

Introducing the Christadelphians

The Christadelphians are a small religious body who have attempted to get back to the faith and character of the early Christian church. The name "Christadelphians" comes from two Greek words and means "brothers (and sisters) in Christ". (Col 1:2; Heb 2:11)

We accept the Bible as our only guide and believe it to be the inspired word of God. Membership is extended to those with similar beliefs after being baptised (fully immersed in water).

We are located in many countries throughout the world with large groups of Christadelphians in Australia and New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Europe, North America, South, East and South-East Asia and Africa. We meet in church halls, homes, and rented spaces such as classrooms, perhaps in a similar way to the early first century Christians. (Acts 1:13-14; 2:46-47; 18:7; 19:9; 28:30)

We are a lay community generally patterned after first century Christianity. Each congregation (church or ecclesia) is independent without any paid clergy or church hierarchy. Each local church elects a small management committee to organise church activities but the committee is accountable to the local church members.

All members contribute their time and energy voluntarily in service to God. A strong common belief binds our community together (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:4-27; Gal 3:28).

The Beginnings

Many believers since the apostles have held the same faith as the Christadelphians. There have been countless independent communities around the world who have eagerly studied the Bible and accepted its simple teachings.

The Christadelphians as a specific movement trace their history to the mid-1800s. In 1830, an English physician named John Thomas sailed to America. On the voyage, the ship met some unexpected bad weather and nearly sank. For the first time, Dr Thomas faced the reality of his own mortality and was dismayed to discover that he was not sure what lay beyond death. In the midst of the storm he vowed that, should he survive, he would not rest until he had found a satisfactory answer. He did survive and kept his vow, beginning a life-long search for Biblical truth.

It soon became evident that many of the doctrines that were popularly taught and believed were inconsistent with the Bible. Dissatisfied, Dr Thomas devoted himself to a careful independent study of the Scriptures. He made no claim to any vision or personal revelation.

The work of Dr Thomas attracted the support of others in America and Britain who were convinced of the truth of his conclusions. Together they formed the Christadelphian community. Since then, Christadelphian communities have been established in many countries all over the world.

Our Way of Life

The Bible gives effective direction to our lives. We try to rely fully upon God and develop a faith which is active in prayer and good works. At the same time, however, we recognize that salvation is by grace.

With God's help, we seek to please and obey him every day, striving to imitate Christ who faithfully obeyed his Father. We therefore endeavour to be enthusiastic in work, loyal in marriage, generous in giving, dedicated in preaching and positive in our approach to living in the modern world under God's guidance.

A widespread custom amongst Christadelphians is to read the Bible every day using a reading plan which enables us to systematically read the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice each year. Of course, many read much more widely than this.

We may also attend one or more evening Bible classes each week. Every Sunday, we attend a service we call the "Memorial Meeting" or "Breaking of Bread". This is similar to the "Communion" of some churches. All members partake of bread and wine and an "exhortation" or encouragement is given based on the Bible. Attendance at this service is the focus of our religious life.

We also have Sunday Schools, Children's groups and Youth Groups; a weekend away at a Bible Study camp is always popular with Christadelphian young people.

We hold church retreats for weekends or for a week, as well as much larger gatherings such as regional, state or national conferences.

Some members travel overseas on mission work; others care for the elderly in our nursing homes and hostels. Members support community groups which assist those less fortunate in places such as Africa, eastern Europe and the Pacific Islands. Many of our members also volunteer in the wider local community. There are a small number of private schools run by our community.

Members donate to the activities of the church as they see fit and can afford, without set requirements such as tithes. No members are paid for their church work since all are lay preachers and volunteers.

The Christadelphians are a close-knit community working in God's service in whatever ways we can until Jesus Christ returns to set up his Father's kingdom.

