

## Frequently Asked Questions

People who join The Church of The Apostles have varied backgrounds and bring a diversity of views to our congregation. To avoid confusion, Dr. Youssef has set forth his answers to some commonly asked questions.



### The Bible

**Q: What do we believe regarding the Bible?**

**A:** We believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. The Bible is the written Word of God, without error and of infallible and divine authority in all matters of faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21)

### Practice of Baptism

**Q: What is the purpose and our practice of baptism?**

**A:** Catholics and Orthodox adherents, as well as Anglo-Catholics, believe that a baby is born again (although they do not use this term) at the time of baptism. On the other hand, many evangelical churches only baptize and merely have a service of dedication for infants.

### Infant Baptism

The Protestant Reformers rejected the idea of regeneration of baptism. But the evangelical Anglican church sees infant baptism to be more than a mere dedication of the baby. We believe the service of baptism of a child at Apostles serves three purposes:

1. It is a service of *thanksgiving* to God for the baby. God is the One who has given us His children to manage. Thus, parents must be thankful to God and willing to express that publicly.
2. It is a service of *claiming* the promises of God in Acts 16:31 - the spiritual promise of salvation saying, "For you and your children..." Thus, confidentially, we come to God in prayer, asking that He open the spiritual eyes of the babies at some point in their lives.

3. It is a service of *pledging* to God that the child will be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord. Just as a child will not have a choice in his name or the school he attends, he will not have a choice about being brought up in a godly home.

In summary, the infant baptism service is a covenant-making service.

### **Adult Baptism**

Any believer who has not been baptized is encouraged to do so. This service is not a covenant-making service as much as it is a public testimony of one's salvation through the living Lord Jesus Christ and the surrender of one's life to His Lordship.

### **Speaking in Tongues**

**Q: What do we believe about speaking in tongues?**

**A:** During the early days when The Church of The Apostles was being formed, some friends asked me if I would identify Apostles as a "charismatic" church. I doggedly refused to do so then...and am just as determined to do so today. My reasons are as follows:

To most uninformed churchgoers, "charismatic" means speaking in tongues. I have sought to dispel this misnomer in a series of sermons on the gifts of the Holy Spirit...but this misunderstanding persists. (For reference you may obtain my tape entitled, "Tongues or No Tongues" from the Living Happily Here and After Series, 1995).

Therefore, I want to delineate my convictions on the subject after twenty years of pouring over the Scriptures and studying the subject, to say nothing of the hours spent on my knees hearing God's vision for Apostles!

1. Speaking in tongues is one of the gifts of the Spirit. Some have this particular gift but not all.
2. It is a gift given more for one's own spiritual prayer life and personal edification and not for public worship. Prophecy is for public worship (see 1 Corinthians 14).
3. It is the least of all gifts according to the same Scripture, although some seek to reverse the biblical order and place it as the highest.
4. Speaking in tongues is not the only indication of the inner filling of the Holy Spirit, as some Pentecostals profess.
5. To teach that: (a) tongue speaking is a gift for super Christians; or (b) a believer is a second-class Christian for not speaking in tongues...is a form of legalism that puts people under false guilt or gives others pharisaic self-righteousness.

Speaking in tongues is a priority of some wonderful churches in this city with whom I rejoice and fellowship. But this is not a priority at Apostles.

Denying that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are operative for today, and that they were only meant for the New Testament church, is also the vision of some evangelical churches in this city with which I fellowship. But this is not what we teach, for I believe that the Holy Spirit of God has given His gifts to the church today.

Finally, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given for the edification of the body...not for the confusion of the body (1 Corinthians 14). The gifts are for building up or strengthening the body, not for personal boasting, bragging, or using in a condescending manner.

## Role of Women

### Q. What about the role of women in ministry at Apostles?

**A:** As a biblically-based church, we believe that, as it relates to salvation, the Bible teaches that “God is no respecter of persons.” This means we unequivocally believe in equality of the sexes in the sight of God and man.

The Bible does teach that men and women are to have different roles in the church just as a husband and wife have different roles in the home. The church should mirror the ideal Christian home. Therefore we recognize the husband’s role as spiritual leader, both in the home and the church.

At Apostles, we believe in the biblical teaching of male headship. More accurately, male servant headship. This manifests itself in the way women serve as hosts in welcoming visitors and members to the church while the task of waiting on tables is given to servant leaders (the men). Waiting on tables includes the collecting of offerings and serving the Lord’s Supper.

We believe in women’s ministry. Women serve in various functions at The Church of The Apostles...such as leading worship...reading the Word of God, etc. Additionally, there are women in leadership positions on the staff under the leadership of the pastor.

The Scripture is clear regarding women teaching men in the church and we follow that biblical admonition (cf Genesis 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 11:2-3; 1 Timothy 2:12).

Qualification is not the issue. Equality of opportunity is not an issue. Rather, it is our desire to be in obedience to biblical directive. Our convictions are based upon the Word of God, not secular argument.

We will be blessed by our obedience to God’s Word.

## Communion

### Q. What do we believe about Communion?

**A:** Like baptism, communion is viewed differently by different Christian traditions. For example:

1. The bread and the wine are the real body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the belief of Catholics, as well as our Orthodox adherents and some Anglo-Catholics. Yet, the Old Testament prohibits eating flesh and drinking blood. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ was speaking symbolically as He passed the real bread and the real wine.
2. The elements do not become real flesh and blood until after one consumes them. This is the position of some Anglo-Catholics and some Protestants.
3. Jesus is present in a mystical way in the elements during that time.

The Anglican Church fought all of the above teachings during the Reformation. And in the Articles of Religion, which is the foundational document of Anglicanism, Article 27 refers to transubstantiation as being “repugnant to the plain words of Scripture.”

In Luke 22:19 we find the key words related to the Lord’s institution of the Eucharist: “In remembrance”...past, present, and future. *Past*, reminding us of Christ’s redemptive work in the Cross; *present*, exhorting us to live a godly and holy life; and *future*, compelling us to look forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Titus 2:11-13).

And, following the practice of the original apostles - who gathered on the first day of the week to celebrate the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of His death on the Cross for our sins - we, too, break bread and drink wine in *remembrance* of His death for us.

The service of Communion is, on the one hand, a joyous celebration of Christ’s victory and our salvation. On the other hand, it is a solemn moment which reminds us that it was our sins that put Him on the cross.