

Why Do We Do What We Do?

Church Things

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

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Have you ever been sitting in church and said to yourself, "Why does the church do that?" Today, I want to answer why we do what we do as a church. And it doesn't really matter whether you were raised in a church or not. I am sure you know that because some of you have no problem asking your questions, but there's others of you who don't want to ask you should already know the answer, and so you don't want to feel kind of silly asking the question.

I think that it is extremely important in our church setting to ask the question, "Why?" Many of you have heard the story of a woman who cuts both ends of her pot roast before she cooks it, but let me share it with you if you haven't. There once was this woman who was cooking a meal for her friends and decided to have a pot roast. And so she's getting it all ready. And she cuts both ends of the pot roast and gets ready to cook it. And one of our friends looks at her and says, "Why do you cut off both ends of the pot roast?"

"I've never seen that done before." So the young lady, intrigued, says, "Well, my mom taught me to cook. And whenever I cook a pot roast, I would always cut the ends of the pot roast off before she put it in the pan." And so the next time she went to visit her mother, she had a question for you. Explain to me how you cook a pot roast." And so her mom starts going through all the directions and she says, "I cut off both ends and I put it in the pan." And the daughter says, "Why do you cut off both ends of the pot roast before you put it in the pan?" And the mother says, "Well, I don't know.

That's the way my mom always did it." And so the next time this mother goes to the nursing home to see her mom, she says, "I want you to explain to me how to make a pot roast?" And so the mother goes through all the directions and says, "I put seasonings in the pan." And then I cut off both ends and I put it in the pan.

And the mom stopped her at that moment and said, "Why do you cut off both ends of the pot roast before you put it in the pan?" And the grandma got a sparkle in her eye and said, "Well, because the pot roasts that I bought were always too big to fit in the pan." It's important to ask questions, "Why?" I never want to get into the habit of just doing things because it's how we've always done it. There might be no reason to do it that way.

There's danger in only doing things in the church because of tradition. Here at Fairview and in the Protestant stream of Christianity, tradition should never trump Scripture. Scripture always comes first. And if we are doing something that's contrary to what's validated by Scripture, we shouldn't be doing it anymore. And so today, I want to talk about some topics, some of the things we do in the church to help answer these questions.

Why do we do these things? I want to talk about communion. Why do we take communion? What do other denominations do? Why do we have communion, which is going to be enough to get me in trouble? We probably should stop there, but we're going to keep going. I want to talk about church membership. What is it? Is it important to become a church member? Then I want to talk about singing in church services like we did today? What is the point of that? Is it right to sing?

Is it wrong to sing? Is there a right way to sing, a wrong way to sing? What should it look like? Then I want to talk about baptism. We have child dedication here at the church? And why don't we do baby or infant baptism? And then I want to talk about the meaning of baptism? What is the purpose? Do I need to be baptized to be saved? Is it important to be immersed, or sprinkled?

You see, these are fun conversations we get to have, right? Do I have to go all the way in the water, or can I just be through all of these things, I'm sure that half of you might be angry at me, so we'll stop there, all right? And then I maybe angry next week. But we're going to jump into these things because I want you to know why we do what we questions that maybe you've had. So let's pray and then we'll get started. Heavenly Father, I thank You for the oppo and to worship You.

At the end of the service today, there are going to be two individuals that are going to be baptized, that are going to proclamation of faith as we celebrate in our family, those that proclaim you as Lord. So may we be aware of the rea things we do so that they can continue to carry their meaning. And Father, so you can be lifted up. We ask this in Je

So let's start by talking about communion. The reason why we do communion is an obvious one. It's an easy answer it is a direct command from Scripture. It's a direct command that we are given, that we are to partake in communion the church in 1 Corinthians, chapter 11:26 says as he's giving the directions for communion, says, "Whenever you ea cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." You see, a part of our service, a part of gathering together, sho Lord's death and celebrating that and the resurrection until he returns.

And so when we take communion together, we are doing this. We are proclaiming the Lord's death. We're proclaim are anticipating His return. When we take communion, we are modeling what Jesus did with His disciples at that eve Last Supper. Jesus and His followers were Jewish. And during that last supper, they weren't taking communion as we celebrating Passover.

And Passover was a time for the Jewish people as a nation to remember when God delivered them from the Egyptia remember when that final plague that would come upon the Egyptians, that this angel of death that was going to ki family, that it would pass over the homes of the Jewish people.

So they were told to sacrifice a lamb and to place the blood of that lamb around the doorpost of their home so that recognize that's a Jewish home and it would pass over during that final plague, and their firstborn sons would not lo strange story. Why is this taking place? Scripture is very clear that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgive

So what does that mean? That means that without somebody paying the price for something that was done that wa forgiveness, there's no justice that happens there. And so in the Old Testament, we see this sacrificial system that e would offer sacrifices for the sins of the people so that we could be made righteous before a holy and a righteous ar if that blood was covering us.

It was paying our price so that we could be made right. Now, fortunately for us that are after the cross, Jesus came t you would notice that we don't have an altar up here on the stage and I'm not sacrificing lambs and goats every we because I probably wouldn't be your pastor anymore, all right? Jesus came to pay that final sacrifice for the sins of a

And so in reality, Jesus became the sacrificial Passover Lamb. You may have heard that phrase before. That is where you and I take communion, we are in symbolism, in symbolism, putting Jesus' blood on the doorpost of our lives to spared spiritual death. That's the beauty behind communion.

It's truly one of the most beautiful things that we do in the church. Now, what you need to know about Fairview Mis Protestants in general is that we don't believe there's anything special about the bread and the juice that we use. It used to remember the body and blood of Jesus. Now, without getting into all of the crazy details, this would be one between Protestants and if you have Catholic friends.

The Catholics believe in something called and I'm not going to say it because I think some of you know it. It's a big lo is it? Transubstantiation. And those of you that don't know it, don't worry about it, okay? Transubstantiation. Some is good. All right? The Catholics believe that when they take communion, the priests pray over the bread and the wi believe that the bread and the wine actually becomes the body and blood of Jesus.

It actually is physically transformed. And so it is for that reason, and some of you may not even know this, that after everybody is gone, if there is any bread or wine that is left, the priest must eat all of the rest of the bread and drink become the body and blood of Jesus, so it can't be left. This is the theological truth for the Catholics known as trans

They also call communion, and many of you have heard this word before, a sacrament. What is a sacrament? A sacrament is necessary for salvation. This is why those in the Catholic faith believe that their first communion is so important. Communion in order to be saved. Now that I have forced you to have probably a million more questions, we're just getting started. You can write me any questions later.

I'd love to have the conversations. My wife grew up Catholic, and my dad grew up Catholic. So I know many Catholic people, but we certainly have some differences. And we love to talk about them. All right? So if you have questions, let's talk about communion and why we take communion. Now let's talk about church membership. To become a church member, it's more than just saying, "Well, I come to Fairview," and so I'm a part of that church.

I'm talking about a formal commitment to a body of believers that is identifiable, that you have joined together for a purpose, why we exist. So here at Fairview, we talk about why we exist. It's to receive instruction from God's Word, to worship together, to serve together, to fellowship together, and to proclaim the good news of Jesus together. It's why we exist.

Now, the interesting thing when you look at church membership is the Bible does not contain an explicit command to join a church membership. But this is where it is biblical, and I think we can back what we do. There is certainly a biblical foundation for church membership that permeates the entire New Testament. Let me give you some examples here. First, we have the example of the church.

In the book of Acts, you see this church that is coming together, and this is the model that Jesus would leave for His church. He adopted that model. As we read in the New Testament, we see guidelines as Paul writes letters to the early churches. The church is supposed to look like and kind of church governance, how it's supposed to manage itself. And so there's the structure of a church. We see the command for church discipline in some of the Pauline letters where someone is asked to leave because of what they have done or because of what they now believe.

And finally, in Scripture, we have the exhortation to mutual edification, this idea that we are to gather together to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ in various ways. Even reading through the book of Acts, the only way that we can make sense of the commands or even under what authority it is written is to believe this foundational truth that we are to belong to a local church and that that is a necessity for us.

As you read about the elders, this idea of how the governing body of the church is supposed to work, the elders of the church, through that, are not responsible for the well-being of every individual who visits the church or attends sporadically. They are responsible to shepherd those who have submitted themselves to the care and the authority of the Bible. So let's look at scriptures about this idea of church membership.

Hebrews 13:17 says, "To have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority because they keep watch over you; they will not accept your faith if you do not obey. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you." I love this verse for many reasons, but we're just going to read it and leave it there, okay? Joining a church, submitting to leadership, submitting to authority.

