

BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES



Calvary Baptist Church is a traditional, independent, fundamental Baptist church. The name Baptist was born during times of persecution. The Baptist people were first called Anabaptists, which means rebaptizers! These people were persecuted for refusing baptism for their infants. They believed instead that the Bible teaches only believers are to be baptized (Acts 2:41, 8:36-38). Along with believers' baptism, the Baptist church has traditionally been known for the following distinctives that Calvary Baptist Church holds dear:

B – Biblical Authority for Faith and Practice (II Tim. 3:15-16). We reject the authority of tradition and church counsels. We stand on the authority of God's Word alone (Is. 8:20).

A – The Autonomy of the Local Church. The church, as a congregation, is responsible for all decisions pertaining to church officers (Acts 6:1-5), disbursement of funds (I Cor. 16:1-3), doctrinal statements (Acts 15), commission of missionaries (Acts 13), and discipline of its members (Matt. 18: 15-17; I Cor. 5). As an autonomous local Baptist congregation, Calvary Baptist Church is a self-governing congregational assembly not aligned with any denomination or obligated to its oversight.

P – The Individual Priesthood of the Believer (I Peter 2:5, 9). The New Testament declares that every born-again believer can access the very throne of God through "one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). Each professing believer is a practicing priest who represents God to man and man to God.

T – Two Biblical Ordinances. 1.) Believer's Baptism (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41; 8:36-38) by immersion, and 2.) The Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:23-26) as an ongoing remembrance of the sacrifice of the Savior for our sins.

I – Individual Soul Liberty (II Tim. 2:15). Every believer will one day give account for his or her own decisions and actions before the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10). Therefore we must respect every believer's right to read, interpret, and practice what is taught in Scripture as he or she lives and walks in the liberties enjoyed through Christ.

S – Saved Church Membership (Acts 2:41f). Every member of Calvary Baptist Church must profess Christ as personal Savior (Rom. 10:13).

T – Two Church Offices: the pastor and the deacon (I Tim. 3; Phil. 1:1). We believe that the

words *pastor*, *elder*, and *bishop* refer to the same office (I Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:17, 28-30). We refer to our elders as pastors, believing that the word *pastor* is a term of endearment and relationship (Acts 20:28-30), *elder* a term of respect and authority, and *bishop* one of administrative position (I Tim. 3:1). Deacons are to be spiritual men who strive to meet the needs of others. They serve under the oversight of the pastors and are elected by the congregation (Acts 6:1-7).

S – Separation of Church and State (Matt. 22:21). Having been persecuted by state churches in England, Switzerland, France, and the American Colonies, the Baptist people advocated the separation of the church from the state. Americans enjoy the freedom of religion because colonial American Baptists demonstrated for religious freedom in Rhode Island and Virginia and finally secured it through the 1st amendment to our constitution.

Calvary Baptist Church is pleased to be known as a traditional, historic, balanced, Bible-based, evangelistically-fervent, family-friendly Baptist church.