

Christ Church Liverpool

Doctrinal Distinctives

This document states the doctrinal position, and thereby determine the practice, of Christ Church Liverpool in respect of certain issues. It is recognised that true evangelical Christian believers may, in conscience, take a different personal view in respect of these matters. Persons may be welcomed into membership of the church who hold a different view on these matters, provided that they are prepared to respect the beliefs and practices of the church and that they will not seek to undermine them. A person may only become an Elder of the church if he wholeheartedly subscribes to these beliefs and is willing to uphold them.

The Sufficiency of the Scriptures

We believe that God speaks to men and women today through the Scriptures. When the Scriptures are read or explained, whether publicly or privately, God speaks by his Spirit. The Scriptures contain everything which it is necessary for God to say to enable men and women to come to salvation through Christ, and to grow to maturity in Christ so that they might know how to live to please him. Since the Scriptures are entirely sufficient in this regard, no additional word or revelation from God is required to enable a person to know God, or to know his will. Where anyone claims that God is speaking a word by any means other than through the Scriptures, such word shall not be accepted unless it is first tested to determine whether it is consistent with the Scriptures. In accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, the Elders of the church are the persons within the congregation who bear the responsibility for assessing whether any such word is genuinely from God.

Baptism

We believe that Baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is an outward sign which marks a person's regeneration and baptism by the Holy Spirit into membership of the Church of Jesus Christ. As such it should only be administered to a person who publicly professes faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism should, wherever possible and practicable, be administered by immersion in water, symbolising that the person baptised has been united with Christ in his death and resurrection, and is the possessor of the benefits thereof.

The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a remembrance meal at which Christian believers share bread and wine together to remind themselves of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of the new covenant of salvation which he inaugurated, and to proclaim that he will return. Jesus Christ is no more present at a celebration of the Lord's Supper than at any other gathering of the members of a local church. The Lord's Supper should be celebrated on a regular basis by the members of the church demonstrating their unity in the body of Christ.

Election and Evangelism

We believe that God is sovereign in the salvation of men and women. Those persons who exercise genuine repentance and true faith in Jesus Christ do so because they have been chosen by God. Knowledge of this truth promotes amongst believers absolute humility and assurance of salvation. However it does not follow from the truth of election that believers need not participate in mission and evangelism. The Church is commanded by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to all men everywhere, and the proclamation of the gospel is the means by which the elect are brought to salvation.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

We believe that every genuine believer is baptised by the Holy Spirit at the moment at which they are regenerated and brought to true faith in Jesus Christ. Every genuine believer is always indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but it does not follow that every believer is necessarily filled with the Spirit at all times. All believers are urged by Scripture to ensure that they are increasingly yielded to the power, influence and control of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them.

Salvation By Christ Alone

We believe that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life, and that he provides the sole means by which men and women may come to salvation. The Christian faith is the only true religion, and adherence to any other belief cannot lead to salvation. Believers in Jesus Christ are required to display tolerance in their attitude towards those of other faiths, but also to seek to bring them to a true saving knowledge of him by prayer and evangelism.

Leadership of the Local Church

We believe that a local church congregation should be led by two or more suitably gifted Elders. Whilst God created men and women in absolute equality, he also ordained that leadership in the family, within the context of marriage, and in the church, should be the functional responsibility of men. For this reason the Elders of the church are required to be men. The duly appointed Elders of the church are the under-shepherds of Christ, and they must exercise their leadership of the local church in accordance with the character of Christ's own leadership of the Universal Church. They are to love the members of the church and to give themselves in their service, working to present them to Christ as holy and blameless. In turn the members of the church are required to submit themselves to the leadership of the Elders, in so far as such leadership is exercised in accordance with the Scriptures. Members of the church with appropriate gifts and character, both men and women, may be set apart as Deacons to serve particular needs arising in the life of the church.

Every Member Ministry

We believe that every member of the church is called by God to utilise their gifts by ministering to other members of the church. The provision of teaching and pastoral care within the life of the church is not the sole responsibility of the Elders and Deacons. We believe that every believer is a priest who enjoys direct access to God and is able to minister to others. The Elders and Deacons of the church are believers who have been appointed by the members of the church to provide pastoral leadership of the congregation, in recognition that they are suitable in character and gifts to undertake such responsibilities.