

The Things We Do

Water Baptism, Communion, and Laying on of Hands

Key Verses

Matthew 3:13-15 — Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 — For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

Mark 16:17-18 — And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Biblical Practices

There are several practices observed by the Christian Church. Of particular interest in this study are: water baptism, communion, and the laying on of hands.

Water Baptism

There are several types of baptisms mentioned in the Bible.

Baptism into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit is the most important and takes place at salvation.

1 Corinthians 12:13 — For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body....

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is for Believers. This is when the Holy Spirit fills a person and gives gifts for ministry.

Acts 2:4 — And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 11:15-16 — And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’

Baptism of suffering is primarily used in reference to Jesus’ crucifixion. It can also apply to intense suffering that results from laying down your life in service to Jesus (Matthew 20:21-23).

Luke 12:50 — But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!

And then there is water baptism...

What is Water Baptism?

For Christians, water baptism is an observance that symbolizes our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ.

Romans 6:3-4 — Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Baptism is the heart-felt obedience of a person who has chosen to follow Jesus. When baptized, that person is declaring visually and publicly that he or she has died to his old life and is now raised to new life as a follower of Jesus.

Does Baptism Save Us?

Based on certain Scriptures, some people teach that you must be baptized to be saved, or that your sins are forgiven at baptism.

Mark 16:16 — He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Acts 2:38 — Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:20-21 — who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine long-suffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Acts 22:16 — And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

Notice that in Acts 22:16, it is the "calling on the name of the Lord" that washes away your sins, not baptism. There are other verses that clearly demonstrate that baptism is not the mechanism of forgiveness or salvation.

1 Corinthians 1:14-17 — I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel...

Luke 23:42-43 — Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Romans 10:9-10 — that 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. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Baptism is not required for salvation or forgiveness of sin.

So Why Should You Be Baptized?

When Jesus began His public ministry at about the age 30, He started with baptism. Jesus was fully righteous and did not need to get saved like we do. However, to fulfill the righteous requirements of God, Jesus needed to be baptized (Matthew 3:13-15).

Matthew 3:16-17 — When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Right after His baptism, Jesus spent forty days fasting and praying—being worn down physically, but built up spiritually. Afterward, when offered a “short cut,” Jesus chose God’s truth and defeated the enemy’s lies.

Matthew 4:1-4 — Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It is written, *‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’*”

When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, equipping Him for ministry.

Luke 4:18-19 — *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*

Baptism is generally an act of obedience, following Jesus’ example and following His command to baptize people. But we also look to baptism as a new beginning of Holy Spirit empowered living.

Matthew 28:19-20 — 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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.

Who Should Be Baptized?

Baptism is appropriate only for those who are saved. Baptism is not appropriate for a non-Christian, and may give that person a false sense of being right with God.

Since baptism is the response of a born-again Christian who is choosing to declare his decision to follow Jesus, baptism is not appropriate for babies or very young children. However, anyone who is saved can be baptized at any age.

When Should You Be Baptized?

Generally, a person should be baptized soon after salvation, especially once you realize the importance and meaning of baptism.

Baptism is typically a one-time event, but you can be baptized more than once. This sometimes happens when a person is originally baptized as a child or some other time before he or she was truly born again. Baptism can also be repeated if a person

comes to a new appreciation of the meaning of baptism or a renewed dedication to follow Jesus.

The Foursquare denomination requires that a person who wishes to become a member be baptized. At Life Foursquare Church, we typically make baptism available on the last Sunday of each month.

How Should You Baptize?

The Bible model of baptism is full immersion in water. The symbolism is that of someone being buried, then raised from the dead. This gives a visual declaration of what has taken place spiritually when a person is born-again (saved). The words *baptize* and *baptism* have the following meaning.

