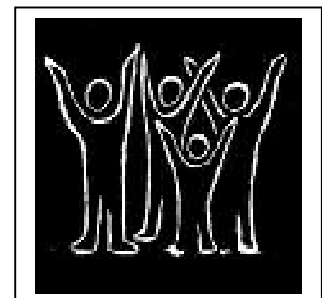
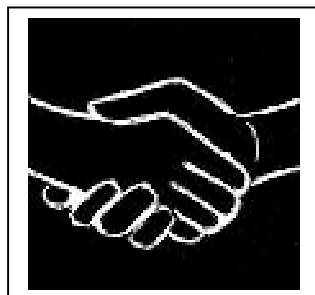
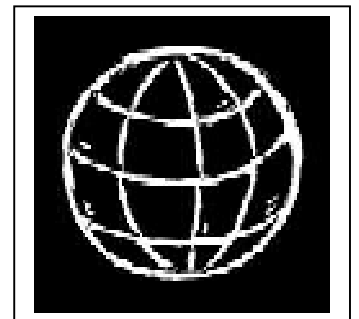
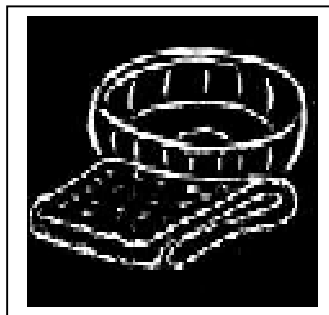
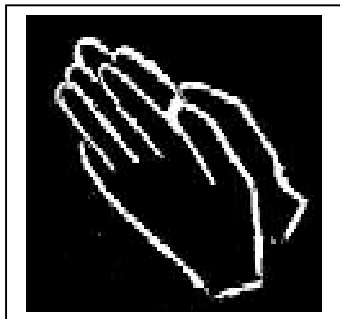


Session Three

The family tasks

“Let there be real harmony among you so there won’t be any split in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.”

1 Corinthians 1:10 (LB)



In the last session we looked at the family celebrations; Baptism and Communion. Today we will focus on:

What is the worldwide church for?
Ways we do this

What is the worldwide church for?

The Church Is a wonderful mix of all those people who have put their trust in Jesus Christ , Son of God, Saviour of the world, and have committed themselves to following Him. We're all very different so it's not always easy to get on, but loving and respecting one another is part of Jesus' teaching. Between us we have many different gifts.

*Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one **body**, and each member belongs to all the others. We each have **different gifts** according to the grace given us." Rom. 12:4-6*

1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 5:23, Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 2:19

Just as the different parts of the body have different functions but they all contribute to the life of the body, so we all have different parts to play...but we need to work together.

What gifts has God given you?

We are a living organism — not a defunct organization! We are a body — not a business! But as such we are invited by God into the business of extending His Kingdom in this world. He has given us tasks:

Worship

Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only." Matt. 4:10

"...The Father seeks worshippers...and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Jn 4:23-24

When you love someone you want to worship them and be with them. So we spend time worshipping God physically, spiritually, mentally, in all sorts of ways and at all sorts of times of the week ...it doesn't have to be in a church building on Sundays. It can be in a community building, on a walk in the countryside or the city, in a car, in a home. We do this together, we do it in families and we do it on our own. We use all kinds of music and written or spoken words to help us. Sometimes we don't know what to say but we just stand back or kneel or close our eyes and let God's Spirit help us to worship Him. He enjoys hearing of our thankfulness and encourages us to pray for ourselves and the world.

In the Bible, we read that God is a missionary God...always thinking about and going towards others rather than Himself. So worship is not just about being quiet or singing or praying to God...its following the example of Jesus in giving ourselves in service to others too. And laying gifts before him just like the Shepherds and Kings did in worshipping the baby Jesus. It is part of our joy and worship to give a significant proportion of our money and energy to be used in fulfilling the family tasks.

How and where do you find it easiest to worship God?

Community

“Jesus said, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart...soul...and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments.’” Matt. 22:36-40

To love your neighbour is almost as important as loving God...in fact the two things are inseparable because God loves our neighbour, whoever that might be. When Jesus was asked who the neighbour might be, he told a well known story about someone from a despised race who had been unfairly and brutally treated. .

Learning how to work together in the world and have respect for one another's differences is really hard...but its another of the family tasks. We must try to ensure that everyone God sends to us and God sends us to is able to feel His care for them.

Are there any groups of people who seem left out in this locality?

“You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.” 1 Peter 3:8 (LB)

*“Now you are no longer strangers.....you are members of **God's family.**”*
Ephesians 2:19

God loves the whole world, so one of our family tasks is not to be exclusive or cliquy but rather to extend a sense of belonging and caring way beyond the family. We value your perspective on this...In what ways might we do this better?

Learning

Acts 2 42: They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and to the fellowship and to breaking of bread and to prayer.

