

JOURNEY INTO MISSION!

INTRO

Crossroads

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We Exist To Serve!



"engage culture, encounter Christ, enable community!"

"Journey Into Mission"

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Crossroads

"engage culture... encounter Christ ...enable community!"



The Birth Of A Church (a brief history) ...

In the mid 1990's God placed a vision in the heart of the new pastor of a country church 40 miles Northwest of Des Moines, Iowa. Little did he know that God had already placed the same vision in the hearts of his congregation. God prompted this pastor and his people to see that their church not only needed to grow, but also needed to give birth to a daughter church. This daughter church would be in one of the outlying communities a number of miles away. The goal of this new ministry would be to more effectively reach the unchurched people who lived there. The pastor and his people spent years in prayer and planted many seeds of faith while they waited for the Lord to bring the vision into reality.

By the turn of the millennium Pastor Ray Hoke and Bethel Church, located outside of Ogden, entered into talks with their leaders in the Mid-America District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. These talks were immediately conjoined with a tremendously focused prayer effort. Within a year or two, the community of Perry (approximately 20 miles from Bethel) had been selected as a location where there was tremendous need for a fresh work of the Holy Spirit and the development of a local church that was Christ centered and outreach oriented.

In 2002 a core of approximately 25 Bethel people began to meet weekly to pray for the opportunity to begin this new church, and to be used by God to reach out to the unchurched of the Perry area. Through a process of yielding themselves and their own will to the direction of the Holy Spirit, the group began to solidify in their commitment and dedication to following the Lord and stepping out in this venture of faith.

During the earliest pre-natal phases of the birth of the church many people wrestled with their commitment to this challenging mission and their willingness to allow the Lord to shape them and the direction of the new church. Following two years of prayer, surrender and sacrifice the Lord identified pastoral leadership! God moved this pastor and his family to Perry in February of 2004. Thus began the final trimester of the pre-natal phase of the birth of the new church!

During the summer of 2004 the core group of people equipped themselves in various ministry capacities, continued to pray, and watched God at work! Four times they held a Sunday morning gathering and celebrated along with friends and neighbors who had been drawn in by the Holy Spirit. On the alternate weeks they met on Sunday evenings and in mid-week life groups for Bible study and discipleship.

On October 3, 2004 Crossroads Church was born as the first official weekly celebration and worship gatherings began to celebrate God's goodness and to teach the Word of God!

Crossroads has a distinctive flavor for ministry and has established itself as a group of believers who are committed to Christ and who love their neighbors. The people of the Crossroads family are willing to do whatever it takes to think and reach outside the box of Christendom in order to live-out their faith every day in the workplace, in the neighborhood and in their homes.

Crossroads is not a perfect church and there are no perfect people within the family. Crossroaders are serious about fulfilling our God-given mission to engage our culture relationally in order that those we share life with might encounter the risen Christ in their own personal experience. We seek to enable meaningful, healthy, Biblical community in a culture that has a rather worn out understanding of the nature of community. Crossroaders seek to introduce their friends and family to the power of a community centered in the forgiveness of Jesus Christ!



What would it be like to ...?

...be a part of a church family that really cares for me?

...not have to be perfect to belong?

...just be myself without fear of rejection?

...be where I feel connected, really connected?

...find a place to help me develop skills to cope with life?

...feel my life has meaning and purpose?

...realize God can use me for good?

...know I can help others with my unique gifts and abilities?

...understand I can make a difference in the world?

...really know God understands me and loves me and has a future for me?



The Beginning Of A Mission!

This is the beginning of a personal and spiritual journey that we hope will be the most exciting and fulfilling you will ever be a part of. This is the Crossroads journey. This a very important step in your choice to accept God's invitation to align your life with the mission of Crossroads.

Some of you may think this is a stopping point, a place where you have "arrived." If you think that way you would miss as much as if you decided to fly to Florida to see Disney World, but stopped at the airport.

Think of this as a launching pad for you to grow and explore all the opportunities God has for you. Opportunities to learn more about God, for personal growth, to discover and use the gifts God has placed in you, to be a part of something bigger than yourself and to contribute to the greatest work of all: building the Kingdom of God!



Overview of the Membership Class

During this time we will cover:

1. The Purpose, Mission and Values of Crossroads.
2. The Vision and Direction of Crossroads.
3. The Crossroads Lifestyle.

