

*DISCOVERING*  
*CHURCH MEMBERSHIP*  
*AT*  
*OAK HILL BAPTIST*  
*CHURCH*

## ***WELCOME TO DISCOVERING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP***

We're glad you've chosen to find out more about Oak Hill Baptist! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since some of our new members come to us from different church backgrounds, this class was designed to clearly explain who and what our church is.

Discovering Church Membership is divided into four sessions of an hour each. It is designed to provide basic information about Christianity and church life in general and also, to give you an opportunity to ask questions.

### **THE BASIS FOR THIS CLASS:**

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

### **SOME KEY TRUTHS ABOUT BEING A CHURCH MEMBER:**

1. The church is a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. God expects you to be a \_\_\_\_\_ of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is \_\_\_\_\_.

### **THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS IS:**

Each participant will commit him/herself to \_\_\_\_\_ and to the \_\_\_\_\_.

### **WHAT MAKES OAK HILL BAPTIST 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)

## **CLASS 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 Oak Hill Baptist
- Who we are trying to reach
- Circles of Commitment / 4 Covenants
- The OHBC 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

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:26-28

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

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 my life?*”

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 and power.

But real happiness comes from a \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_

### I. WHY AM I HERE?

1. God made me to \_\_\_\_\_ me!

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

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.” Ephesians 1:4-6

2. We were created to \_\_\_\_\_ a personal relationship with God and to \_\_\_\_\_ all of the rest of God’s creation. This makes us special!

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Genesis 1:27-28

“.. trust in the living God who 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 life:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| * A clear conscience (Romans 8:1) | * Life and Peace (Romans 8:6)           |
| * Purpose (Romans 8:28)           | * Confidence (Romans 8:31)              |
| * Security (Romans 8:39)          | * Power and Strength (Philippians 4:13) |
| * Fulfillment (Philippians 4:19)  | * Freedom (John 8:32; 36)               |

This is the kind of lifestyle God intends for us to live. Why then aren't most people really happy?

## II. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Man has a natural desire to \_\_\_\_\_ 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 the Bible says."
- "It's my life and I'll do what I please!"

The Bible calls this attitude \_\_\_\_\_.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way ..."  
Isaiah 53:6

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 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.

"But your iniquities have separated you from your God." Isaiah 59:2

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." 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. Usually when people have problems they try many different ways of coping with it before they finally turn to God.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Proverbs 16:25

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

- "It doesn't matter what you believe just as long as you are sincere..."
- "I'll be religious and go to church..."
- "I'll give up some of my bad habits – that will make God happy."

### **III. WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?**

Jesus said to him, "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 Christ.

Jesus has already taken care of your sin problem.

"For the wages of sin is 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.

"But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."  
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. \_\_\_\_\_ 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 to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

2. \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that He rose again on Easter, and is alive today.

"...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

3. \_\_\_\_\_ God's free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should 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. \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ to come into your life and be the director (Lord) of your life.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12-13

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:20

You can take these four 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."

"For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:13

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM**

### **I.WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?**

1. To follow the example set by \_\_\_\_\_.

"It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan." Mark 1:9

2. Because Christ \_\_\_\_\_ it.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19-20

3. It demonstrates that I really am a \_\_\_\_\_.

“And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.” Acts 18:8

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” 1 John 2:3

## **II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?**

1. It illustrates Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ and resurrection.

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

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

2. It illustrates my \_\_\_\_\_ as a Christian.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too 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 by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Ephesians 2:8, 9

## **III. WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?**

1. Because \_\_\_\_\_ was baptized that way.

“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water ...” Matthew 3:16

2. Every baptism in the \_\_\_\_\_ was by immersion.

(Example) “...then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water ...” Acts 8:38-39



3. The word “Baptize” means “to \_\_\_\_\_ in water.”

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

4. It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection. Great Christian leaders agree:

Martin Luther...”I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imparts 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 \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.

“Then those who gladly received his word 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 Oak Hill Baptist we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them. However, many parents do decide to “Dedicate” their children to the Lord. This is a ceremony that is a covenant between the parents and God on 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 ceremony is Biblical and many examples of it can be found in the Bible.

At Oak Hill Baptist it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated. Many hundreds of people have been baptized at Oak Hill in the history of the church.

## **V. WHEN SHOULD YOU 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 A 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. 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. Doing so puts undue pressure on them and delays *your* obedience.

## **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 \_\_\_\_\_.

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

2. It is a \_\_\_\_\_.

“...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 \_\_\_\_\_.

“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 \_\_\_\_\_.

“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 \_\_\_\_\_. Mark 14:22-26

“For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgement 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

## **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 it is a ‘supper’, it may seem more appropriate to observe it at an evening service. However, there are no set rules dictating when or how often. Most churches, including Oak Hill Baptist, celebrate it in the Sunday morning service. However from time to time we also celebrate it on Sunday evenings, at the mid-week service, at banquets, in small group Bible studies, and one-on-one in hospitals and sick rooms.