907 βαπτίζω [*baptizo* /bap·tid·zo/] verb. From a derivative of 911; TDNT 1:529; TDNTA 92; GK 966; 80 occurrences; AV translates as “baptize” 76 times, “wash” twice, “baptist” once, and “baptized + 2258” once. **1** to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk). **2** to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one’s self, bathe. **3** to overwhelm. **Additional Information:** Not to be confused with 911, bapto. The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be ‘dipped’ (bapto) into boiling water and then ‘baptised’ (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism. e.g. Mark 16:16. ‘He that believes and is baptised shall be saved’. Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle! Bible Study Magazine, James Montgomery Boice, May 1989. [Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible* (electronic ed.) (G907). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.]

Some groups sprinkle or pour water on a person for baptism. In other cases, the circumstances prevent full immersion. While sprinkling or pouring can be used to declare a decision to follow Jesus, it does not follow the New Testament form of baptism. Nor does it provide the visual image of what has taken place spiritually. But the exact method of baptism is an area where we should extend grace to those who see it differently.

Any Believer can baptize someone. It does not require a pastor or other church leader. We encourage Christian parents to baptize the members of their families. Baptism can take place anywhere there is adequate water for immersion.

Acts 8:36-38 — Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Some people teach that you must baptize people only in the Name of Jesus. They get this from passages such as the following.

Acts 2:38 — Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:48 — And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.
....

Actually, baptizing someone in the “Name of Jesus” means to baptize them in the authority of Jesus.

Matthew 28:18-19 — And Jesus came 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 of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Notice that Jesus does not say to baptize only in the Name of Jesus. If there is specific wording required, we would have to follow Jesus’ instruction and say, “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Anytime a Christian baptizes a person saved by faith in Jesus, it is done in the Name (authority) of Jesus, regardless of whether he says “in the Name of Jesus” or “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” This authority (name of Jesus) distinguishes Christian baptism from other baptisms such as John’s, which was a baptism of repentance.

Acts 19:2-5 — he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Since baptism is not a mechanism or requirement for salvation, getting baptized the wrong way (or not being baptized) does not keep you out of heaven.

 **What is our method of water baptism?** _____

 **Have you been baptized in water?** ___ yes ___ no

 **If not, why not?** _____

Communion

What is Communion?

Communion, also called *The Lord’s Supper* and *Eucharist* by some groups, was instituted by Jesus on the night before His crucifixion. During the evening meal Jesus took bread, broke it, and shared it with His disciples. Then He took a cup and shared it with the disciples.

Matthew 26:26-29 — And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

Communion is a Christian observance that remembers the payment Jesus made for both our healing and our salvation. It also symbolizes our union with Jesus—that we are part of the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 — The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27 — For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. — Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

Why Should You Take Communion?

Take communion to remember Jesus' sacrifice with provision for your salvation and your healing. It should be taken any time you need to bring things back into perspective. It also reminds us that we will soon join the Lord for another meal and communion in heaven.

Matthew 26:29 — But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Revelation 19:9 — Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' "

Who Should Take Communion?

Communion is only meaningful to Christians. While a non-Christian can take communion, it does not accomplish its designed purposes.

When Should You Take Communion?

As often as you need to remember.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 — ... do this in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Communion should be taken from time to time to remember the great sacrifice Jesus made and your commitment to follow Him. It also should be taken to remember that we are healed by the broken body of Jesus.

Isaiah 53:5 — But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

How Should You Take Communion?

Communion is usually taken with grape juice and unleavened bread—often called *the elements*. Since the first communion was taken during Passover, Jesus and the disciples only had unleavened bread available. It is the remembrance and celebration of communion that is important. There is nothing magical about the elements, so other juices and breads can be used.

An Intimate Fellowship

The word *communion* denotes an intimate time of sharing. During the three years of active ministry by Jesus, there was little time for intimacy. At times, He and the disciples didn't even have time to eat because of the crowds (Mark 6:31-33). On the eve of His sacrifice, Jesus found a secluded place to eat a meal with His closest disciples. The crowds were gone—probably preparing for the Passover. So was the fervent activity of ministry. It was a quiet time to commune with one another.

John 13:23-25 — Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

When you partake of communion, it is important that you don't lose sight of the intimacy and fellowship that it represents. It is a time for you to draw near to the Lord and to others who are close to Him. It's a time to slow down and remember what and who it's all about.