Our goal for this material is that you will deepen in your understanding of the mission God has called us to in the Crossroads family. Being an active member in this part of the Body of Christ can be very rewarding! We focus on Christ-centered unity and down-play differences of opinion.

As anyone can see, God has made everyone unique, with individual gifts and talents. Part of our ongoing commitment to you is to help you figure out how God has uniquely wired you to discover fulfillment as you minister within this body.

We believe that God loves unity within His church. It is the separate parts of the body, living and functioning together in harmony, that make up the whole. Therefore, God generously gives freedom to live and function within His Church as individuals and as a unified body.



Why Membership?

PARTICIPATING MEMBERSHIP

Crossroads is a safe place for an unchurched person to come to hear the message of Jesus Christ. But proclaiming the Gospel alone doesn't make us a church. What makes us a church—not just an evangelistic organization—is that we are a *community*.

Crossroads is also a safe place for imperfect people to grow in Christ! None of us have fully "arrived."

We have attenders and visitors, but we also have members. People can belong to our fellowship, and they can know they're connected.

One might assume that, as long as you know Christ, what is the need for any further identification with a local church? Isn't it enough to simply call yourself a Christian and attend services somewhere regularly? What is the point of formal membership?

Three Reasons

We believe there are at least three reasons for having formal membership.

- 1) First, we believe the concept of membership is biblical. While the term "church member" is never used, the concept is implicit throughout the New Testament. Believers clearly identified themselves with a specific local body and were challenged to become devoted participants.
- 2) Second, formal membership is valuable to the leaders of the church as they seek to fulfill their God-given task of shepherding. We desire to attract visitors and spiritual seekers. We hope that will always be happening here. But at some point it is important to identify those who truly comprise the "flock" at Crossroads—the core that can be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church. These are also the committed "family members" who should receive priority in the allocation of church resources (as commanded in Galatians 6:10).
- 3) Finally, and perhaps most importantly, experience shows that membership benefits the individual. In a culture where commitment is no longer highly valued, recognizable membership is an important step that moves each of us out of the vague clouds of our good intentions and into the clear light of committed participation. It presents a challenge to "step out of the stands" and publicly affirm a commitment to Christ and to a specific local body. In this sense, membership can be a significant "defining moment" in one's lifelong discipleship journey.



Why Membership? (con't)

"Positional" and "Participating"

How exactly do you define a "member"? This is a legitimate question, and it needs some clarification, since the Bible actually describes two kinds of "membership."

The Bible is full of references to the once-and-for-all union with Christ and His body, which happens at the instant of your conversion (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:13-22, 4:3-6; Colossians 1:13-22). At that moment, you become a "positional member" in the universal Church of Jesus Christ — based solely on His merit and grace. "Positional membership" is eternal and unchanging.

The Bible also urges "positional members" to continue growing by becoming "participating members" in a specific local assembly (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:25-31, 14:12, 26; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Timothy 3:14-15). Obviously, you may be a "participating member" of several different local bodies during the course of your lifetime while maintaining a permanent "positional membership" in Christ's universal Church. We cannot see the invisible bond of "positional membership", but we can identify those who are the "participating members" here at Crossroads.

How can "participating membership" be described biblically?
We attempt to summarize it in an outline from using what we call "The Five G's."
For those who desire to see a tangible dimension for spiritual growth,
the Five G's are a measurable gauge of spiritual and relational development.

THE FIVE G's

GRACE

The individual appropriation of the saving work of Christ
followed by baptism as a believer (Ephesians 2:8-9)

GROWTH

The ongoing evidence of a changing life and pursuit of Christlikeness (2 Peter 3:18)

GROUP

Participation in the body of Christ and connection with others
in significant relationships which effect life change (Acts 2:46)

GIFTS

Serving the body according to spiritual giftedness and passion (Romans 12:6-8)

GOOD STEWARDSHIP

Honoring God with one's material resources and
supporting the church using the biblical precedent of the tithe
as a goal to reach or exceed as God prospers (Philippians 4:11-19)



Family and Body

#1. The Church is a Family

Ephesians 2:19

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,

Romans 12:5

... so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Notice the Bible says "and members of God's household." It doesn't say it is *LIKE* a family. It says we are a part of "God's family." Every Christ follower needs a church family. If we aren't a part of it we are, at best, an orphan, or at worst, a runaway.