2 Timothy 3 16. All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man or woman of God maybe thoroughly equipped for every good work

Listening to God-inspired preaching is part of our life together. Personal study and study in groups can be really helpful. Lifelong learning is essential to the task of the church. Like the disciples, who were constantly with Jesus and learning from Him for the whole of the three years of his ministry, we need to recognise that we are not always right and adopt a willingness to learn. We have to discover how to follow Jesus more closely and be prepared to share with others what we have learned. We do this as part of our worship and also at other times. When you have done this course the worldwide church offers all sorts of other ongoing learning opportunities for you

What was the last course of any kind that you went on?

Mission

“Jesus said, ‘Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.’” Matt. 28:19-20

God reaches out to His world in love, and the life of Jesus shows us what He means by that. He sent his followers out to the surrounding towns and villages in twos to preach the good news and to heal. To offer whole-person care wherever they went. And His last command in Matthew 28 is sometimes known as the “Great Commission” This is the church’s ongoing task. We’re all involved in it. We have to communicate the message of Jesus in whatever way is appropriate for the culture that we find ourselves in. But Jesus never forced people to believe in him, and freedom of all people to worship and believe as they choose has always been important for Baptists.

In what kind of context do you currently spend your work time? leisure time?

But Jesus didn’t just suggest that we do this in our familiar territory. He sent people out to new places. You might need to check that your passport’s up to date!

You will be my witnesses, said Jesus, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. (*Acts 1;8*)

Travel’s a bit easier these days than it was then.

Do you speak any other language? What culture of the world would you really like to get to know better?

When you have a body of Christian believers who own the family distinctive, honour the family celebrations, and function in all of these four tasks you have a local expression of church, be it in a pub, a home, a shop, a prison, a school or a church building.

How we try to do this at ----- Baptist Church

Worship

e.g. Our Worship Style

At this Church our **Morning Services** are intended to be:

- *Attractive* to non-Christians
- *Balanced*, with something for all tastes
- *Challenging* for everyone
- *Down-to-earth* and relevant for daily life
- *Encouraging* to the weary believer
- *Friendly to families* with children and teenagers
- *Guaranteed* as a good place to bring guests
- *Helpful* for the spiritually hungry
- *Interesting* and varied
- *Jargon-free* for new attenders

Our evening services * are intended to be:

- *Quieter* - a place for 'space'
- *Simpler* and more meditative
- *More Traditional* in general style
- Aimed primarily at those who are *already Christians*

*with the exception of Youth Services

We have regular Baptismal services and Communion services so that we can demonstrate the family signs together.

Community

We share occasional meals together and have a system for offering pastoral care to all who need it. We enjoy loads of fun, sports and games together. We invite people outside the church to share in our social events. We join with other local groups to help form a sense of local cohesion in the society in which we live. We especially look out for the strangers in our neighbourhoods and try to find out how we can befriend them. We try to serve our local community together in all kinds of ways. We make a special effort to work with other expressions of the World Church in our area, especially.....

We have leaders whom we have appointed out of a sense of respect for the gifts God has given them, but the model is servant leadership. No-one is given more authority than another. When making decisions we do it all together in community..like other Baptist Churches, seeking to pray about various items of business and discern the mind of Christ together. We don't always get it right, but that's the principle. You are welcome to observe one of these meetings before deciding to join us.....just ask. .

Life-long learning

Preaching plays a key part in our services and more informal teaching in our home-groups. Like other UK Baptists, our understanding of the Bible is as truth interpreted through the life of Jesus. Also, like other Baptist Churches we believe in every member ministry...encouraging everyone who is part of the church to use the gifts God has given them, so learning to use these skills better is very important to us. In partnership with other churches around here we offer a range of courses in the following subjects:

Parenting courses	Pastoral care
Being a Christian in the modern world	Marriage enrichment
Church planting	Biblical studies
	And many more!!!!

Mission (add church's mission statement if you have one.)

We are deeply concerned about truth and justice in our world and we seek to support the poor and those who are unfairly treated, or who do not have access to health care, adequate nutrition, employment and education.

We share our faith with our friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues.
"Always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."
1Peter 3:15

Where there are people but no living expression of the World church among them, eg on new housing estates, we will work with other churches to get something started.

We support world mission in the following ways:

Our teenagers get the opportunity to do some really worthwhile voluntary work in their school holidays and get gap year opportunities to go with extremely well organised teams to help poorer communities in developing countries.

We have a special link with _____ through BMS World Mission and with _____ through Home Mission.

15% of our offerings goes directly to support Mission in the UK or abroad.

We believe that every one of our members, however old! should have the chance to engage in a cross cultural mission experience at least every five years.

We see Mission in its many forms as our overriding task and this influences all our decisions about the use of money and time.

Humanly speaking, it would be difficult to engage in all the above tasks. But by His Spirit God helps us to worship, to relate to one another, to continue learning, and to engage in mission.

Next Week.....want to join us?

Why be a member?

What it means to be a member. Our structures and affiliations

What makes a Baptist?