

Bethlehem PBC OKC

Articles of Faith

- Article 6

# What are the Articles of Faith?

Articles of Faith (AOF) are short summaries of doctrines that a church publishes and holds to as a statement of belief. Most PB Churches still have them, and most are similar (but not identical).

When the Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church of Jesus Christ in Oklahoma City was constituted in November 1900, the body of believers there adopted these articles as a public declaration of "those things which we most surely believe."

AOF do not rise to the level of Scripture, but they are central points upon which anyone who joins our assembly must believe and affirm.

Bethlehem PBC AOF: <https://pbokc.org/us/articles-of-faith/>

# Article 6

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that feet washing is an example, a duty, connected with the supper, and that true believers are the only subjects of either and should be practiced by the churches; and that baptism by immersion is the apostolic mode.

What does this Article mean?

# The Purpose(s) of the Church

The first five AOFs deal with the existence of God (AOF 1), the fact that He has spoken to us through His Word (AOF 2), and provide a general outline of the Doctrines of Grace (TULIP) (AOFs 3-5).

The sixth AOF begins to address the reason for and organization of the New Testament Church. The NT Church is an organized body of believers in Jesus Christ who have been called out from the world.

The purpose(s) of the NT Church are many. The main ones I wish to focus upon are the following:

1. To glorify God (more specifically, to glorify Jesus Christ);
2. To be a witness in and against the world;
3. To worship God in a manner pleasing to Him;
4. To teach the Word; and
5. To administer His Ordinances.

\* Note: Populating heaven, or pleasing and entertaining men, do not appear anywhere on this list.

# Gospel Ordinances

God gave the NT Church two (2) main ordinances, or rules/decrees, to follow.

Water Baptism is the first ordinance. It is how we gain entrance to the kingdom. Every believer who professes faith in Jesus Christ should submit themselves to baptism.

The Lord's Supper (Communion) is the second ordinance. It is the highest form of fellowship for baptized believers in the local church.

Both ordinances represent, and should bring to mind, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

# Water Baptism

Men like to make things complex and ornate, but the worship of Jesus Christ in His NT Church is actually meant to be very simple.

True water baptism requires the following:

- A proper candidate: one who confesses Jesus to be the Lord and the Savior of Sinners, believes himself to be a sinner saved by grace, and desires to follow Jesus in His Kingdom
- A proper mode: full immersion, and then back up out of the water
- A proper motivation: belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, sufficient understanding that baptism represents the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and understands that water baptism is not a way to wash away the person's sins or obtain eternal life. Jesus Christ puts us into heaven; submitting to water baptism (and continued faithfulness) puts us into his NT Church
- A proper administrator: an ordained Elder who has been regularly baptized, called of God and come under the hands of a presbytery – this is dealt with more fully in AOF 8

# The Lord's Supper

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (Communion) the night before he suffered and died. He shared it with His disciples after eating the Passover with them.

The Lord's Supper is the highest form of fellowship and worship in which we can engage. Only those who have submitted to the first ordinance (water baptism) can participate in this second ordinance.

The Lord's Supper involves the sharing of Unleavened Bread and Wine.

The Unleavened Bread represents the body of Jesus Christ, which was broken for us on the cross.

The Wine represents the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for us.

Both have no leaven (yeast), which represents sin in the Bible.

By His death, Jesus Christ was the perfect burnt offering, sin offering, trespass offering and peace offering to God on our behalf. We are completely saved by His Death, and we are partakers of both His Death and His Life.

As Jesus said, "this do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)



# Foot Washing

The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us about the communion. Only John (chap 13) tells us about the foot washing.

Jesus laid aside his outer garments, clothed himself with a towel, filled a basin with water, and one-by-one washed the Twelve Disciple's feet. This was highly disturbing and embarrassing for the disciples. John 13:2-11.

Jesus then said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13:14-15

We conclude that foot washing, where the saints take turns washing one another's feet, is an example that is connected to or associated with the communion. Just as we use literal unleavened bread and wine, we literally wash one another's feet. It is not part of the second ordinance, but rather, is "an example, a duty, connected with the supper."

Foot washing shows our place as merely servants in the house of God.

# Implementation

The sixth AOF further says that that “true believers are the only subjects of either [ordinance] and should be practiced by the churches.”

“True Believers” means that the Church makes a judgment upon the profession of faith being genuine in order to admit someone who wishes to join our order by water baptism, letter or relation. Only true believers can participate in either ordinance (water baptism and the Lord’s Supper).

“Should be Practiced by the Churches” recognizes that each NT Church independently stands or falls before our Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we should faithfully administer both ordinances in a church setting, together, as the body of Christ.

It is the custom of Primitive Baptists to usually have communion and feet washing twice a year. Any number of times a year is fine, so long as it retains its primacy, beauty and meaningfulness to the group. “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” (1 Corinthians 11:26)

# Apostolic Mode

Finally, the sixth AOF says that, with regard to the first ordinance, “baptism by immersion is the apostolic mode.”

“Apostolic” means the way in which Jesus was baptized, the way in which the apostles baptized, and the way in which they directed others to baptize.

“Immersion” means that the person is wholly lowered into and surrounded by the baptismal waters. “Baptized” literally means “immersed.”

Baptism in this manner demonstrates two important principles that are not shown by sprinkling or other non-apostolic modes:

1. The water represents a grave, so going all the way down into the water and coming back up affirms the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as a desire by the candidate to walk in newness of life.
2. Baptism represents the baptism that Jesus Christ gives every one of His Elect by the Holy Spirit. We are not just sprinkled on, but instead are fully encapsulated and cleansed by the Spirit.

What are some Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 6?

# Some Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 6

1 Corinthians 11:2: “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.”

Mark 14:22-24: “And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.”

John 13:14-17: “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

# Some more Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 6

1 Corinthians 11:26-29: “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”

Acts 8:36-39: “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”

# Some more Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 6

1 Peter 3:21: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”

1 Timothy 3:15: “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

1 Corinthians 10:16-17: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

John 3:23: “And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.”

# A Further Listing of Scriptures from the Group On Article 6

- Mat 20:22-23
- Mat 28:19
- Acts 9:18
- Acts 2:38-41
- Acts 8:36-38
- John 1:25-34
- 1Cor 12:13
- 1Pet 3:21
- Acts 8:12-13
- Mat 26:26-29
- Acts 22:16
- 1Cor 10:1-4
- Col 2:12
- 1Cor 11:24-26
- Luke 3:7-10
- Gen 14:18-20
- Exod 12:1-14
- Gen 40:11-13

\* And there are many, many more.



# Conclusion

The New Testament Church is the pillar and ground of the truth. The NT church is a local body of believers called out from the world by God to glorify His Son Jesus Christ, to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth, to be a witness in and against the world, to teach His Word, and to administer His Ordinances.

The first Ordinance is water baptism, to be administered by an authorized Elder upon a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Immersion is the proper mode for baptism since it represents the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The second Ordinance is the Lord's Supper, in which unleavened bread and wine are shared by the Church in remembrance of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Foot washing is an example and a duty connected with the Last Supper, and demonstrates our love for one another and willingness to be a servant in the House of God.