If a Christ follower isn't a member of a local church, it's like someone saying they want to play baseball but not on any team, or that they want to be a bee without belonging to a hive.

The difference between being a Christ follower and being a member of a church family is summed up in one word: COMMITMENT.

I become a Christ follower by committing my life to Jesus Christ.

I become a member of a church by committing myself to other Christ followers. "This will be my church home where I'm going to give and be given to, where I'm going to serve and be served, where I will love and be loved."



Family and Body (con't)

#2. The Church is a Body

There are many places where the Bible describes the church as a body. We are the Body of Christ! We are a body, not a building or a business. We are an organism, not an organization.

Ephesians 4:16

"From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. "

Ephesians 5:30

"...for we are members of his body. "

Colossians 3:15

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. "

Romans 12:4-5

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, [5] so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. "

These scriptures tell us two things.

1. We are individuals, yet a part of a body which depends on each part doing its work.
2. Because we are a part of one Body, we must live in peace with each other.

Scripture tells us a hand can't tell a foot that it is less important. The liver isn't more important than the lungs. Just as the parts of our body are interdependent on each other to function and be as fit and healthy as possible, so too, the members of the church need to fully participate in the life of the church.

If you're good at teaching, you should teach. If you are handy with tools or crafts, you should find a place to use those gifts. If you're good at organizing, or singing, or accounting, or anything, it's up to you to find a place to use those gifts and abilities God has given you.

As mentioned before, the church is an organism, not an organization. You won't be elected to do something. It's not seniority which puts you into specific tasks or functions. It's your own abilities, gifts and faithfulness in using them to their fullest. The Body of Christ needs you!



The Crossroads Strategy

Every church has a strategy behind it. Some are intentional, some aren't. Some are known, some aren't. Some are effective, some are ineffective. There are many different ways to do church. None are necessarily right or wrong, better or worse. The important thing is does a church's strategy assist it in expanding the Kingdom of God? Are they making disciples of Jesus Christ? After all, Jesus told His disciples before he went back to heaven, "Go and make disciples." That is the measuring stick.

No church can appeal to everyone. If all we had were one kind of radio station, life would be pretty dull and boring. Likewise, if a radio station tried to appeal to everyone, no one would listen to it. One minute it's heavy metal, the next song is country. Then they do a talk radio format for 30 minutes, and then switch to rap. Later they play jazz or big band, followed by top 40 and then classical. It would drive the listeners nuts! The same with a church that tries to please everyone. We can't. We won't try. We try to be as appealing as possible, but, to be honest, there will be some people that just won't feel comfortable with our style. That's not wrong. That's just reality. And that's OK because somewhere there is a church they will feel comfortable in. We have to be who God called us to be!

We do things intentionally. Our goal is to reach unchurched people. So we intentionally play up-beat, contemporary music. Most unchurched people don't listen to hymns or to organ music. Our goal is that our music will pick people up and help them to experience dimensions of God that they don't even know exist. We want the music to be a drawing point. We want it to be bright, cheery, positive and God honoring! We won't appeal to everyone, but we don't have to. We focus on "intentionality" in each area of this ministry.

A major part of our strategy involves life groups. One of our core values is that "Life Change happens best in life groups." We know that on Sunday mornings we can encourage people and pat them on the back, but we also know that people need more than that. So every week we have life groups that meet to help people grow in community with other people and in their relationship with God. Except for Sunday mornings, homes are the #1 venue for Crossroads. We think this is a great thing! It allows us to deal with the issues of life in the safety, comfort and relaxed environment of a home. Growth is difficult enough on its own. We try to make the learning process meaningful and enjoyable.

Crossroads wasn't founded to take people away from other churches. We know that at least 9/10 of the people in our area never attend church. These are our target. We welcome people from other churches only after encouraging them to do all they can to be at peace in their previous church, and then to move on only if the Lord is directing them to do so. When they do come to Crossroads, they need to understand that they need to embrace our mission, because our mission is our calling from God:

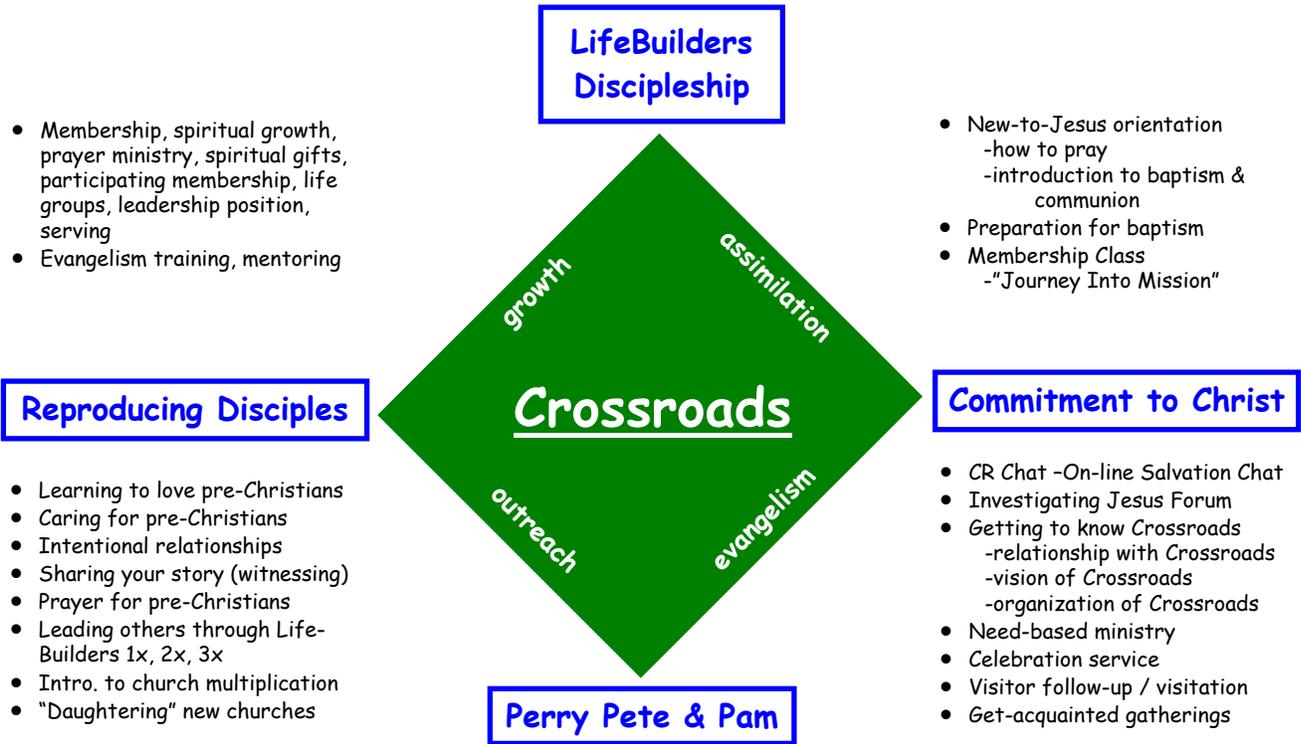
"Our mission: "engage culture... encounter Christ ...enable community!"

Crossroads

"engage culture... encounter Christ ...enable community!"



The Crossroads Strategy Illustrated



Our Mission:

"engage culture... encounter Christ ...enable community!"



Purposes of Crossroads

Purpose #1: Love the Lord with all our heart	(Worship)
Purpose #2: Love our neighbors as ourselves	(Ministry)
Purpose #3: Go and make disciples	(Evangelism)
Purpose #4: Baptize people	(Community)
Purpose #5: Teach people to obey (Growth and Reproduction)	(Maturity)

Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' [38] This is the first and greatest commandment. [39] And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' [40] All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Ephesians 4:11-12

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, [12] to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."



Values of Crossroads

(What We Value And What Motivates Us!)

Naturally, because we are a collection of diverse individuals, we all have slightly different values with regard to how we go about serving Christ. Yet certain common values unify our efforts and define our distinctives.

Value 1: *We believe that the Bible and the Holy Spirit are the catalysts for transformation in individuals' lives and in the church.* Romans 12:7, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, James 1:23-25.

Value 2: *We believe that life-change happens best in the context of life groups.* Luke 6:12-13, Acts 2:44-47.

Value 3: *We believe that lost people matter to God, and therefore, ought to matter to the church.* Luke 5:30-32, Luke 15, Matthew 18:14.