Our Beliefs

The Bible

We believe that the Bible is God's only revealed message to mankind, given to bring responsive individuals to the obedience of faith. The Bible is our only authority and we teach that it should be read prayerfully and with care at every opportunity. (Rom 16:26; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21)

God

There is only one eternal, immortal God. Jesus Christ is his only begotten son and the Holy Spirit is his power. (1 Tim 1:17; 2:5; Luke 1:35; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 8:6; Isa 45:5-7)

Jesus

In his love, God sent his son, the man Jesus into the world to save men from their sins. Those who believe in him will not perish, but have everlasting life. (Luke 1:35; Matt 1:20-21; 3:17; John 3:16)

Man

Man is mortal and a sinner before God. His whole being is prone to sin and the punishment for sin is death, the end of all life. (Job 4:17; Rom 3:23; Jer 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; James 1:13-15; Rom 6:23; Eccles 9:5-10; Psa 146:4)

Hope

The only hope of life after death is the resurrection of the body and everlasting life in God's kingdom on earth. (Psa 49:12-20; 1 Cor 15:12-50; Rom 8:22-39; Acts 24:15; John 11:25-26; Rev 5:10; 20)

Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

Jesus was sinless. He died to show God's righteousness and to redeem those who receive this sacrifice by faith. God raised him from the dead, gave him immortality, granted him all authority in heaven and on earth, and set him as the mediator between God and men. (Eph 1:19-23; 1Tim 2:5-6; Heb 4:14-16; Rom 3:21-26)

Return of Jesus

Jesus will return to the earth soon. Then he will raise many of the dead, judge them with the living, and give his faithful followers everlasting life in the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:11; Rev 22:12; Luke 21:20-32; John 5:28-29; Dan 12:2; 2 Tim 4:1; Matt 25:31-34)

Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God will be established on earth. Jesus will be king in Jerusalem, his dominion worldwide and his government will bring eternal righteousness and peace. (Dan 2:44; 7:27; Acts 3:21; Jer 3:17; Isa 2:2-4; Psa 72; Dan 7:14; Isa 9:6-9; 11:1-9; 61:1-11)

The Promises

The Gospel is inseparable from the promises, which God made to Abraham and David in Old Testament times. These promises find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. (Gen 13:14-17; 22:15-18; 2 Sam 7:12-16; Luke 1:31-33; Gal 3:6-9, 16, 26-29)

The Way of Salvation

The way to enter the kingdom of God is by faith. This involves belief in the Bible and obedience to its requirements that men and women confess their sins, repent, be baptized and follow Jesus faithfully. (Heb 11:6; 1Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15; Acts 2:37-38; 4:12; Mark 16:16; John 3:3-5; Matt 16:24-27)

The Life in Christ

As followers of Jesus Christ we endeavour to emulate him as much as we can. We believe in treating other people with respect and dignity. Where possible our community lives within the world community but stands aside from it in matters of politics, obeys the laws of the country in which we live and worships simply and freely.

We prefer to let the Bible speak for itself and determine the ways in which we should serve our God as believers who are separate from the world around us. We are citizens of the kingdom of God. (1 Pet 2:13-17; Rom.12:9-21; Rom.13:1-7; Eph.4:29-32; Acts 5:29)

Principles for Living as a Christian

"If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15)

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart. (Matt.22:37)
2. Love your neighbour as yourself. (Matt.22:39)

Jesus Our Example

3. Take Christ for an example and follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21; Luke 14:27)
4. Be imitators of God. Let Christ's teachings live in you. Be a noteworthy example. (Eph.3:17; Col.3:16; Matt.5:16; Phil.2:16)

Discipleship

5. Continue to show your faith and confidence in God. (1 Cor.16:13; 1 Tim.6:12; Heb.11:6; 2 Tim.1:13; 2:22)
6. Be holy in all that you do. Be eager and tireless in your efforts to do good. (1 Peter 1:1 5-16; Eph.6:5-8; Titus 2:14; Gal.6:9)
7. Whatever you do, do it with all your heart for the Lord. (Col.3:23)
8. Follow after whatsoever things are true, noble, right, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. (Phil.4:8)
9. Be self-controlled, compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, meek, merciful, forgiving, sober, grave, sincere, and temperate. (Phil.4.5; Col.3:12-14; 2 Tim.2:24; Titus 2:2; Eph.4:32; 1 Pet.1:13; 5:8)

10. Be watchful, vigilant, courageous, joyful, courteous, blameless, harmless and in a continual state of readiness for his coming. (1 Cor.16:13; Phil.2:5; 4:4; 1 Thess.5:6-10)

11. Choose to think about spiritual things, not material things and, by this process, you will become a new person. (Rom.12:2; Col.3:2; 1 John 2:15)

12. Whatever you do, consider the effect of your action on the honour of God's Name among men. Do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor.10:31; 3:17)

