

Becoming a Member at Providence Baptist Church

To us, membership is much more than a formality or a means of keeping records. By receiving people into membership, we are affirming as a church that we have not only heard them say they know Christ, but have also seen evidence of His saving work in their lives. Before we can welcome you into membership, we must be as certain as possible that your profession of faith in Christ is credible, and we must know that you have been baptized.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SAYING MY PROFESSION OF FAITH MUST BE “CREDIBLE”?

We mean first of all that your profession of faith in Christ must be based on biblical truth. There are many people who would say that they believe in Jesus, yet biblically they could not be considered Christians. They may have a false understanding of who Jesus is, or they may misunderstand the nature of saving faith in Him. Before we can welcome a person into membership, we simply must be assured that their understanding of these things is according to God’s Word.

Secondly, in order for a profession of faith to be credible, it must be characterized by repentance—an eagerness to turn from sin and live in obedience to the commands of Christ. We know that no one will live the Christian life perfectly, but the Bible tells us that a person who claims to be a Christian, yet does not obey Christ, “is a liar and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4).

We need to get to know you for a time before we can see that your profession of faith is credible in these two ways. We haven’t set any particular time frame for membership. We simply want to be careful, prayerful, and reasonable, considering each prospective member as an individual.

WHAT TYPE OF BAPTISM DO YOU REQUIRE?

We believe that there is only one true baptism—immersion in water following genuine conversion to Christ. We know that many people have been “baptized” as infants through pouring or sprinkling before they were able to make a profession of faith in Christ, but we do not find this type of “baptism” commanded, practiced, or inferred anywhere in the Bible. Therefore, we do not consider such a person to have been baptized in the biblical sense.

We also realize that there are a number of groups who claim to be Christian, and who practice baptism by immersion in water. Some of these, even though their outward mode of baptism may be according to the biblical model, cannot be included in the term “Christian” because other key elements of true Christianity are not believed or taught within their circles. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that you have been baptized as a Christian, in a true Christian church, before we welcome you as a member of Providence Baptist Church.

WHAT ELSE IS INVOLVED IN BECOMING A MEMBER?

Get To Know Us

We ask that you get to know us by reading our Church Constitution and By-Laws which contains the Following: Vision Statement, Statement of Faith, Our Common Values, Statement on Church Government, Our Church Covenant, Restoring Those Who Fall (Statement on Church Discipline).

Please take the time to carefully read each of the documents listed above before completing the Petition for Membership which is included in this introduction. You will notice that we have an Elder’s Statement of Faith and a Member’s Statement of Faith. The Elder’s Statement is much more thorough and summarizes what our Elders/Pastors teach. We realize that you may not fully understand or agree with every doctrinal conviction put forth in this fuller statement. We believe, however, that it is important that you are presented with our positions and practices, and that you agree to pursue unity in these areas while maintaining a humble and teachable spirit as we all seek to understand the Scriptures better. The member’s statement is briefer and summarizes the essential doctrinal convictions we believe all the members of our church should hold to for the sake of purity and unity at PBC. We do require all members to believe the full member’s statement of faith.

Lastly, we ask that you read or listen to “Wasted Faith,” by Jim Elliff. You can listen to an audio version at www.waytogod.org/wasted_faith.asp, or ask an elder for a free copy. This short book is an excellent tool for examining your own profession of faith in Christ.

Help us Get to Know you

Once you have finished reading and decide that you want to become part of our church, we ask that you assist us in getting to know you. As mentioned briefly above, you will need to complete and submit the ***Petition for Membership***. The information you provide in your petition will help us to better evaluate your understanding of the essential doctrines of the Christian faith, and it will enable us to better serve you as pastors. Any private information you provide will be kept completely confidential and will be shared with no one other than the elders of the church.

While information given on paper is helpful, it is somewhat impersonal. At some point during the membership process, after we have had the chance to review your Petition for Membership, you will need to schedule at least one interview with two or more of our elders. This will give you the chance to ask any remaining questions you may have about our doctrine or practices, and it will give us the chance to review with you the information on your Petition for Membership.

SUMMARY

Before you become a member of Providence Baptist Church, we need to be as certain as possible that you are truly a Christian, and that you have been baptized as a Christian. As you seek membership, we ask that you assist us in the following ways:

- Carefully read this introductory packet as well as the documents listed above, so that you can get to know what we believe, how we will conduct ourselves as a church, and what will be expected of you as a member. Also read or listen to “Wasted Faith” by Jim Elliff.
- Attend regularly so that we can get to know you, and you can get to know us, on a personal level.
- Complete and submit the Petition for Membership.
- Speak with an elder in at least one private interview.

When one of our elders has reviewed your Petition for Membership, gotten to know you personally, and received any necessary input from others who know you well, he will present your petition to the elders of Providence Baptist Church. With the agreement of all the elders, you will be presented to the congregation. After sharing your personal testimony, you will be asked to make a verbal confession of faith and commitment to membership in PBC. Then, when you have signed our membership covenant, you will be a member of Providence Baptist Church.