



Five Core Values

Introduction

Baptist people are a Christ-centred people. Having responded to the Lord Jesus Christ in believer's baptism, we should long to live out that mission lifestyle formed around his teaching. Our Declaration of Principle says, 'that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice.'

In 1996 our Denominational Consultation called for more work to be done to help us grapple afresh with issues of living justly in our contemporary world. When the Baptist Union Council met in Bristol in November 1996 to consider the advice of the Denominational Consultation, it noted that valuable insights into issues of biblical justice had been revealed. Concern was expressed that these insights must not be lost or minimised, but should be expressed in a way that would make them a standard by which to measure all we are and do as Baptists. A special Task Group was set up to reflect on what we learnt about Christ and the call of God for us to 'act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God'. (Micah 6:8). The 'Five Core Values for a Gospel People' is the result of the work of that Task Group.

Values: A Gospel People Called to be ...



A Prophetic Community

Following Jesus in confronting evil, injustice and hypocrisy. Challenging worldly concepts of wealth, power, status and security.

As Baptists, we emphasise the importance of conscience, and of carefully listening to the voice of conscience. Having a dissenting history, we should be unafraid to live distinctively and prophetically.



An Inclusive Community

Following Jesus in transcending barriers of gender, language, race, class, age and culture. Identifying with those who are rejected, deprived and powerless.

We should reflect Jesus' love for the fallen, the excluded, the poor and hungry, the oppressed, voiceless and powerless. As Baptists we need to recover the Reformation emphasis on the priesthood of all believers.



A Sacrificial Community

Following Jesus in accepting vulnerability and the necessity of sacrifice. Seeking to reflect the generous, life-giving nature of God.

Baptist communities will resist the temptations of worldly power and triumphalism. We will recognise the importance of vulnerability and the necessity of sacrifice as the path to resurrection and new life. We will embrace the call to live with paradox and failure. We will seek to reflect the generous life-giving nature of God.



A Missionary Community

Following Jesus in demonstrating in word and action God's forgiving and healing love. Calling and enabling people to experience the love of God for themselves.

Corporately and individually we are obliged to seek to bring other people to a personal experience of God's saving love and to a faith-relationship with him and to demonstrate in our words and actions God's forgiving and healing love.



A Worshipping Community

Following Jesus in engaging in worship and prayer which inspire and undergird all we are and do. Exploring and expressing what it means to live together as the people of God, obeying his Word and following Christ in the whole of daily life.

We must recognise the primacy of worship and prayer, both individually and corporately. This will nurture our relationship with God and awaken us to the wonder of his salvation. It will open our hearts and minds to the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, making us more ready to obey his Word and honour him in all aspects of our daily lives. It will also enrich our life together as the people of God by guiding and undergirding all we are and do.

Prayer

Jesus the disturber

You were impatient with the status quo
and defiantly refused to accept the way things
were.

You dreamed dreams of justice
and created streams of righteousness.

Your way of life was shocking,
amazing, challenging.

Jesus we must walk your way

Strengthen us to be a prophetic community.

Jesus the liberator

who crossed bridges and broke down barriers;
who found words for the voiceless
and room for the outcasts;
who gave dignity and value to those who had
no reputation and no name.

The whole creation longs to sing in harmony.

Jesus we must walk your way

Teach us to be an inclusive community.

Jesus the Saviour

The risk taker who lost everything
The fool who accepted the shame of the cross
The failure who died a criminal's death.
Through your poverty we are made rich,
for you open to us and to all people
the path to resurrection and new life.

Jesus we must walk your way

Inspire us to be a sacrificial community.

Jesus the love

who embraced the world with compassion
and touched lives with healing;
who dared to offer forgiveness
and worked to bring reconciliation;
who showed the things that make for peace
with God,
with one another
and with ourselves.

Jesus we must walk your way

Call us to be a missionary community.

Jesus the Christ

You are the guide of our living

And the shaper of our horizons.

You are the meaning of our living

and the song of our hearts.

Help us to trust you, to love you and to serve
you.

Jesus we must walk your way

Renew us to be a worshipping community,

now and in the future

until your Kingdom comes.

Amen.



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