

Practical Christian Ministries Handbook

2026-2027

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

Isaiah 6:8

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

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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 is 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. 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, the amazing staff and faculty at Calvary are dedicated to doing everything within their 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

How to Succeed in Practical Christian Ministry ***For First-Time Calvary Students***

1. Read the PCM Handbook and Take the quiz.

The PCM Handbook is going to give you a big picture view of what PCM will look like for you over the coming years. Once you have read it, take the short quiz in Canvas.

2. Schedule your PCM Check-in:

A PCM Check-in is a 15 to 30-minute, meeting with the Director of Practical Christian Ministry (Rhonda Coulter). During the meeting, you will discuss PCM requirements and answer any questions you may have. This meeting may also be shared with another student.

You will find a link to Rhonda's calendar in the assignment instructions in Canvas.

3. Find a local church:

During your first semester as a Calvary student your main PCM requirement is to find a church where you can grow spiritually and get involved. Once you have found a good fit, you will fill out a Church Attendance Form in Canvas.

At Calvary, two hours of weekly church attendance is required.

4. Complete Assignments on time:

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

The PCM assignments and how they are weighted:

- PCM quiz (each semester) 15%
- PCM Check-in (once each year for most students) 35%
- Church Attendance Form (each semester) 50%

More details are included in subsequent sections of this handbook and in the instructions for each assignment within Canvas.

How to Succeed in Practical Christian Ministry For Returning Undergraduate Students

1. Schedule your PCM Check-in:

A PCM Check-in is a 15 to 30-minute, meeting with the Director of Practical Christian Ministry (Rhonda Coulter). During the meeting, you will discuss PCM requirements and answer any questions students may have. This meeting may also be shared with another student or completed in an unscheduled conversation with Rhonda if the conversation is documented.

2. Consistently Attend a Local Church:

Attend a local church, in person, at least two hours per week.

3. Get involved in Ministry/Service:

Participate in church ministry or qualifying service opportunities for a minimum of sixteen (16) hours per semester. Fill out and turn in your Ministry/Service journal **twice** during the semester.

4. Ask a person in leadership where you serve to be your Ministry Supervisor

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

5. Complete Assignments on time:

In order to create accountability, to evaluate program effectiveness, and to meet accreditation requirements, there are several PCM assignments due throughout the year. The PCM assignments and how they are weighted are:

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| • PCM quiz (each semester) | 10% |
| • PCM Check-in (once each year for most students) | 10% |
| • Church Attendance Form (each semester) | 20% |
| • Ministry/Service Journal (each quarter) | 40% |
| • Ministry Supervisor Form (each semester) | 15% |
| • Personal Reflection Survey (each semester) | 5% |

More details are included in subsequent sections of this handbook and in the instructions for each assignment within Canvas.

How to Succeed in Practical Christian Ministry For Graduate Students

See “Expectations Breakdown by Program”

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?

As a rule of thumb, acceptable opportunities are roles within church or Christ-centered 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. See also “PCM Exceptions Form” below if you have a non-traditional ministry opportunity or idea.

What activities count toward my ministry time?

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

Who qualifies as a Ministry Supervisor?

Your Ministry Supervisor must be 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. Your Ministry Supervisor, and the feedback we get from them, are critical parts of our ability to meet accreditation requirements and measure the effectiveness of the PCM program. This person must be able to answer questions regarding your work ethic, spiritual maturity, ability to handle challenges, and your character.

This person may NOT be a parent or peer.

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

- All first-time Calvary students must schedule a PCM Check-In within their first semester.
- THIS FOR MOST STUDENTS!
All returning undergraduate students need to schedule a PCM Check-In according to the first letter of their last name:
 - A-M, first semester, N-Z, second semester.

NOTE: Students must contact the PCM Director at least 24 hours prior to a meeting if they are unable to attend. Failure to do so will result in a 10% grade reduction. Two missed meetings will result in a “0” for this assignment.

What activities count toward my church attendance requirement?

- Sunday Worship
- Sunday School
- Evening services
- Small group/ life group meetings
- Prayer meetings
- Haystack* (an on-campus Bible Study)

Online services do not count.

How will I be graded?

This is a pass/fail course. Passing is defined as 60% for undergraduate students and 100% for graduate students. Points will be lost for late work.

School policies on plagiarism and the use of AI apply to all PCM assignments.

If I work in ministry and have more service hours than are required, do I have to record them all?

No. You may choose to record all or many of your hours for your own records, but you only need to show examples of 16 hours of service in the Ministry/Service Journal to meet PCM requirements.

What if I have a special circumstance?

If you believe that you have a special circumstance that should be an exception to one of the PCM policies, you may fill out a “PCM Exceptions Form” available in the PCM office. The PCM Committee will prayerfully consider your request and, if approved, the exception will be considered valid for the remainder of that school year.

PCM Exception Forms must be completed and validated before the effected assignment is due for the exception to apply and credit given.

You must submit, even previously approved requests, again each school year.

Is there anything else I should know?

- Internships required by a student’s major qualify as a Christian Ministry.
- A summer ministry may count as a ministry for the fall semester.
- Service at a home church or origination over Christmas Break may count toward hours for the Spring semester.
- If you are ministering in a church, your ministry time counts toward both your church attendance and service hours.
- On-campus activities, such as jobs, res-life team, praise band, small group leader, athletics, clubs, etc. do not fulfill Practical Christian Ministries requirements. But, Haystack (an on-campus, student-led Bible study/worship time) does count toward church attendance hours.
- Travel time does not count toward your ministry time total, but preparation, rehearsals or clean-up does. That adds up!

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.*

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 PCM Check-in, 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.

A Few Final Thoughts

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.

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 or stop by the office if you have questions or need assistance.

Rhonda's office hours are posted on her door and a link to her calendar is available in the "PCM Check-in" assignment in Canvas. Although her office hours vary from week to week, she is on campus most Tuesdays and Wednesdays and responds promptly to emails.

Rhonda Coulter

Director of Practical Christian Ministry

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