Value 4: *We believe that the church should be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure.*

Value 5: *We believe that Christ-followers should serve according to their spiritual gifts, with a genuine and loving spirit.* Ephesians 4, Hebrews 12:1, Philippians 1:6, Romans 12, John 13:34-35

Value 6: *We believe that Christ-followers should give their best to God in every area of life and ministry.* Colossians 3:17-23, Malachi 1:6-14, Proverbs 27:17, Ephesians 6:7.

Value 7: *We believe that growth and reproduction are normal for Christ followers and churches.* Matthew 5:13-16, Mark 9:50.



Salvation

What Does It Really Mean To Be A Christ follower?

The Bible teaches there are two reasons we exist.

1. God made me to _____ me.

Jeremiah 31:3 "The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."

Ephesians 1:4-5 "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love [5] he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- "

2. We are created to _____ a personal _____ with God.

See Genesis 1,2,3

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me--"

Knowing God produces many positive benefits in our lives.

1. A Clear _____

Romans 8:1 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,"

2. _____ and Peace

Romans 8:6 "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace."

3. The Spirit _____ for us and helps us in our _____

Romans 8:26 "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. "

4. God works for the _____ of those who love Him

Romans 8:28 "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. "

5. God is _____

Romans 8:31 "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? "

6. Awareness of the _____ we have in Christ

John 8:32,36 "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." [36] So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. "

7. Nothing can _____ us from the love of Christ

Romans 8:39 "Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. "

8. Power and _____

Philip. 4:13 "I can do everything through him who gives me strength. "



Salvation (con't)

So What's The Big Problem?

Isaiah 59:2 - "It is our sin that separates us from God."

We have a natural desire to be _____.

The Bible calls this **SIN**.

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

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

When our relationship with God isn't right, it creates problems in every other aspect of our lives.

People try many different ways to cope with their problems.

Proverbs 16:25 - "There are ways that seem right to man, but they only end up in death."

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me."
—Jesus Christ -John 14:6

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself.

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." 1 John 4:9,10

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:6-8



Salvation (con't)

How Do I Become A Christ-Follower?

1. We become a follower of Christ, or a Christian, by admitting to God that we have fallen short of His standard and that our sin is separating us from God.

- "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." - Romans 3:23
- "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." - Romans 6:23

2. We must believe that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin when He died on the cross and rose from the dead.

- "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit." -1 Peter 3:18

3. Accept that He did all that was ever necessary for us to stand before God, and transfer our trust from ourselves or from others to the Lord Jesus Christ. He has promised to receive us in spite of our sinfulness.

- "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." - John 1:12

4. Call upon Jesus.

- "But what does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." - Romans 10:8-10
- "for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" - Romans 10:13

The important issue is to place our trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. There is nothing magic about the following prayer, but it is a sample prayer to help you express that trust.

- Pray this prayer:
- "Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as My Savior, my leader, my Lord, and forgiver. Thank you for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Now What? Remember, Christianity is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, I encourage you to grow in your love relationship with Jesus by:

- Reading the Bible and praying each day. The Gospel of John is a good place to begin reading.
- Telling your pastor or a Christian friend about your commitment to follow Jesus.
- Finding a good church that will help you grow in your relationship with God.
- Living by faith (trust) in God and His Word which do not change, rather than by your feelings which often change with your circumstances.
- God's Word, the Bible, gives us great hope and confidence:

"Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." - 1 John 5:10-13



Baptism

When it comes to the topic of baptism, there are typically four basic questions that come to people's minds.

1. Why should I be baptized?
2. What is the meaning of baptism?
3. Why should I be baptized by immersion?
4. Who should be baptized?

1 - Why should I be baptized? There are actually three reasons to be baptized.

1. To follow the examples set by Jesus. Mark 1:9 "at that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river." Why was Jesus baptized? In order to save him? No, he didn't need to be saved. He was perfect. Baptism doesn't save you. It is a symbol of obedience and it's an example that we are to do what he has done.
2. Because Jesus commands it. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus commands his followers to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..." These are the three things the church is commanded to do: Make disciples, baptize them, help them grow up. There is a certain order to this. First, you become a Christ-follower. Secondly, you get baptized. And third, you spend the rest of your life growing as a Christ follower.
3. It demonstrates that I am really a believer. Baptism doesn't make you a Christ follower. It just shows that you are a Christ follower. A wedding ring doesn't make me married; it is a symbol of a commitment that I made that made me married. One day I made a commitment to my wife before God and a bunch of people and I said "I do" and I gave my life to her in front of God for the rest of my life. That commitment is what makes me married, not the ring. If I was to lose this ring, I'd still be married. This is an outward symbol of an inward commitment.