1 Thessalonians 5:12, when Paul writes to the church in Thessalonica, he says, "Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord, and who admonish you, teach you, instruct you, this idea that we are to be a family." There's obviously a system in place from the very beginning of the church in Acts chapter two that we are to submit to one another. So that's why we encourage church membership.

Number three, singing. Why do we sing in church? If you didn't grow up in church, the time of singing can be very strange. If you didn't grow up in church? Raise your hand. We have a few people that are willing to raise their hands. Didn't grow up in church, I had a few people as well. There aren't many other events like church that you would go to, except maybe a concert. It bursts out in song, right? It's strange. It's weird. It actually can be terrifying.

If you're like me and you can't sing, and all of a sudden, everybody starts singing around you, you're thinking, "Where's the music? Right? Did I just walk into a musical? What's taking place? Why in the world is everybody singing? So why do we sing in church? Practical reasons first, and then we'll look at the Scripture, which these practical reasons come out of. First, when we sing in church. It brings us together as we are singing the same words together with one voice. It reminds us we're not alone.

I don't know if you've ever taken the opportunity during our time of worship and singing to maybe stop and just listen to everybody's voice as one singing and praising our Father. The second reason we sing is because it's a form of prayer.

communicating with God when we don't know what to say. I'm sure if I asked many of you, there would be times w/ to God, but you don't know what to say because of what's going on in your life.

And then you hear a song on the radio and you're like, "That's it. That's my prayer." And so that song resonates with course, we have the Book of Psalms, a collection of these songs and prayers. The third thing, singing has a unique w heart, your mind, your soul, and your strength to focus wholly on God. It's just this unique thing that allows us to us breath that we are given and to combine that with our head and with our heart.

So we look at an example in Psalm 96, verse 1, where it says, "Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the e His name. Proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among the nation. His marvelous deeds among all p and most worthy of praise. He is to be feared above all gods. Singing is a way of worshiping our Creator.

It's a way of praise, of giving him the thanks and the honor and the respect that he deserves. Singing also helps us to maybe we don't otherwise know how. In Psalm chapter 3, David says, "Lord, how many are my foes? How many rise saying of me. God will not deliver him, but then he gets to the truth.

But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the one who lifts my head high. So many people feel that there is so unlock when you're praying for God's power or for an answer of prayer. But I am here to share with you there's no s having conversation with you. He enjoys hearing from you. Many of the Psalms were sung in the early church for thi great value in singing our prayers.

When we sing, it helps us to engage again with that emotional dimension and truth while we are speaking with our a critical role in helping us to bridge the gap between the cognitive part of our brain and the effective aspects of our out. We talked about this a little bit with the idea of lamenting a few weeks ago, if you remember. When we sing th process our emotional pain and bring us, as David does here, to a point of praise.

And finally, singing helps us proclaim the truths of our faith. Many of the songs that we grew up with speak of the tr scriptures reveal that the life-giving word of Christ is ministered among people of God, not only by Bible reading and by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Singing helps us to remember the truths of God.

For whatever reason, the way that God has created our brain, some of you learned when you were in school and try if you make it a song, you can remember it. It just helps us to remember the biblical truths. This is why we sing. All r dedication, and then we'll talk about baptism. Some of you are familiar. Again, maybe grew up in a tradition where 1 Fairview, we have something called child dedication.

We're going to talk about baptism in a little bit, but we believe that baptism is meant to be the decision of the persc every time someone is baptized, but it is a confirmation and a public confession of the person being baptized of the that being the truth, then it is not possible to do an infant baptism because they're not old enough to make that pro believe that child dedication or infant baptism secures their salvation.

Again, if you were raised in the Catholic faith, they would say that that infant baptism is also a sacrament. It's neces: why it's so important for them to baptize their children. At the same time, even though we say it's not necessary for understand that Christian parents want their children to believe in Jesus. So we've created child dedication as an op chance to make their public proclamation of their desire to raise their child in a home that confirms Jesus as Lord.

And so we have child dedication. Again, there's no specific scripture to child or baby dedication as it's practiced toda founded in the truth of Scripture. There are many verses about raising or training your child in a way they should go teaching our children the ways of God all the way back in Deuteronomy as we read about the Israelite people and te the commands that God had passed down.

