

Practical Christian Ministries Handbook

2025-2026

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Isaiah 6:8

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James 1:27

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A greeting from the Director of Practical Christian Ministry

Dear Calvary Student,

Welcome to the Practical Christian Ministry (PCM) program. The experiences that you have as part of PCM will be a critical part of your time here at Calvary University. Classes offered at CU teach essential skills for careers and faith built on the Word of God and the wisdom of our experienced faculty. Practical Christian Ministry provides opportunities for you to take the knowledge from these classes and immediately apply it in local churches and areas of need in our community fulfilling the great commission and extending the love of Jesus Christ to a world that so desperately in need.

To ensure that you get the most out of your PCM experience and to encourage integrity and accountability, there are several assignments due throughout the year in addition to church and ministry expectations. It is your responsibility to be aware of due dates, schedule meetings, take tests and complete other requirements even though there is no classroom time scheduled for this course. I expect you to take these responsibilities seriously and to ask questions and seek assistance at the first sign of confusion or struggle so that I can get you the help that you need as quickly as possible.

I know that as a college student, your plate is very full. However, I also know that I and the other amazing staff and faculty at Calvary are dedicated to doing everything within our power to ensure your success. It is our hope that what you experience here will not only build your knowledge, strengthen your faith, and form your character, but will also establish Godly patterns of service in you that you will take beyond graduation.

I am praying for each of you and trusting that God will work in you for your blessing and His glory through Practical Christian Ministry this year.

Blessings,

Rhonda Coulter

Practical Christian Ministry Requirements Summary

1. Schedule your PCM Check-in:

The PCM Check-in Meeting is a 15 to 30-minute, one-on-one meeting with the Director of Practical Christian Ministry. During the meeting, the DPCM discusses requirements and answers any questions students may have, offering guidance, resources, counsel and prayer as needed.

*See FAQs to find out **if and when** you need to schedule a PCM Check-in Meeting.*

2. Consistently Attend a Local Church:

Attend a local church, in person, at least two hours per week. If you are unable to consistently attend two services for some reason, please discuss this with the Director of Practical Christian Ministries.

If you are unsure how to choose a church, curious why we value church attendance, or unsure if certain church activities "count"? Check out the FAQs and Biblical References.

3. Get involved in Ministry/Service:

Participate in church ministry or qualifying service opportunities for a minimum of sixteen hours per semester. If you have difficulty finding ministry opportunities, or fulfilling your hours, please contact the Director of Practical Christian Ministries as soon as possible.

There must be a person (pastor, teacher, coach, ministry director, etc.) who can verify your participation as well as knowledgeably fill out the required **Ministry Supervisor Form** each semester.

Are you wondering what "counts" as ministry or service, or who "counts" as a Ministry Supervisor? Check out the FAQs.

4. Complete Assignments in Canvas:

In order to create accountability, to evaluate program effectiveness, and to meet accreditation requirements, there are several PCM assignments to be turned in throughout the year.

The PCM assignments are:

- PCM quiz (each semester)
- PCM Check-in (once each year for most students)
- Church Attendance Form (each semester)
- Ministry/Service Journal (each quarter)
- Ministry Supervisor Form (each semester)
- Reflection Survey (each semester)

Specific assignment descriptions, rubrics and due dates are available in Canvas.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we have a Practical Christian Ministry program?

Reason #1: Accreditation requirements

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criteria
 - Criterion 1.C.: The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
 - Criterion 3.C.: The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.
 - Criterion 3.E.: The institution improves the quality of its educational programs based on its assessment of student learning.
- Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) Criteria
 - Standard 9: The institution provides services that contribute to the holistic development, care, and success of students and are appropriate to the level of education and instructional modality.
 - 9.6. Academic and/or co-curricular ministry preparation of all students to be effective witnesses, servants, and workers in the church and the world.

Reason #2: Serving in ministry follows the example that we see in scripture

Jesus not only taught his disciples, but He sent them out to put into practice what they had been taught. Jesus was discipling and preparing them for their future ministry when He would no longer be physically with them. Our prayer is that God will use local churches, pastors, lay leaders, and ministries, as well as Calvary's faculty and staff, to give you the best discipleship experience possible to prepare you as fulling invested followers of Christ beyond graduation.

See Biblical References.

Reason #3: We believe in the importance of the local church in the life of a believer

The local church is not a man-made idea. It is God-ordained for worship, fellowship, and service and scripture reminds us not to forsake gathering together. Our prayer is that you will develop a beautiful relationship with a great family of believers here in our area.

See Biblical References.

