more additional witnesses who offer further reproof and spiritual counsel (see Matt. 18:16; Deut. 19:15). If the offender admits to and stops the sin the matter is dropped. If the offender refuses to repent, these additional witnesses stand as evidence to the offender's unwillingness to repent.

**Step 3:** After reasonable attempts toward restoration have failed, the charges shall be submitted to the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders may request prayer for the offending member by the church. During this time the offending person is encouraged to change his or her mind about their sinful course of action.

**Step 4:** If the matter is not reconciled to the satisfaction of the Board of Elders the offender shall be excluded from the attendance, participation, fellowship and membership of the congregation at large, as well as from individuals of the local assembly.

A majority vote of the Board of Elders is necessary to impose disciplinary action. The decision of the board shall be announced at a regular worship service or a specially called meeting of the church members and carried out by the members of the church (see Matt. 18:17; 1 Tim. 5:20; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 1 Tim. 1:20; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15).

Any member has the right to appeal to the Board of Elders where they may present their case at any time during and after the disciplinary process. A written request presented to any Board member to meet with the Board is required for a hearing before the Board of Elders.

Persons who have been so disciplined, but who demonstrate an attitude of repentance to any member of the Board of Elders or one of the pastors may be restored to fellowship by a majority vote of the Board of Elders.

# PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ of application

Date of Interview \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Planned baptism date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Interviewing Elders 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Church background \_\_\_\_\_

Conversion Date (approximate, if not known) \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse saved? \_\_\_\_\_

Childrens' names and ages (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Elders \_\_\_\_\_ recommend candidate for baptism YES NO  
(Initial signature)

Scheduled baptism date \_\_\_\_\_

Office Use: Date of Baptism \_\_\_\_\_

Performed by Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

# INTERVIEW WITH ELDERS

When did you trust Christ for salvation?

What evidences are present in your life that you have truly been born again?

How do you understand your identification with Jesus Christ and your commitment to Jesus Christ?

What do you understand about the command of Scripture to be baptized?

Have you read and do you accept the conditions of membership?

YES NO

Comments: