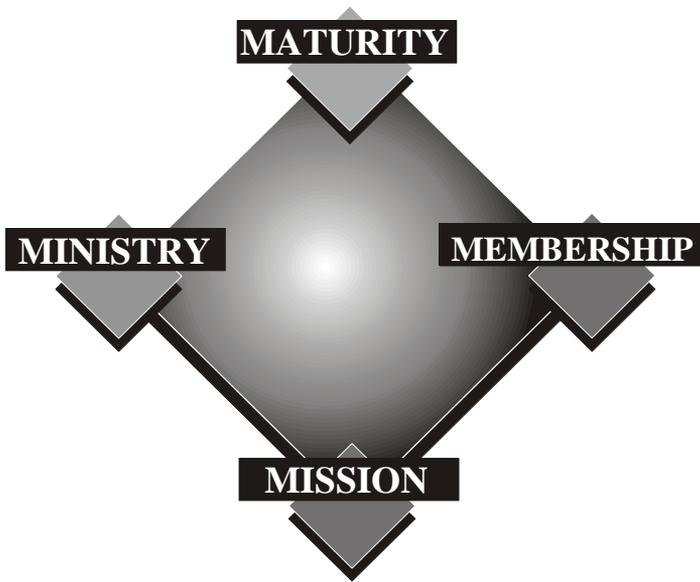


INTRODUCTION TO OUR CHURCH FAMILY



First Baptist Church of Ramona

WELCOME!

We're glad you've chosen to find out more about First Ramona! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members from many different church backgrounds, this class was designed to clearly explain who and what our church is.

THE BASICS FOR THIS CLASS – CHURCH IS ESSENTIAL

1. The church is A FAMILY.
2. God expects you to be A MEMBER of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is AN ORPHAN.

“...you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.” Ephesians 2:19

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS

That I will commit myself to CHRIST and to His CHURCH FAMILY.

WHAT MAKES FIRST RAMONA A FAMILY?

Four things unite us:

- **Our Salvation** (What God has done for us)
- **Our Statement** (Why we exist as a church)
- **Our Strategy** (How we fulfill our purpose)
- **Our Structure** (When and where we fulfill our purpose)

INTRODUCTION OUTLINE

SESSION ONE: OUR SALVATION

- What it means to be a Christian
- The symbols of salvation: Baptism and Communion

SESSION TWO: OUR STATEMENTS

- Our Purpose Statement
- Our Faith Statement
- Our Lifestyle Statement

SESSION THREE: OUR STRATEGY

- The story of First Ramona's beginning
- Who we are trying to reach (target)
- Circles of commitment / 4 covenants
- The First Ramona strategy

SESSION FOUR: OUR STRUCTURE

- How our church is structured
- Our affiliation
- What it means to be a member
- What Now?

Session One: Our Salvation

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Galatians 3:26-28

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

Everyone wants to be happy!

People try many ways:

...Some look for happiness by **acquiring possessions.**

...Some look for happiness by **experiencing pleasure.**

...Some look for happiness by **gaining prestige & power.**

But real happiness comes from understanding my PURPOSE IN LIFE.

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing “*WHY?*” They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God’s purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, “*What is the meaning of life?*”

I. WHY AM I HERE?

1. GOD MADE ME TO LOVE ME!

God says, “*I have loved you with an everlasting love!*” Jeremiah 31:3

“*Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ...because of His love. God had already decided that through Jesus Christ He would make us His children — this was God’s pleasure and purpose.*” Ephesians 1:4-5 (GN)

2. WE WERE CREATED TO ENJOY A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND TO MANAGE ALL OF THE REST OF GOD’S CREATION! THIS MAKES US SPECIAL!

“*So God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said, live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge.*” Genesis 1:27-28 (LB)

“*God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.*”
1 Timothy 6:17

Jesus said, “*I have come in order that you might have life — life in all its fullness!*” John 10:10

3. WHEN WE KNOW AND LOVE GOD, AND LIVE IN HARMONY WITH HIS PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES, IT PRODUCES TREMENDOUS BENEFITS IN OUR LIVES:

Clear Conscience
Romans 8:1

Life & Peace
Romans 8:6

Help with Weakness
Romans 8:26

Purpose
Romans 8:28

Confidence
Romans 8:31

Security
Romans 8:39

Power & Strength
Phil. 4:13

Fulfillment
Phil. 4:19

Freedom
John 8:32,36

II. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Man has a natural desire to **BE BOSS** and to ignore God's principles for living.

- *"Look out for #1. Do your own thing."*
- *"If it feels good, do it - regardless of what God says about it."*
- *"It's my life and I'll do what I please!"*

THE BIBLE CALLS THIS ATTITUDE: SIN.

"All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way." Isaiah 53:6

"If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth." 1 John 1:8

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.

"The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God."
Isaiah 59:2 (LB)

"All have sinned and fall short of God's glorious ideal." Romans 3:23

When our relationship to God is not right, it causes PROBLEMS in every area of our lives — marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

WHEN PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS, THEY OFTEN TRY MANY DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING BEFORE TURNING TO GOD.

“There are ways that SEEM right to man, but they only end in death.”
Proverbs 16:25

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:

- “My mother was a Christian so...”
- “It doesn’t matter what you believe, just be sincere.”
- “I’ll give up all my bad habits.”
- “I’ll work real hard and earn it.”
- “I’ll be religious and go to church.”

III. WHAT’S THE SOLUTION?

Jesus Christ said, *“I AM THE WAY, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except THROUGH ME!”* John 14:6

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way is a PERSON!

JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEM!

“The wages of sin in death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

“God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

“God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind.” 1 Timothy 2:5

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us.

IV. WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

1. ADMIT THAT GOD HAS NOT BEEN FIRST PLACE IN YOUR LIFE AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE YOUR SINS.

*“If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from every wrong.”* 1 John 1:9

2. BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED TO PAY FOR YOUR SINS AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD, AND IS ALIVE TODAY.

*“If you confess that Jesus is your Lord, and you **believe in your heart** that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”* Romans 10:9

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name (Jesus) by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

3. ACCEPT GOD’S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION. DON’T TRY TO EARN IT.

*“For it is by grace you are saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the **gift of God** — not by works, so that no one can boast.”* Ephesians 2:8,9

Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us!

4. INVITE JESUS CHRIST TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE AND BE THE DIRECTOR (“LORD”) OF YOUR LIFE.

*“To all who **receive** Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who **believe** this are reborn! — not a physical rebirth...but from the will of God!”* John 1:12-13

“Jesus says, ‘Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...’” Revelation 3:30

YOU CAN TAKE THESE STEPS BY PRAYING A SIMPLE PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO GOD:

“Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I’ve ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I’m sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian.”

“Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:13

Thank Him right now for your salvation.

Tell us your story:

Write down when you became aware of your need for Jesus and when you received him as your Savior and Lord:

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BAPTIZED

I. WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

1. TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE SET BY JESUS.

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river.” Mark 1:9

2. BECAUSE CHRIST COMMANDS IT.

*“Jesus said, ‘Go then, to all people everywhere and **make them my disciples**, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and **then teach them** to obey everything I have commanded you.’”* Matthew 28:19-20

3. IT DEMONSTRATES THAT I REALLY AM A BELIEVER.

*“...many of the people who heard Him **believed** and were **baptized**.”* Acts 18:8

*“We know that we have come to know Him, if we **obey** His commands.”* 1 John 2:3

II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

1. IT ILLUSTRATES CHRIST’S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

“Christ died for our sins... He was buried...and He rose again.” 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

*“For when you are **baptized**, you were **buried** with Christ, and in baptism you were also **raised** with Christ.”* Colossians 2:12

2. IT ILLUSTRATES MY NEW LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN.

“When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!” 2 Corinthians 5:17

*“**By our baptism then**, we were **buried** with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was **raised** from the dead...so also **we may live a new life!**”* Romans 6:4

Baptism doesn’t make you a believer — it shows that **you already believe**. Baptism does not “save” you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism

is like a wedding ring — it’s the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart.

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith**...it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.”* Ephesians 2:8-9

III. WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

- **BECAUSE JESUS WAS BAPTIZED THAT WAY.**

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water.”

Matthew 3:16

- **EVERY BAPTISM IN THE BIBLE WAS BY IMMERSION.**

(Example) *“...then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...”* Acts 8:38-39

- **THE WORD “BAPTIZE” MEANS TO DIP UNDER WATER”.**

The Greek word *baptizo* means “to immerse or dip under water”.

- **IT BEST SYMBOLIZES A BURIAL AND RESURRECTION!**

The founders of denominations agree:

Martin Luther...“I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

John Calvin...“The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

John Wesley...“Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”

IV. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

- **EVERY PERSON WHO HAS BELIEVED IN CHRIST.**

*“Those who **believed** and accepted His message were **baptized**...”*

Acts 2:41

*“Simon himself **believed** and was **baptized**...”* Acts 8:13

*“But **when they believed** Philip as he preached the Good News...and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptized**, both men and women.”*

Acts 8:12

At First Ramona, we wait until our children are old enough to **believe** and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

Some churches practice a “*baptism of confirmation*” for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on the behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his own personal confession of Christ. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed. **This is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible** which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ.

When a Southern Baptist church requires baptism by immersion for membership, it is not inferring that a person who has been baptized by sprinkling is in any way inferior, or second class, or unsaved. It is not attempting to insult anyone or elevate itself as superior; it is merely striving to be faithful to the Lord and His command, and asking those who wish to be members to do the same. For the church to do otherwise would be compromise. Even worse, it would be disobedience.

At First Ramona, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though some of us were “confirmed” as children.

V. WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

AS SOON AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED!

*“Those who believed...were baptized...**that day!**” Acts 2:41*

“Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, ‘Look, here is water! Why shouldn’t I be baptized right now?’ Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ The man answered, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So they went down into the water and Philip baptized him.” Acts 8:35-38

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are “perfect”, you’ll never feel “good enough”!

CAN MY FAMILY BE BAPTIZED TOGETHER?

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we

encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment. Young children who wish to be baptized are asked to meet with our Pastor for a pre-baptism conversation.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a *personal* statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts an undue pressure on them, and delays *your* obedience.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR WHEN I AM BAPTIZED?

Women should wear shorts and a top rather than a swimsuit. Men may wear a swimsuit or cutoffs with a t-shirt. Bring a change of clothes, a towel, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. We provide changing rooms and baptism robes.

WILL I HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING?

No. At the beginning of the service, Pastor Kevin will briefly explain the meaning of baptism. You will wait at the edge of the baptistry for your turn to be baptized. The Pastor will introduce you, briefly lower you just under the water, and then you can leave the pool, dry off, and watch the others. Later you will be mailed a certificate of your baptism. We encourage you to invite all your relatives and friends to attend your baptism.

SPECIAL NEEDS?

Our Pastor can perform a private baptism in special circumstances.

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called “ordinances”) as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

I. WHAT IS THE LORD’S SUPPER? (1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26)

1. IT IS A SIMPLE ACT.

*“The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, **took bread...**” (vs. 23)*

2. IT IS A REMINDER.

*“...and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; eat it **in remembrance** of me.’” (vs. 24)*

3. IT IS A SYMBOL.

*“In the same way, He took the cup, saying, ‘**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood; drink it to remember me.’” (vs. 25)*

4. IT IS A STATEMENT OF FAITH.

*“For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, **you proclaim the Lord’s death** until He comes back.” (vs. 26)*

II. WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LORD’S SUPPER?

Only those who are already BELIEVERS. (Mark 14:22-26)

“For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment upon himself.” 2 Corinthians 11:29

III. HOW DO I PREPARE MYSELF FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER?

“Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A person ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” 1 Corinthians 11:27-28

By...

1. Self-Examination

1 Corinthians 11:27

2. Confessing My Sins

1 John 1:9

3. Recommitment

Romans 12:1

4. Restoring Relationships

Matthew 5:23-24

IV. WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe The Lord's Supper. He instituted it on a Thursday night.

Since our Sunday morning service is designed so you can bring your non-believing friends, we usually only take the Lord's Supper during our Sunday evening service.

Session Two

Our First Baptist Statements

“Let there be real harmony among you so there won’t be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.”

1 Corinthians 1:10 (LB)

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT – *the Essentials* ***Why We Exist As A Church***

The purpose of our church is summarized in a single sentence based on two key scriptures:

“WE BELIEVE A GREAT COMMITMENT TO THE GREAT COMMANDMENT AND THE GREAT COMMISSION WILL GROW A GREAT CHURCH!”

The Great Commandment: *“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

The Great Commission: *“Jesus said, ‘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.”*

Matthew 28:19-20

- To “Love God with all your heart” is **“WORSHIP”**.
- To “Love your neighbor as yourself” is **“MINISTRY”**.
- To “Go...make disciples” is **“EVANGELISM”**.
- To “Baptize...” is to **“INCORPORATE INTO FELLOWSHIP”**.
- To “Teach them...all things” is **“DISCIPLESHIP”**.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH EXISTS:

1. To **CELEBRATE** God's Presence (Worship)
2. To **DEMONSTRATE** God's Love (Ministry)
3. To **COMMUNICATE** God's Word (Evangelism)
4. To **INCORPORATE** God's Family (Fellowship)
5. To **EDUCATE** God's People (Discipleship)

I. WE EXIST TO CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE

WORSHIP:

"Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only." Matthew 4:10

"...The Father seeks worshipers...and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth." John 4:23-24

Expressions of Worship

- **Singing** (Ephesians 5:19)
- **Commitment** (Romans 12:1-2)
- **Praying** (Ps. 95:6)
- **Hearing the Word** (John 17:17)
- **Giving** (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
- **Baptism** (Romans 6:3-4)
- **Meditating** (Habakkuk 2:20)
- **Lord's Supper** (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

FBC Worship Style

"Celebration"
Psalm 122:1

"Inspiration"
Isaiah 40:31

"Preparation"
Ephesians 4:11-12

II. WE EXIST TO DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE

MINISTRY:

*“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples — **that you have love for one another.**”* John 13:35

1 John 3:16-17, Matthew 25:34-40, Hebrews 13:16, Romans 12:13

The heartbeat of First Ramona is our *SMALL GROUPS*.
Every member needs to be a part of one.

*“Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities.. and there are different kinds of service to God (ministry)... **All of you together form the one Body of Christ and each of you is a separate and necessary part of it.**”*
1 Corinthians 12:4-5, 27 (LB)

At FBC...

- Every member is a: *MINISTER*
- Every task is: *IMPORTANT*
- Every member is a “10” in: *SOME AREA*

III. WE EXIST TO COMMUNICATE GOD'S WORD

EVANGELISM:

*“His intent was that **through the church,** the manifold wisdom of God should be made known...”* Ephesians 3:10

“Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But who can ask Him to save them unless they believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells him?” Romans 10:13-14 (LB)

WHY OUR CHURCH MUST NEVER STOP GROWING

1. Because *GOD LOVES PEOPLE.*

*“The Lord...is patient, **not wanting anyone to perish,** but wants everyone to come to repentance.”* 2 Peter 3:9

2 Corinthians 5:14, Luke 15:3-10, Matthew 9:12-13

2. Because *GOD COMMANDS US TO REACH OUT.*

“Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full.” Luke 14:23 (LB)

“...you will be my witnesses...” Acts 1:8

3. Because *GROWTH IS GOD’S WILL.*

“Under Christ’s control, the whole Body is nourished...and grows as God wants it to grow.” Colossians 2:19 (GN)

“(Jesus) I will build my church.” Matthew 16:18

Unbiblical Excuses For Not Growing:

- *“God isn’t interested in numbers.”*
- *“Our church wants quality not quantity.”*
- *“Large churches are impersonal”*

We believe our church must grow *LARGER* and *SMALLER* at the same time.

*“And the Good News of the Kingdom will be preached to the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and **THEN** the end will come.”*
Matthew 24:14

III. WE EXIST TO EDUCATE GOD’S PEOPLE

DISCIPLESHIP:

*“Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ **and go on to maturity**...”* Hebrews 6:1

*“**Grow in grace** and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* 2 Peter 3:18

“(God has given)...some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all...become mature...like Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH - *What We Believe*

- **In essential beliefs — we have unity.**

“There is one Body and one Spirit...there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all...” Ephesians 4:4-6

- **In non-essential beliefs — we have liberty.**

“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.” Romans 14:1,4,12,22

- **In all our beliefs — we show love.**

*“...If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains — but have **no love**, I amount to nothing at all.”* 1 Corinthians 13:2 (Ph)

THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE:

1. ABOUT GOD

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 2; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19;
1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

2. ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven’s glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30;
Hebrews 4:14,15; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:3,4;
Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13

3. ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16,17; Acts 1:8;
1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25;
Ephesians 5:18

4. ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 1:13;
Psalm 119:105,160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5

5. ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin". This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1, 2

6. ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is God's free gift to us but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith.

Ro.6:23; Eph.2:8,9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5; Gal. 3:26; Ro. 5:1

7. ABOUT ETERNAL SECURITY

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot “lose” it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security.

John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10,14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

8. ABOUT ETERNITY

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18;
Revelation 20:15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-9

For other questions see the Baptist Faith and Message:
<http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>

OUR LIFESTYLE STATEMENT

What We Practice

Beliefs are not worth much unless they are translated into actions. Based on what the Bible teaches, we feel very strongly about the following seven practices:

BIBLE AS OUR SOLE AUTHORITY

“The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us to do what is right.” 2 Timothy 3:15

Since God’s Word is the only completely reliable and truthful authority, we accept the Bible as our manual for living. Our first question when faced with a decision is “What does the Bible say?” We practice daily Bible

reading, Bible study, and Bible memorization. The Bible is the basis for all we believe.

AUTONOMY OF EACH LOCAL CHURCH

“Christ is the head of His Body, the church. He is the source of the Body’s life...” Colossians 1:18 (GN)

Christ is the recognized head of our church, not any person, group, or religious organization. While recognizing the value of associating and cooperating with other groups of Christians, we believe every local church should be self-governing and independent from any denominational control. Each congregation determines its own strategy, structure, and style.

PRIESTHOOD OF EVERY BELIEVER

“Christ loves us, and by His death He has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests to serve God...” Revelation 1:6 (GN) ***“You are...the King’s priests...God’s own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God.”*** 1 Peter 2:9 (GN)

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to “full time” Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every member to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayer Bible reading.

TITHING

“A tithe of everything you produce belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.” Leviticus 26:30

At First Baptist we practice tithing for the support of Christ’s body, the church, as God commands. We recognize that giving 10% of our income is the Biblical standard of giving. Equal sacrifices, not equal giving.

IMMERSION

“For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ...” Colossians 2:12 (GN)

We practice baptism by immersion under water — the way Jesus was baptized, and the way the Bible commands.

SPIRIT-LED LIVING

(Jesus said), “I am the Vine, you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; but apart from me you can do nothing.”
John 15:5

We believe the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God’s power within us. So we seek to practice a daily dependence on God’s Spirit to enable us to do what is right. (Philippians 2:13, Ephesians 5:18)

TELLING OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” 1 Peter 3:15

It is the responsibility of every Christian to share the Good News with those with whom God brings us into contact. We practice personal sharing about Christ and inviting friends to church.

Session Three

The First Baptist Strategy

*(Paul) “I have been all things to all sorts of people
that by every possible means I might win some to God.
I do all of this for the sake of the Good News.”*

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 (Ph)

THE STORY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

WHO ARE WE TRYING TO REACH?

“...Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.”

1 Cor. 9:22 (LB)

WHY PEOPLE DON'T COME TO CHURCH:

Sermons are boring and they don't relate to my life.

Members are unfriendly / clique.

Lacking quality child-care.

THE FBC STRATEGY

What kind of church are we going to be?

Churches have different styles.

No church can appeal to everybody.

5 CIRCLES OF COMMITMENT



1. MEMBERSHIP is a commitment to CHRIST and THE CHURCH FAMILY.

*“You are **members** of God’s very own **family**...and you belong in God’s household with every other Christian.” Eph. 2:19 (LB)*

*“We are all parts of Christ’s Body, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we **belong** to each other and need all the others.” Romans 12:4-5 (LB)*

2. MATURITY is a commitment to the HABITS necessary for spiritual growth.

*“**Continue to grow** in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:18*

*“Take **the time and trouble** to keep yourself spiritually fit.”
1 Tim. 4:7 (Ph)*

3. MINISTRY is a commitment to discovering and using my God-given gifts and abilities in *SERVING* God and others.

*“God has given each of you some special abilities; **be sure to use them to help each other**...” 1 Pet. 4:10 (LB)*

*“There are different kinds of **service** to God...together you form the Body of Christ and each one of you is a necessary part of it.”
1 Cor. 12:5, 27 (LB)*

4. MISSIONS is a commitment to SHARE the Good News with others.

*“...you will be my **witnesses** for me...to the ends of the earth.”
Acts 1:8 (GN)*

*“Always be prepared to **give an answer to everyone** who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do it with gentleness and respect.” 1 Peter 3:15*

WHY DO WE HAVE THESE COMMITMENTS?

WE BECOME WHAT WE ARE *COMMITTED TO*.

PRINCIPLES THAT MAKE OUR CHURCH UNIQUE

***RELEVANT* teaching and preaching.**

“From the unchanging truth of the Bible.”

***AUTHENTIC* leadership.**

“Lead by example.”

***MEANINGFUL* relationships.**

“Small groups.”

***ONGOING* spiritual growth.**

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

NOT WITHOUT PURPOSE.

“We are here to accomplish God’s purposes.”

***ACCEPTANCE* of people.**

“This is a church for people who don’t have it all together.”

“This is a church for people who want to grow.”

Session Four

The First Baptist Church Structure

*“For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace...
Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”*

1 Cor. 14:33, 40

HOW OUR CHURCH IS STRUCTURED

The structure of the church should *not* be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH DETERMINES ITS STRUCTURE.

I. THE CHURCH IS A FELLOWSHIP

“They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles, and joined in the fellowship...” Acts 2:42 (Ph)

A top priority in a fellowship is *HARMONY* and *UNITY*.

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Eph. 4:3

“So let us concentrate on the things that make for harmony and the growth of our fellowship together.” Romans 14:19 (Ph)

ANY attitude that causes disunity is sin - Col. 3:15, 1 Cor. 1:10, 2 Tim. 2:14, Pr. 17:14, 2 Cor. 13:11, Phil. 1:27, 2:1-3, Col. 2:2, Phil. 4:2, 1 Peter 3:8, 1 Cor. 14:33, John 13:34-35, 2 Tim. 2:23, Romans 15:5-6, Romans 12:16-18, Col. 3:13-14, Ps. 133:1

IMPLICATION: A GOOD STRUCTURE PROMOTES UNITY AND DOWNPLAYS *DIFFERENCES*.