What counts as a Christian Ministry?

We give you some structure and accountability, however, you have freedom to choose prayerfully and wisely what you discern God would have you do for ministry or service. As a rule of thumb, acceptable opportunities are roles within church or community organizations that meet the spiritual, physical or psychological needs of people through Biblically based programs and services.

If you are not sure whether an activity qualifies, please reach out to the PCM Director to discuss it as soon as possible.

What activities count toward my ministry time?

- Preparation (spiritual and physical)
- time spent actively serving
- clean up or follow up activities

Are there any special circumstances or exceptions for ministry hours?

- Internships required by a student's major may be used for a Christian Ministry.
- A summer ministry of at least 16 hours may count as a ministry for the following semester.
- If you are ministering in a church, your time serving in youth group, worship team, AWANA, etc. counts toward both your church attendance and service hours.
- On campus activities, such as on-campus jobs, res-life team, praise band, small group leader, athletics, clubs, etc. do not fulfill Practical Christian Ministries requirements.
- Travel time does not count toward your ministry time total.
- Undergraduate students, your first semester's Christian Ministry is "Church Search." This counts as your ministry credit. If you are unable to find a church home during your first semester, you may continue to look in subsequent semesters. You will still need to serve in a ministry for a minimum of 16 hours each semester following this "Church Search" semester whether or not you have found a local church home.

Who can fill out my Ministry Supervisor form?

Your Ministry Supervisor Form is a critical part of our ability to meet accreditation requirements and measure the effectiveness of the PCM program. For accuracy and accountability, we need this form to be filled out by someone in leadership within an organization where you are serving who has had the opportunity to *observe you in ministry at least twice* throughout the semester. This also means that, although we encourage you to have diverse ministry experiences, you must serve in the same location under the same supervisor at least twice.

Do I need to schedule a PCM Check-in meeting? And if so, when?

- All freshman and first year Calvary students must schedule a PCM Check-In within the first quarter of their first semester. If you are unable to do this for some reason, please contact the PCM Director or secretary to make alternative arrangements.
- Students who have had four consecutive, successful semesters of PCM may consider this meeting *optional*. However, if you need help with any PCM requirements, please call, email or set up an appointment. (You are still required to complete ALL OTHER PCM requirements.)
- All non-freshman and returning students who have not yet completed four successful semesters of PCM need to schedule a PCM Check-In during 2nd or 3rd session every year until they meet the exemption requirements.
- If you are still not sure what category you are in, contact the PCM Secretary for clarification.

Who must participate in Practical Christian Ministry?

The short answer to this question is all undergraduate and graduate students. However, the number of PCM credits varies based on the program.

Greater details are offered in *Expectations Breakdown by Program*.

What activities count toward my church attendance requirement?

- Sunday Worship
- Sunday School
- Evening services
- Small group/ life group meetings
- Prayer meetings
- Haystack*

How will I be graded?

This is a pass/fail course. Passing is defined as 65% for undergraduate students and 100% for graduate students. Late work is not accepted. Points will be given by turning work in on time and complete. School policies on plagiarism and the use of AI apply to all PCM assignments.

What happens if I don't fulfill my PCM requirements?

When a student fails a semester of Practical Christian Ministries they are enrolled in Non-Academic Monitoring the following semester. *Students on monitoring must complete these requirements by the beginning of the **fourth** week of the following semester:*

- Write a one-page paper which acknowledges that s/he has been placed on Non-Academic Monitoring, affirming that this will not happen again, and detailing a plan for change within the semester. This paper is to be submitted to the Practical Christian Ministries office by the beginning of the **third** week of the following semester and must be approved by the Director.
- Meet with the Director to go over the plan by the beginning of the **fourth** week.
- Complete two Practical Christian Ministries sections per semester until s/he has made up all missed semesters.
- By the end of that semester, the student must have enacted the plan that was laid out in the aforementioned paper to be removed from Monitoring. If the student remains on Non-Academic Monitoring for three semesters, the student will be recommended for non-academic dismissal from Calvary.
- *Students not complying with Practical Christian Ministries requirements will not be cleared by the Practical Christian Ministries Committee for graduation.*

*Note: this is the only on-campus activity that counts toward this requirement

Biblical References

What the Bible says about various aspects of PCM

Below is a list of key verses that support the philosophies behind the Practical Christian Ministry program, but this is not an exhaustive list. Personal Bible study partnered with prayer is the best way to fully understand the depth of God's passion for these subjects.