2 - What is the meaning of baptism? Baptism does two things.

1. It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection. Romans 6:4 "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." What this means, is we identify ourselves with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through baptism, we make a public statement of our faith that our old sinful self has been buried as Jesus was buried, and we rise again to a new life in Jesus Christ just as Christ himself rose from the dead. At Crossroads we baptize the way they did in the Bible, putting people all the way under the water. It is a symbol of a burial and resurrection. Just like Jesus Christ died and was buried in the ground for three days and then rose again.
2. Baptism illustrates my new life as a Christ follower. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "when anyone becomes a Christ follower, he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has past away and the new life has begun." In the Bible, there was no such thing as a person claiming to be a Christ follower and not be baptized. It was automatic. You were baptized as soon as you gave your life to Christ.

3 - Why should I be baptized by immersion? There are a lot of ways people get baptized. Some churches sprinkle just a little water on your forehead. Some pour a little water. Some dip a little bit. Other churches put you all way under the water. Why do we believe at Crossroads that you should be baptized by immersion? There are four reasons: (see next page)



Baptism (con't)

- 1) Because Jesus was baptized that way. Matthew 3:16 "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water." Jesus went down to the Jordan River. John the Baptist baptized him in a river. He set the example.
- 2) Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion. Acts 8:38, 39 "Then both Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away."
- 3) That's what the word means. "Baptize" literally means "to immerse [under water.]"
- 4) It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection. Many founders of denominations agree about this:
 - Martin Luther said, "I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed as the word imports and the mystery signifies."
 - John Calvin said "The word baptize signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."
 - John Wesley said "Buried with him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the accustom of the first church."

That is the way baptism is taught in the Bible. That is the way we have chosen to do it as well.

The fact of the matter is, if we are to keep the Bible as the basis of our faith and practice, we are to be baptized after we understand and commit to living the life of a Christ-follower.

4 - Who should be baptized? Every person who believes in Christ. Acts 2:41, 8:12, 13, and 10:47, 48. From these passages, it is determined that as soon as a person has accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior they get baptized. If you have already been baptized since you began following Christ there is no need for you to be baptized again to become a member of Crossroads. However, if you haven't been baptized since you began following Christ... why is it important to follow the instruction and example of the One we say we follow?

...First, because Jesus commanded the church to do it. He said, "go baptize." Secondly, it's a symbol that you are a member of the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13. Now there is nothing special about the water. You can get baptized in a lake, a river, a stream, a pool, a hot tub, a bathtub or any other body of water in which you can become totally immersed. The water is not the holy part. What is holy is the faith of the people. It's not where you're baptized. It's why you're baptized.

Question: How is it possible that a private baptism (say someone being baptized at home in their bathtub) could actually be contrary to the meaning and intention of baptism?

We do not have an minimum age limit on baptism. If your child decides they wish to be baptized, one of the elders would be happy to sit down and speak with the parent(s) and the child to help to explain baptism to them in order for them to understand. We do not wish to withhold baptism from anyone, however, we want to make sure there is an appropriate level of understanding of what baptism is and why someone wishes to be baptized.

We also offer a class called "Preparing for Baptism." This class is occasionally offered for groups, but can be done by an individual as well.



What If I Was Baptized As A Baby?

We are very glad that your parents chose to raise you in a manner that emphasizes the importance of God and spiritual things. This means that they recognize the importance of honoring God with our lives.

We too believe that God should be honored in all that we do in life. That is why we base our lives and our practices on the teachings of God's Word. The Bible is our source of authority in all that we teach and practice. As we read what the Bible teaches about baptism, the pattern is always "Believe and be baptized."

If you were baptized as a baby, you obviously were not able to believe or express faith in God on your own. Your parents were expressing their desire that you live your life in the knowledge, appreciation and love of God. They wanted you to share their belief that God loves you and takes care of you.

Baptism, in the Bible, is a sign or a symbol that a person already believes in Jesus Christ as their Leader, Forgiver, Savior, and Lord. It is a means of identifying oneself as a Christ follower and of saying that your life is committed to Jesus Christ. Baptism is also the public means of identifying with other Christ followers. Jesus Himself commanded that we should be baptized for these reasons. Of course, there is also the matter of simple obedience to Jesus, since He told (commanded) us to do it.

