

The Church

How to Start a Baptist Church

Not many church members have the opportunity to be part of a church as it is first organized. It's a topic usually relegated to ministry students, but I think we can learn much about the structure of a church by looking at its inception.

I. Getting Started

- A. To keep things simple, let's run with the scenario of a new church plant being started.
- B. We will start with a preacher moving into a new city to start a church there.
 1. He goes there by the leading of the Holy Spirit
 2. He goes there through the authority of another local church
 - a) Many churches start technically as "missions" of another church.
 3. He researches and learns about the area to help plan
- C. He finds a place to meet
 1. Usually rented, such as a school gym or a store front, or possibly in their own home.
 2. He prepares the place (seating, etc.)
 3. He sets a date for the first services.
- D. He spreads the word
 1. Through every means possible: door-to-door visitation, advertising, mailers, signs, social media, etc.
- E. Services begin
 1. The first services are held, usually just on Sundays
 2. Ministries and services and begin as they are able to
- F. The church grows
 1. Through continuing work and God's blessing, attendance should grow.
 2. Through continuing work and God's blessing, the people should grow.
 - a) It is great if you can have grounded families with you at the beginning to help the process.
 - b) If not, new converts need to be disciplined to the point where they can handle the responsibilities of church membership.

II. Charter Service

- A. When the group of believers is ready to assume as its independence as a church, then a charter service is scheduled.
- B. A number of things will happen at this service:
 1. Those gathered enter into a business session by vote
 2. Moderator and clerk are elected for this meeting
 3. Motion is made to organize a new church
 4. If motion passes, those wishing to become charter members (by statement or by letter) are recognized
 5. Items such as church covenant, statement of faith, and initial bylaws should be discussed

6. Those charter members then sign a copy of the resolution stating their desire to form a new church and their acceptance of statement of faith, etc.
 7. Officers may be elected, including pastor, at this point by the charter members
 8. At this point those wishing to join the new church by baptism may do so.
- C. A new church now exists.