13. Be joyful in hope and patient in times of trouble. (Rom. 12:12)

14. Love your enemies; do good to them who hate you. Be forgiving. (Matt. 5:44; Rom.12:17; Col.3:3; Matt.6:14-15; 18:21-35)

15. Carry each other's burdens and thus fulfil the law of Christ. Love one another. Serve one another in love. Live a life of love as Christ loved us. (Gal. 6:2; Phil. 2:4; John 13:34-35; Eph. 5:2)

16. Let all things be done in love, and in mutual submission. (1 Cor.16:14; 1 Pet.5:5)

Prayer and Confession

17. Pray for the forgiveness of your sins. (Matt.6:12-14; 1 John 1:9)

18. Don't be weighed down with the anxieties of life. (Matt.6:31-4; Luke 21:34-36)

19. Avoid bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, dissensions, factions, hypocrisy, envy, greed, selfish ambition, sexual immorality, idolatry, witchcraft, teachers of error. (Eph.4:31; 5:3; 1 Peter 2:1; Gal.5:19-21; 2 Peter 2:1)

20. In everything give thanks to God and acknowledge him in all things. (Eph.5:20; Prov.3:6)

21. Pray for those who persecute you and harass you. (Matt.5:44)

22. Confess your faults one to another. (James 5:16)

23. Pray always; pray briefly and simply; pray in private. (Luke 18:1; Matt.6:6-8)

24. Pray for guidance to avoid temptation. (Matt.6:13: 26:41)

Obedience and Conformity

25. Obey authorities except where they conflict with God's laws. (1 Peter 2:13; Acts 5:29)

26. Show integrity, sincerity and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those opposed have nothing bad to say about us. (Titus 2:7-8)

27. Refuse ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives. (Titus 2:12)

Giving, Sharing and Receiving

28. Call him to remembrance daily, and frequently in the breaking of bread as he has appointed. (Matt.26:26-27; 1 Cor.11:24-26; Acts 2:42; 20:27; 1 Cor.16:2)

29. In everything, do for others what you would have them do for you. (Matt.7:12)

30. Give to everyone that asks you, and if anyone takes something of yours, don't demand it back. (Luke 6:29-30)

31. Be humble, accept humble duties, befriend humble people. (Matt. 23:10-12; Rom. 12:16)

32. Be content with what you have. Always share with others, and help those in need. (1 Tim. 6:8; Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:16; Jas.1:27)

33. When you give something to a needy person, do it quietly and in private. (Matt. 6:1-4)

34. Give to everyone all that you owe them, be it money, respect or honour. (Rom.13:7-8)

35. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. (Rom.12:15)

Conflict Resolution

36. Live in peace with everyone. Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. (Hebrews 12:14; Jas.1:19)

37. Settle any disputes quickly; accept being wronged or cheated. (Matt.5:25; 1 Cor.6.7)

38. Don't repay evil for evil or insult with insult. Instead, respond with a blessing. (Matt.5: 39-40; 1 Peter 3:9; Rom.12:17, 21)

39. If your brother or sister sins against you, go to them in private and try gently to resolve the matter. (Matt.18:15; Gal.6:1)

40. Do not judge or you, too, will be judged in the same way you judge. (Matt.7:1-2)

Speech

41. Talk about the gospel and your beliefs at every opportunity. (Mark 16:15; 2 Tim.4:2; Rom.10:8-10)
42. Let your communication be always full of grace, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (Col.4:6)
43. Bless them that curse you; let no cursing come out of your mouth. (Matt.5:44; Rom.1 2:14)
44. Avoid lying; speak truthfully to your neighbour. (Col.3:9; Eph.4:25)
45. Don't slander others and don't give others a reason to slander you. (1 Tim.5:14; Titus 3:2)
46. Swear not at all; let your speech be "yes" and "no". (Matt.5:34)

Family Relationships

47. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ; wives, love your husbands; husbands, love your wives. (Eph.5:21-6:4; Col.3:18-21; Titus 2:4)
48. Children, obey your parents. Fathers, encourage your children and be careful not to frustrate them. (Eph.6:4; Col.3:21)
49. Servants, submit yourselves with all respect; masters treat your servants fairly. (1 Pet.2:18; Eph.6:5-7)
50. Brethren, live in harmony with each other. (Heb.13:1; Gal.6:2)

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