Your choice to be baptized as a Christ follower doesn't change/alter/ or take away anything from your infant baptism. This is a separate event in your life. This is actually the next step in the natural progression of you becoming responsible for and "owning" your personal faith in Jesus Christ. Your parents would want your faith journey to continue down the path where you choose to have a close personal faith in Jesus Christ. And now here you are!

Invite your family to join you as you choose to embrace the values of the Bible and identify with a group of Christ followers who will help you to continue down that often-times difficult path of honoring God with your life.



Communion

What is the Lord's Supper?

1. It is a simple act. The Bible says that at the very first communion, the Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread and broke it. He didn't have some big elaborate ceremony, wear special costumes, vestments or burn incense and perform all kinds of fancy rituals. The Lord's Supper is a very simple act. He took bread and He took wine and He gave it to the people. It's not some big elaborate ritual. When we take the Lord's Supper at Crossroads, we don't turn it into a big ritual.

2. It is a reminder. "And when He had given thanks, He took the bread and He broke it and said, 'This is My Body, which is for you: do this in remembrance of Me.'" The whole purpose of the Lord's Supper is for us to remember what Jesus did on the cross.

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.'" When Jesus said, "this bread is My body and this cup is My blood," He didn't mean literally. When He said this, He hadn't even gone to the cross yet. He hadn't died yet. Obviously, He's talking about a symbol, not His actual blood.

If I were to pull out my wallet and show you pictures of my wife and children, you would not be seeing my actual wife and children. Photographs are only images of different types of chemicals on photographic paper. They are not real. It is only a representation of my wife and children.

Jesus once said in the Bible "I am the door." Does that mean He's a piece of wood? He said, "I am the bread of life." Does that mean He's a loaf of bread? No. He's giving symbolism. It is a representation just as the photos are representations of my wife and children. The Lord's Supper is actually a statement of faith. 1 Corinthians 11:26 says, "for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." There is a forward look and a backward look. We look forward to the fact that Jesus is coming back and He says to do this until He does come back. And we also look back at what Jesus did on the cross. Jesus didn't stay dead. He's coming back again.

Who should participate in the Lord's Supper? Only those who are already Christ followers. When Jesus offered communion he didn't offer it to the 5,000 where he fed them with bread and fish. He only offered the Lord's Supper to the 12 Disciples whom He knew were true Christ followers. He did not offer the Lord's Supper to the uninformed crowds.

At Crossroads, Sunday morning gatherings include many people who have not yet chosen to follow Christ. The Lord's Supper isn't for pre-Christians. In fact, the Bible says that when a pre-Christians take the Lord's Supper they bring judgment upon themselves. We don't wish to lead pre-Christians to against the teachings of the Bible, so when we serve communion on Sunday morning we give very clear instructions and invite those who are not Christ followers yet, to observe the sincerity of the event and see the love that Jesus has for them. We encourage them to allow this to be part of what might eventually influence them to desire to know Jesus better. We provide them with opportunities to choose to follow Christ at many and various times.

Prepare yourself for the Lord's Supper by first examining your heart in prayer. Ask God to reveal to you any hidden sin or anything that is displeasing to Him. Perhaps you're holding bitterness or unforgiveness towards someone. Perhaps there is a strained relationship. When you ask God to reveal to you anything that is not right with Him, He will show it to you. Then, before taking communion, confess your sin, receive forgiveness, (possibly go restore that relationship) and then receive the bread and juice with a clean heart.



Baptism/Communion

One: Why should I be baptized?

- 1 - To follow Jesus' _____.
- 2 - Because Jesus _____ it.
- 3 - It _____ that I am really a Christ follower.

Two: What is the meaning of baptism?

- 1- It illustrates Christ's _____ and _____.
- 2- Baptism illustrates my new _____ as a Christ follower.

Three: Why should I be baptized by immersion?

- 1- Because _____ was baptized that way.
- 2- _____ baptism in the Bible was by immersion.
- 3- The word "baptize" means " _____ in water".
- 4- It symbolizes a _____ and _____.

Four: Who should be baptized?

_____ person who is a true Christ follower.

The Lord's Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth.

What is the Lord's Supper?

1. It is a _____ act.
2. It is a _____.
3. It is a _____.