1 Corinthians 11:27-32 — Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

There are some who believe that the juice and bread actually become Jesus' blood and body when you take communion. Those emblems only represent and remind us of His shed blood and broken body. However, when we take communion we must not fail to realize that Jesus' body is actually present. Look around at those taking communion with you. You and they are the Body of Christ.

 **Communion is something I can do at home or in Church or anywhere that I have the need to remember!** **yes** **no**

Laying on of Hands

The laying on of hands is a "right" given us in the Lord that has application in every-day life. All of us have been given authority in Jesus to be utilized for doing good things. The laying on of hands can confer many of those good things. We should be employing it far more than we do. The only reason we don't have much more of it may be because we don't fully understand its scope of use. Following are some of the ways the laying on of hands is used.

For Healing

Mark 16:18 — ... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

This is more than the positive power of touch (which should not be minimized in our touch-less society). This is the touch of identification, of compassion, of impartation. When Jesus conferred this benefit on all Believers He was asking for people to be His hands extended. More often than not, Jesus touched the people He was praying for. When you pray for someone, don't be hesitant to make a kingdom connection by laying a hand on their shoulder, arm, or head.

For Infilling with the Holy Spirit

Acts 8:18-19 — And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

People want to know if "just anyone" can do this. The answer is "Yes!" Anyone can pray for someone who is willing to receive the Holy Spirit. He is a gift that the Lord desires every believer to experience. Any person of faith (because we receive Him by faith) can lay their hands on someone and ask Father for the gift poured out two thousand years ago. There is nothing quite like the experience of praying for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with someone and seeing and feeling the power of God flowing into their lives!

For The Impartation of Spiritual Gifts

Romans 1:11 — For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—

2 Timothy 1:6 — Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Is this something for every Believer? If we can have a part in praying for someone to receive the Holy Spirit, certainly we can have a part in laying hands on them to receive His gifts as He directs us. Since we don't have any gifts of our own to distribute, and it's not our will, all a person will get from us praying without direction is messed up hair or a sweaty head. And if someone wants you to pray for them to receive some gift, remember the injunction to not lay hands on any one quickly (1 Timothy 5:22). You must hear from the Holy Spirit it's His gifts and His will that is preeminent.

For Blessings On Your Children

Mark 10:13-16 — Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them*. But when Jesus saw *it*, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.

Jesus gave us the permission to imitate Him. A praying touch is far more effective than a touching prayer. It is a wise person who takes the time to lay a hand on a child to ask Father for a blessing upon them.

For Ordination and Setting Apart for Ministry

Acts 6:3-6 — Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

Acts 13:2-3 — As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

This is such a touching moment for all concerned when, in obedience to the Lord's direction and confirmation by the Holy Spirit and visible fruit, we commission a brother and sister for ministry. It's such a joy to touch them as we pray symbolizing our commitment to them, our support for them, our identification with them, and our partnership with them in the field of their work.

When commissioning, be very careful not to lay hands on someone before they are ready to go forth in ministry.

1 Timothy 5:22 — Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

How Should You Lay Hands on Someone?

Generally, you place your hand on the recipient's should, arm, or head. When praying for healing, you may want to place your hand on or near the physical part of the body that needs healing. However, care should be taken not to touch someone inappropriately, particularly between mixed sexes.

 **List the ways you have employed the laying on of hands during your Christian lifetime.**

Conclusion

It's all about relationship.

With water baptism, we declare our union/relationship with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection to new life. Like Jesus, we go forth in the authority of God as His sons and daughters with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

With communion we declare our union/relationship with the Lord's Body—the Body of Christ—which includes Jesus and all Believers. This includes our recognition, acceptance, and care for one another.

With laying on of hands we declare our union/relationship with the Lord and another individual. We join with the other person physically (by touch), mentally (in agreement), and spiritually (in the power of the Holy Spirit) to accomplish the Lord's will.

Immersion; personal response; personal response; yes; personal response