



"The Churches of God Outreach Ministries provides leadership, information, and biblical teaching in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20"

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Guidelines For Your Baptism

Here's an outline of the practical aspects of being baptized.

by James McBride

This is not to "prepare you for baptism", but to give guidelines for the ceremony itself. It is assumed that you have already counseled with the ministry. However, you may have niggling worries about what happens at your baptism! In fact, as we practice it, it's a simple ceremony.

Above all this is a *joyous* occasion - a bit like family feelings for the birth of a baby! For many it is an emotional experience as they realize they are embarking on a new life - life in Christ. When you come out of the water you are spiritually clean, all your sin washed away through the suffering, death and resurrection of our Savior. *Surely something to rejoice over, as do God's angels!*

Let's look at some of the practical aspects of baptism.

First, if you have a *dread of water*, or are in some way *disabled* or have a *serious health problem*, please don't hesitate to voice this in advance of your baptism. It's usually possible to work out any difficulties.

Surroundings

We will try to have your baptism in as pleasant surroundings as possible - though some have been baptized in rushing mountain streams or crammed into a bath-tub! You can help by locating a suitable location in your locality.

What should you wear? Use neat everyday clothing - old, but freshly washed and pressed. For *men*, a shirt and trousers is adequate. And for *ladies* a swimsuit under a simple dress which is modest even when soaked through; you might consider a swimcap.

Footwear is usually unnecessary. You will need a towel(s) and possibly a warm sweater or coat for after the baptism.

Total Immersion

The practical aim of baptism is that you be *totally immersed* in the water - symbolic of the death and burial of "the old you". This is achieved by the method most comfortable for you in the circumstances. It means you will - very briefly - be completely under water. The person baptizing will consult as to the best way for *you*. Usually this is from a seated position in the water, with you holding your nose with one hand, and anchoring your elbow with the other. Total immersion is achieved by gently but quickly drawing you once - backwards and under, and out again speedily.

At some time immediately before your immersion - usually while in the "pool" - you will be asked a few simple questions regarding your commitment and intentions. The minister will then say: "[NAME] I now baptize you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins". He - usually with an assistant - will then immerse you.

That, in brief, is the baptism ceremony.

Laying on of Hands

However, it is not entirely complete, for the Bible clearly shows that baptism must be followed by *the laying on of hands* as the means of your receiving the awesome miracle of being begotten as a child of God. By it you are "legally" and literally accepted into His Family. In some religious circles it is known as *confirmation*.

Guidelines For Your Baptism

Following your baptism those appointed by the Church will lay hands upon your head asking God to dwell in you through His Holy Spirit, and to endow you with spiritual gifts for the benefit of His Church.

If you have truly repented, God will honor His promise and instantly beget you with His Spirit - "which he has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32). God will no longer merely be teaching you "from the outside" but will in-dwell your mind as your Leader and Comforter and Helper, and witness to your human spirit that you are His child.

Gifts of the Spirit

In no way do we limit Jesus Christ as to the gifts He places in His brethren in the Church. However, some almost demand to be given the "gift of tongues", and are expectant of a variety of physical manifestations - falling over, repetition of the name of Jesus, tongue-speaking, shaking, warm glows, even barking! Sadly, they are indeed "rewarded" (but *not* from God) by counterfeit gifts of tongues and other "signs" that are far from being "holy gifts". This is mentioned here to warn against an expectancy of similar physical or falsely spiritual signs following your baptism. In our experience God does indeed impart spiritual gifts, but none of the above!

Witness

Finally, feel free to invite other church members or friends or relatives to your baptism to share your joy on this momentous occasion, and as witnesses to your faith in Jesus Christ.

If you have further questions on any points briefly mentioned here, please discuss them ahead of time to the person who is counseling with you about your baptism.

REMEMBER:
Correct date and location

Towel(s) etc.

Suitable clothing

Warm sweater or coat

Further Reading:

What Do You Mean "Repent"?

Coming To Baptism

Published by:
The Churches of God Outreach Ministries
PO Box 54621
Tulsa, OK 74155-0621
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www.cgom.org

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