They were commanded to impress these laws and commands on their children, to talk about them when they sit at along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up, it's a command that they were given. There's certainly a s children the way of God. And so I'm not sure any Protestant would admit to this, but it's true. In a way, child dedicat something that has been done because of tradition, infant baptism, which we don't see in Scripture, and trying to m and call it child dedication, and it's the purpose of the parents.

All right? So if you disagree with me, we can talk later. But that's how we look at that. Now, finally, let's talk about baptism. We're going to have two baptisms today. But of course, we follow this idea of baptism again because we are commanded. It was the model of the early church. You see it all through the New Testament, certainly in the book of Acts. And in His final words to His disciples, He said, "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." So it's a command that we are given.

And so we see this happen in the early church in Acts 8:12. But when they believed Philip, as he proclaimed the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women. We see in the New Testament somebody would put their faith in Jesus. They would proclaim it as the Messiah. And their very next step was to be baptized. I want to share with you what we believe about baptism. I've done a message on this in the past.

This is just going to be the Cliff Notes version. We do not believe that you need to be baptized to be saved. We do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation. We interpret this out of Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 and 9. As Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus, he says, "It is by grace you have been saved through faith." And this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God, not by works.

We do not believe that anything is necessary for salvation except for that faith in Jesus Christ. Again, there would be no need to say, "No, you need to be baptized for salvation." We just don't see that in Scripture. Instead, we would certainly preach the message of obedience that every believer should naturally take. Every believer should naturally be baptized because that's what is in Scripture, it was the logical next step.

In Acts 2:41, we read in the early church that those who accepted his message after Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost, after they accepted his message, what was the very next thing they did? They were baptized. And that was a long baptismal service, isn't it? 3,000 people were baptized. It's the natural next step. There's nothing special about the water.

It is a symbol of what is taking place, which we will talk about. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward change. When we are immersed in the water and brought back out, it is because we believe that that is a beautiful picture that represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It is to remind us of the foundation of our faith.

Romans chapter 6 verses 3 and 4 says this, or it's supposed to. There we go. Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him. That's why we put you down into the water through baptism, that just as Christ was raised from the dead, we come back out of the water. Through the glory of the Father, we too will live in newness of life.

It is the symbolism of being buried with Christ and brought back to new life, that spiritual resurrection that takes place in our lives. But do you have to do immersion? No. It is a symbolism. It's beautiful. We enjoy it. But there have been plenty of people who have said, "Pastor, I want to be baptized, but I am petrified of being put underwater. Could you just sprinkle some water on my head?" You know That's kind of fun anyway. Let's go ahead and do that. I get to splash you and not get in trouble, right? It's just a symbolism.

It's just the symbolism behind it. Again, we don't think there's anything special about the water. It's the symbolism of an inward change. So as we end the message today, what do I want you to go home with? Don't be afraid to ask questions. If you don't know why we do something, ask. If something seems strange to you, ask. If you have a question, ask.

If something seems to contradict Scripture or the Bible that we do, ask me the question. The danger in church happens when we don't ask questions. We need to ask questions, and I honestly enjoy most of your questions. Not all, but most. I want you to be able to take the next step in your faith.

My prayer is that maybe after hearing some of the explanations behind why we do what we do, some of you would be joining us in worship through singing to our Savior, maybe you just came and you're like, "I don't want to sing." And I know that that was us corporately praising God." Maybe you would join us and you would sing. Maybe it's becoming a family. Maybe you've been attending for a long time, but you want to make that commitment to say, "No, this is my family. I want to become a member." And so you want to become a member.

Maybe it's getting baptized to proclaim your faith as two are going to do today. Maybe it's dedicating your children. It was all about. And you're like, "That's kind of weird. What is that?" And you just say, "You know what? I want to put my family. We're raising our kids to know that Jesus is Lord. That is important to us."

Maybe it's just the next time we take communion, you join in celebration as you now have this image in your mind c
take this, we are remembering Jesus being that sacrificial Passover lamb so that we can be saved by faith through gr
one can boast." I am going to pray, and then we are going to play the baptism videos, which will hopefully give me e
change to come back to do the baptisms, all right?

So we have two. I'm going to pray. We'll show the videos, and then we will close with a song after the baptisms. Let
thank you so much for today. Thank you for the opportunity to gather together, to worship you, to praise you, to be
you for the individuals today that are making that public proclamation who have put their faith in you. Again, may tl
be encouraged to do the same.

It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.