



REDEMPTION

CHURCH AT NEW HOPE

Position on the Age of Baptism

Redemption Church at New Hope affirms that baptism and the Lord's supper are the two ordinances Christ has given His church. Article 7, Section 2 of the Constitution of Redemption Church at New Hope states the following: "God has ordained baptism to be a means of declaring personal union with Christ, the cleansing of sin, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit (Rom 6:3-5; Act 2:38; Act 22:16; 1 Pt 3:21). Therefore, true disciples of Christ are proper candidates for baptism."

While we believe the practice of believer's baptism by immersion to be the clear biblical model, Scripture does not specify a proper age for baptism. Therefore, the question of an appropriate age for baptism is a matter of wisdom. We recognize that other churches, with whom we agree in matters of doctrine and polity, may arrive at differing positions on this question.

We believe that generally, around age 13, a young person is capable of understanding what is being affirmed in believer's baptism. The crucial question is this: Can the individual articulate a credible confession of faith, exhibit a sufficiently mature understanding of the gospel, articulate their conversion, and exhibit evidences of the new birth? Ultimately, only God knows for certain who has been saved by His grace, and God can and does save young children. After all, it is through faith alone we are saved, not through the waters of baptism. However, the church has been entrusted with the keys of the kingdom and given the responsibility to bind on earth as it is in heaven (Mt 16:19). Discerning the evidence of the new birth in children is difficult, and prudence encourages the church to wait to affirm a child's faith publicly in baptism until the elders, the parents, and the church can visibly recognize the fruitfulness produced by saving faith.

A candidate for baptism should be able to clearly explain the gospel to an Elder and articulate a credible profession of faith. Consequently, it will be the church's practice to require a candidate to write out his or her understanding of the gospel along with his or her personal testimony. This written testimony will then be used at the baptismal service. In addition to an interview with an Elder requesting baptism, the Elders will be available to help with the preparation of

the candidate's testimony and gospel explanation. The Elders are always available to discuss with any parents the specifics of their children's faith as well as the church's position on baptism.

The Elders request that parents wait until a child is approaching age 13 before asking for an interview for baptism. We recognize that waiting can be difficult for some, and conversations regarding the church's preferred practice can be challenging. However, we do wish to affirm the faith and commitment of any children as they grow in their understanding and application of the gospel to their lives. The delay of baptism for children seeks to avoid unnecessary challenges that often occur in the baptism of young children. Committed to our Baptist convictions of a regenerate church, Redemption Church at New Hope does not desire to compromise the church's purity nor affirm faith in a young child that may not exist. Inaccurate affirmations of childhood faith can create spiritual confusion or false assurance as the child matures into adulthood.

In the context of the explanations above, it will be the policy of Redemption Church at New Hope to baptize individuals no earlier than age thirteen. Exceptions to this policy would be permitted by the decision of the Elders. Those baptized will come under the care of the Elders as with other church members. Those baptized will be voted upon for membership. If approved by the members, they will be entitled to all the privileges of membership except that as required by Article 2, Section 1 of the church's constitution, the "privilege of voting is reserved to members at least 18 years of age and in good standing."

We want to encourage the covenant members of Redemption Church at New Hope to consistently evangelize their children, to bring them up in the sound teaching of the word, to prioritize their child's involvement in the local church, and nurture them in the Christian faith. When a child makes a profession of faith, we encourage parents to actively disciple their child and to consult the elders when you sense a child may be ready for baptism. The elders are ready to answer any question about this policy or counsel you in the spiritual state of your children.