

What Southern Baptists Believe

An overview of *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*
Session 10: Article VI – The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

I. _____ the church is

II. How the church _____

III. What the church _____

IV. How the church is _____
and _____

V. How the church is _____

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3

Questions for Consideration:

1. Consider your own church experience. How has your experience been shaped by these truths? How has your own experience differed?
2. Have you discovered your spiritual gifts and are you serving in the church through those gifts?
3. Have you relationally engaged with the fellowship of other Jesus followers in this local body? If not, why not?
4. How has tonight's session informed your understanding of how the local church operates and relates to other local church bodies?

Southern Baptists are a convention of autonomous, like-minded churches voluntarily partnering for ministry and mission.