



This lesson provides a brief overview of what to look for in the event you need to join another church, e.g. moving away[Ⓢ].

It would be easy to advise a family moving into a new community to just join a Baptist church. However not all churches with “Baptist” in their name are Baptist in belief and practice while in some areas churches without “Baptist” in their name are Baptist in belief and practice. How do you know where to go?

Attend. Go to worship, Sunday School or small group, new member classes, sit through a business conference, etc.

Attend for a while. Get to know the church.

Ask questions. Ask lots of questions. Here’s a sample list divided into five categories:

- ❖ The Bible
 - What is your position on the inerrancy of Scripture?
 - Do you believe Genesis 1-11 is factual or symbolic?
 - Is the preaching and teaching of the church based in the Bible, i.e. expository preaching?
 - What is the doctrinal statement of the church, and may I have a copy?

- ❖ The Gospel
 - How is a person made right with God?
 - Do you believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin?
 - Do you believe that Jesus Christ lived the perfect life?
 - Do you believe that Jesus’ death paid the penalty for our sins?
 - Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven?
 - Do you believe in a literal Hell?
 - Do you believe in the bodily return of Jesus Christ?
 - What is the meaning of baptism?
 - How does this church observe the Lord’s Supper?
 - Is the church actively involved in missions?

- ❖ Church Life
 - Have there been any splits in the church and have any pastors been asked to leave?
 - Is the church unified in vision and purpose?
 - Does the church participate in mutual accountability (“church discipline”)?
 - How would you/the church handle a case of scandal or immorality by a church member?
 - What are the greatest strengths of this church? Weaknesses?
 - What ministries does the church have? And where might I fit in?
 - What is your position on the ordination of women for positions of church leadership?

- What is your position on the charismatic movement?
- What does the church expect in regard to tithes and offerings?
- What is the church's view of abortion?
- What is the church's view of homosexuality and same sex marriage?

❖ Church Business

- Does the church follow its constitution and by-laws, and may I have a copy?
- What is your position on church debt and is the church in debt?
- Does the church have a budget and may I have a copy?
- How does the church ensure financial integrity?
- What associations or conventions does the church affiliate with?

❖ Church Pastor(s)

- What have been the high points (or the "best thing") in this church in the last five years? In the last six months?
- What are your goals for the church?
- Would you mind telling me about your devotional life?
- Who are your favorite authors?
- What kind of degrees do you have and from where?
- What is your primary role in the church?
- Does a large percentage of the church differ with your position on any of these issues?

Pray. Pray without ceasing.

Talk. Talk with your spouse and children.

Commit. Not because the church is convenient or because it's got cool programs or because the children like it or because friends go there. Commit because it is truly one of Jesus' churches and the Holy Spirit puts you there.