*“(Often)...your meetings do more harm than good because I hear that when you come together as a church, **there are divisions among you...**”*
1 Cor. 11:17-18

“Voting” tends to create conflict / divide people.

At First Baptist, we vote on:

Major purchases and financial commitments, property changes, hiring personnel, ministry changes that will impact the church. Old fashioned business meetings are notorious for dividing the church, ours don't.

Guidelines help facilitate love and unity as the Church makes decisions.

- We meet on the first Wednesday evening after the first Sunday of the month to have our business meeting.
- We come prepared to obey God's will in all Church Body decisions.

- We seek His wisdom and express His love as we make decisions.
- We will vote in such a way as to preserve the unity in the church and avoid the feeling of “winners and losers.”
- After the decision is made we will continue to love and understand each other, knowing that continuing in love is more important than getting our way.

II. THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY.

“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ” 1 Peter 3:8

Gal. 6:10, Heb. 2:10-12, 1 Peter 4:17

SO WE OPERATE ON THE BASIS OF *RELATIONSHIPS* NOT *RULES*.

*“Don’t reprimand a senior member of the church, appeal to him as a **father**. Treat the young men as **brothers**, and the older women as **mothers**. Treat the younger women as **sisters**...” 1 Tim. 5:1-2 (Ph)*

*“(A Pastor) must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to **manage his family**, how can he **take care of God’s church**?” 1 Tim. 3:4-5*

III. THE CHURCH IS A BODY.

1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 5:23, Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 1:18, 2:19

We are a body — not a business!

We are an organism — not an organization!

THEREFORE, WE FUNCTION ON THE BASIS OF *SPIRITUAL GIFTS*, NOT ELECTED OFFICES. ON *MINISTRY* AND NOT *MAINTENANCE*.

*“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We each have **different gifts** according to the grace given us.” Romans 12:4-6*

In an organization, “maintenance” becomes the focus. But in an organism, “ministry” is the focus.

AT FIRST BAPTIST WE HAVE A SIMPLE STRUCTURE SO WE CAN MAXIMIZE MINISTRY AND MINIMIZE MAINTENANCE.

“God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”
Eph. 4:11-12

OUR STRUCTURE

- **THE PEOPLE ARE THE “MINISTERS”.**
- **THE PASTORS ARE THE “ADMINISTERS / EQUIPPERS.”**

There are many different ministries in our church begun and operated by members.

IV. THE CHURCH IS A FLOCK.

(Jesus’ favorite description of the church)

John 10:1-30, Matt. 26:31, Matt. 25:33

THEREFORE, IT IS CARED FOR AND LED BY SHEPHERDS.

*“Jesus asked Simon Peter, ‘Do you really love me?’ ‘Yes Lord,’ said Peter. ‘Then **take care** of my sheep.’”* John 21:16-17

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the *same* church leaders:

- *POIMEN*- pastor/shepherd
- *PRESBUTEROS* – elder (not physical age)
- *EPISCOPOS* - bishop

*“To the elders I say...**Be shepherds** of God’s flock, serving as overseers...”*
1 Pet. 5:1-2

*“Paul sent to Ephesus for the **elders** of the church. When they arrived he said to them... Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**. Be **pastors** of the church of God...”* Acts 20:17-18, 28. See also Titus 1:5-7, 1 Tim. 5:17

The pastor is the under-shepherd of the church. We try to structure our church to minister to people. We know that as we connect people in a small group they will receive the care that they need in their life. Often when people are not connected to a small group in a church their needs are not known and therefore not met. The pastor is helped in meeting the needs of the church by those who lead our small groups. We encourage you to join a group so you can be cared for and care for others.