Church attendance:

"Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near". Hebrews 10:25

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them".
Matthew 18:20

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers". Acts 2:42

Accountability:

"So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God" Romans 14:12

"For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falls, and has not another to help him up". Ecclesiastes 4:10

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." Hebrews 10:24

Our Call to Ministry:

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:19-20

"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'" Mark 16:15

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'
And I said, 'Here am I. Send me.'" Isaiah 6:8

Ministry Through Service:

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” James 1:27

“If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.” Isaiah 58:10

“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”
Matthew 25:44-45

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 6:28

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

Expectations Breakdown by Program

CM-099 (Undergraduate Students)

- All Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Students (Certificate, A.A., B.S.)—Required every semester they are registered for any class.
- Students pursuing 5-year Bachelor's to Masters—Until students are taking more graduate-level classes than undergraduate, they are considered undergraduates and must fulfill undergraduate PCM requirements.

CM-559SEM and CM-599GRAD (Graduate Students)

- *CM-559SEM*—Seminary Students in the following programs:
 - Master of Divinity
 - Master of Arts in Bible and Theology
 - 1 PCM credit, preferably during first semester of degree.
 - Students Pursuing 5-year Bachelor's to M.Div.
 - 1 PCM credit for their graduate program, preferably during their first semester of graduate status.
 - Once students are taking more graduate-level classes than undergraduate, they are considered graduate students and must fulfill graduate PCM requirements.
- *CM-559GRAD*—Graduate and Seminary Students in the following programs:
 - Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling
 - 1 PCM credit during internship with a paragraph submitted by their university supervisor.
 - Master of Science in Education, Elementary Education emphasis (leading to state certification)
 - 1 PCM credit during internship with a paragraph submitted by their university supervisor.
 - Master of Science in Organization Development
 - 1 PCM credit during internship with a paragraph submitted by their university supervisor.
 - Students Pursuing 5-year Bachelor to Masters
 - 1 PCM credit during internship with a paragraph submitted by their university supervisor.
 - Once students are taking more graduate-level classes than undergraduate, they are considered graduate students and must fulfill graduate PCM requirements.

***Guidelines for Christian Ministry Credit for Graduate Students Enrolled in CM-599GRAD (Counseling, Business, and Education) programs:**

Your only semester of CM-599 is during your practicum. Your ministry is that internship. In lieu of completing a debrief, your department supervisor will send the Director of Practical Christian Ministries a letter of confirmation of ministry in your internship.

Ph.D. students and those pursuing a Master of Science in Education that does not lead to state certification are not required to enroll.

Early College students and non-degree seeking students are not required to enroll.

Tips and Advice for PCM Success

Start with Prayer

There is nothing in life that is not improved when approached first through prayer. Time spent in prayer prior to visiting a church or contacting a community organization to discuss ministry/service opportunities prepares your heart for the things that God has planned for you.

Make a plan

Create your PCM plan within the first 2 weeks of each semester, if not before. Consider team, work and school schedules. Lay out a calendar for all 16 weeks of the semester and start adding due dates for major projects and assignments, travel days, work commitments and practice times. Then, you will be able to see days of the week and blocks of time when you have the best availability for service and ministry. Not sure how to do this? Contact the PCM Director and set up a strategic planning meeting.

Attend the Ministry Fair

Each fall Calvary hosts a ministry fair where local churches, camps, and community organizations come to share their vision and get to know students. This is an excellent time to gather information and make connections. The Ministry Fair is also required as a chapel credit for every student.

Get ministry and supervisor contact information right away

Remember to ask ministry supervisors, in advance, if they would be willing to fill out your Ministry Supervisor Form for you. You will also need to have an email address for them so that you can contact them in the future with the Ministry Supervisor Form and contact information for the ministry where you serve to include in your Ministry Journal.

Choose a healthy attitude

When Christ measures our service in ministry, our abilities only play a small part. To be given greater responsibilities by God in the future, we need to learn to be faithful in the little things He asks of us now. Please look at the requirement of Practical Christian Ministries as an opportunity to serve the LORD and grow in Him rather than just an obligation to fulfill.

Demonstrate a Commitment to Faithfulness and Excellence

- Attend worship services and ministry consistently
- Come to your ministry fully prepared.
- Follow the policies and procedures of the organization and your ministry leaders.
- Exhibit an enthusiastic, respectful, and teachable attitude.
- Refrain from criticism.
- Notify your ministry leaders when you will be absent

Practical Christian Ministry Contact Information

The Practical Christian Ministry Department exists to help students thrive in the program. Reach out to the director or secretary if you have questions or need guidance during your time in PCM. It is their privilege to serve you.

Rhonda Coulter

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