

# First Baptist Church of Topeka

## *New member FAQs*

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We are so excited that you are considering membership at First Baptist Church of Topeka. We hope that the following list of Frequently Asked Questions will help you get a better sense of what is involved with joining our church.

### **Who can join First Baptist Church?**

Anyone who wants to.

### **What are the ways that a person can join the church?**

There are 3 basic ways.

- 1) *Profession of Faith and Baptism.* This is when a person is making their first public, adult profession of faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. This does not necessarily mean that you are just becoming a believer at the time, but that you are now making your decision public, requesting baptism and membership.
- 2) *Transfer of Letter.* This is just a fancy way of saying that you are already a member of another church, and are simply wanting to move your membership to our church. We understand and recognize that not all churches have “membership” and that you may just simply be joining our church without an official transfer.
- 3) *Statement of Christian Experience.* This option is for those who are neither making a first-time profession of faith OR coming from another church. New members in this category are simply saying, “I’m not a new Christian, and I don’t have a current church membership but I want to be a member of this church.”

### **How exactly do I join?**

That’s easy. We just present you to the congregation in the worship service of your choice, and have the congregation affirm your decision. We will have you fill out a small card with your contact information and will also ask to take your picture for our newsletter.

### **What if I have a debilitating fear of standing up in front of people?**

We will work something out. The important part is that the congregation sees and knows who you are and can appropriately welcome you. And remember, you don’t have to say anything when we present you for membership.

### **Do I have to answer questions or affirm a set of beliefs in order to join?**

Nothing besides belief and faith in Christ. It will greatly benefit you to learn about things that make Baptists unique, but you don’t have to “sign the bottom line” on anything.

### **Why join?**

There are several very important reasons to join as a member as opposed to simply being a regular attendee. First, it can be a very meaningful time in which you and the congregation make a commitment to each other. It’s very meaningful for the congregation to officially accept someone new into the family, and it’s usually meaningful for the individual to be the recipient of this acceptance and affirmation. Of course, if you are making a first-time profession of faith, your public baptism is an extremely important time for you, your family, and the church. Secondly, you will come under the pastoral care of this church. You will receive our newsletters and communications, and part of our commitment to you is that we will do everything possible to support you in your time of emotional, spiritual, or financial need. And third, joining is simply that important “rite of passage” that signifies your entrance into our church, and let’s our congregation welcome you in an appropriate way.

**Am I expected or pressured to join after attending for a certain length of time?**

No. One of our pastors might bring up the question, but there will be no pressure whatsoever.

**Am I required to be baptized?**

We do not ask or require anyone to be “re-baptized” in our church if you have had a previous baptism in another denomination that you believe is sufficient. However, in the Baptist tradition, everyone should have some adult, informed decision to follow Christ that they can point to. For some, this could be the process of confirmation in another denomination. If you are making a first-time profession of faith, baptism is an integral part of that decision.

**What if I have had a previous baptism but wish to do it again?**

If this is your wish, we would be happy to do this after having a conversation with you about your reasons.

**Are members expected to give financially to the church?**

Yes. First Baptist Church, its programs and staff, are supported solely by our membership. We have no other income for our annual budget. Your regular financial support as a member is crucial to the church, as well as being a very biblical way of showing your commitment to Christ and His Church. Malachi 3:10 says, “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house...[and I will] throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”

Having said that, we are well aware that some of our members are in tough financial situations, and we only expect people to give what they can. The goal that we ask everyone to shoot for is 10% (a tithe) of your income, but you would be in good company if you are not able to do this.

**Besides financial giving, what is expected of me after I join?**

- 1) Every new member is asked to take 2 orientation courses. The courses you will take depend on what your religious background is. Please see the supporting document: “First Baptist Church of Topeka: New Member Orientation.”
- 2) We also encourage every new member to find a small group or a place of service in the church within 6 months of joining. You will find your Christian walk and membership here much more fulfilling if you establish healthy, Christian relationships and if you find a place where you can use your God-given gifts to build up His Church and support our ministries.

**I think I’m ready to join. What should I do?**

Set up an appointment with one of our pastors. This will give us the opportunity to sit down and talk with you, get to know more about you, and answer your questions. We will also confirm a date for you to come forward and join in the worship service of your choice.