OUR AFFILIATION

- ***The Washington Osage Baptist Association***
37 churches that fellowship together and work together to reach Washington and Osage Counties. We support them by giving 4% of our budget to them.
- ***The Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma***
Churches that fellowship together with the goal of evangelizing our state. www.bgco.org
- ***The Southern Baptist Convention***
Over 40,000 churches that cooperate together in a world-wide effort of missions. www.sbc.net

We now wholeheartedly support these three groups in helping start many new churches, doing disaster relief, feeding the hungry, ministering locally, in our state, our nation and around the world.

WHAT IS THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION?

- ***It is an association of Christian churches in America***
46,000 churches and 15 million members
- ***It is a diverse association of churches***
SBC churches include every race, nationality, and ethnic group. Each Sunday, services are held in over 80 languages in the U.S.

For more information please check out the website at www.sbc.net.

WHY NOT JUST BE AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH?

We *are* an independent church! Every SBC church is completely independent. There is no denominational control or hierarchy, as there are in most other denominations. Each church is self-governed and determines its own affairs.

For example:

- *Every SBC church chooses its own pastor*
- *Every SBC church owns its own buildings and assets*
- *Every SBC church determines its own programs*

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF AFFILIATING WITH THE SBC?

1. It allows us to **identify with other Christians** around the world who are known for their commitment to the Bible. Unlike other groups, the SBC has no man-made “creed”. The Bible is our only authority.
2. It allows our church to **participate in the largest missionary organization in the world**. Through the SBC “Cooperative Program” we help support over 7,500 missionaries in 104 countries around the world. We give 17% of our budget to the “Cooperative Program.”

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER

The difference between “attenders” and “members” can be summed in one word: COMMITMENT.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MEMBER?

At First Baptist Church we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. We only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Covenant.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

“Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with First Baptist Church’s statements, strategy and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the First Baptist Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

I. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

...By acting in love toward other members

...By refusing to gossip

...By following the leaders

“So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together.” Romans 14:19 (Ph)

“Live in complete harmony with each other — each with the attitude of Christ toward each other.” Rom 15:5 (LB)

“Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts.” 1 Peter 1:22 (GN)

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...” Eph. 4:29

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith...Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you.”

Heb. 13:7, 17

II. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

...By praying for its growth

...By inviting the unchurched to attend

...By warmly welcoming those who visit

“To the church...we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly.” 1 Thess. 1:2

“Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full.” Luke 14:23 (LB)

“So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified.” Romans 15:7 (LB)

III. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

...By discovering my gifts and talents

...By being equipped to serve by my pastors

...By developing a servant’s heart

“Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you...”
1 Peter 4:10 (Ph)

“God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”
Eph. 4:11-12

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant...” Phil 2:3-4, 7

IV. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

...By attending faithfully

...By living a godly life

...By giving regularly

“Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another.” Heb. 10:25

“But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ.” Phil. 1:27 (Ph)

“Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering.” 1 Cor. 16:2

“A tenth of all you produce is the Lord’s, and it is holy.” Lev. 27:30

Name: _____ Date: _____

Hopefully attending this class has given you a good opportunity to get to know the pastor and have your questions answered about what it means to be a member in our church.

We want to help you get connected with a local body of believers where you can grow in your faith, serve with your gifts, and be part of God's mission of bringing people into a relationship with Jesus and growing them up in their faith.

If you are in agreement with the covenant you have just read and are ready to enter into this new relationship then you now have the opportunity to become a member by:

Profession of faith: you are declaring that you have received Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You have been baptized as the Bible teaches.

Baptism: you have received Jesus as your Savior and Lord but have not been baptized. Upon your profession of faith we will baptize you.

Transfer of Membership: You have been a member of another Southern Baptist Church. You are choosing to join with us and when we receive you as members we let your previous church know.

Let the pastor know of your decision and on a Sunday morning we will present you before the church where we can welcome you into our family.

Whether or not you decide to become a member you are always welcome to fellowship with us and experience God's blessings here at First Baptist Church.