

# Joining the TBC Family

**At Thornbury Baptist Church** we like to use the image of a *family* to describe our life as a church. It's an image drawn from the Bible (1 Timothy 3:15) and it places relationships at the heart of our vision.



Our relationships with God, with one another and with our community are what define us as a church.

When people first connect with us it may be through one of our community activities or through attending a Sunday meeting. Often that first visit, leads to people coming back for more (we hope so anyway!).

At some point, people who started out as visitors feel like they actually *belong* to the family.

When that point is reached it is good to know and acknowledge that the relationship has deepened, and mark the fact that the 'welcome visitor' has become a 'family member' at TBC.

What does it mean to be a family member?

Well firstly, that sense of *belonging* is important. Family members feel that TBC is their spiritual home. Where they are fed and cared for, where they grow and serve.

To fill that out a little, we hold four things to be at the core of belonging to the TBC family.

They are:

**Faith:** The Christian Church consists of people who love and follow Jesus, as Saviour and Lord. Normally that commitment to Jesus will have been expressed through believers' baptism, by immersion. (*Family membership is not closed to people who have been Christened and confirmed in other church traditions - see the information leaflet on Baptism on our website, or speak to one of the TBC leaders if this is an issue for you*).

**Involvement:** As in any family, members get involved in family life. It may take time to work out where you make your contributions- but there will be opportunities for you to serve in TBC and to help make our vision become a reality.

Most family members also contribute financially through their Christian giving to the life and vision of the church.

**Relationships.** Joining the TBC family gives you a whole new set of 'brothers and sisters'. It'll take a while to get to know them, but as a family member you'll find ways to support, encourage and serve your new family.

A great way to get to know people is to join one of our small groups . If that interests you contact the TBC office in the first instance.



**Leadership.** In a Baptist Church the main decision-making body is the whole church! Major decisions are discussed, prayed over and made by all members of the family at a meeting called the Family Forum. These happen about two or three times a year and family members are encouraged to participate in these opportunities to shape the direction of our life together.

To outwork the Family Forum's decisions, TBC has a lot of people who carry day-to-day responsibility for various aspects of our church's life. Overseeing everything is a team of elders. As a family member it is great to pray for those who have this responsibility, to honour them and support them.

If you feel that you are ready to join the TBC family contact one of the elders and they'll arrange to have a chat with you. All their details are on the website.

It's lovely to welcome new family members. It's your choice how that happens: we could welcome you publicly on a Sunday morning, or just quietly add you to the members' list and welcome you by name at the next Family Forum meeting.