

Dear Prospective Church Member,

It is very encouraging to see your interest in becoming a member of Calvary Chapel. Over the years, we have had a more laid back approach to Church membership. The Elders of Calvary Chapel recently modified the By Laws of our Church and have strengthened the sections dealing with Church membership. We believe that strengthening Church membership will strengthen our Church and increase the level of connectedness in the Body of Christ here.

Membership is more than just having your name on a list at the Church office. It allows for mutual accountability. The individual members have the opportunity to hold the Church leaders accountable and participate in the development of ministries at Calvary. In addition, it gives the Church leaders the opportunity to develop the ministries given those who have committed to this local fellowship. As you will see in the attached documentation, membership provides some rights and responsibilities that must be weighed carefully to determine God's will for you and your family.

Please review the following documents as you determine whether or not you want to be a member. They include:

1. Policy Statement for Church Membership at Calvary Chapel of Syracuse.
2. Statement of Faith and Statement of Values: each of these statements serves a different purpose. The Statement of Faith reflects our connection to anyone who calls themselves a Christian. The Statement of Values reflects our individual ministry as Calvary Chapel of Syracuse.
3. Church Membership Application

After reviewing the documents, feel free to contact the Church office to determine when the next Calvary Membership Meeting will occur or to schedule an individual meeting with one of the pastors to review the material and application. Looking forward to discussing this with you!

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Ken Lang

# **Membership at Calvary Chapel of Syracuse**

## **Introduction:**

Calvary Chapel of Syracuse has a membership where individuals officially connect themselves to the local body of believers. Webster's defines a member as "one of the individuals composing a group" and "as a person who is baptized or enrolled in a church"<sup>1</sup>. Both these are true in a sense for those who become members of Calvary Chapel of Syracuse.

Anyone who possesses personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ becomes a member of the universal Body of Christ. Paul said, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved" (Romans 10:9). This person's faith in Christ transfers that person from one group to another, from the world into the Church at large. Paul told the Corinthians, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

In addition, there is an opportunity for an individual to commit to a local congregation, to be enrolled in the Church. There are some abstract elements to being a part of the Universal Church. But, there is also some concrete and specific ways Church membership can be expressed in our daily lives. Being a member of a Church brings you into a more connected relationship where the Church leadership (the Elders) can help you grow as a Christian with mutual accountability. The leadership can hold you accountable as a member and you as a member can hold the leadership accountable as well.

## **Requirements**

Normally, an individual would need to express a desire to the Pastors or one of the Elders to become a member. The Leadership would evaluate the request against the criteria contained in our bylaws. The criteria are:

1. Be a competent person who is at least eighteen years of age. One must be a legal adult to become a member. In addition, a person must be competent. That is, having the capacity to function with all the rights, requirements, and responsibilities. The Board of Elders has

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<sup>1</sup>Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. Includes index. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

the final determination concerning whether a person can function as a member of Calvary Chapel.

2. Hold to and affirm the Statement of Faith and substantially hold to the Statement of Values. These statements are included in our bylaws and are attached to this document for review. The Statement of Faith contains the basic beliefs for what would be any Christian. The Statement of Values describes the unique place that Calvary Chapel of Syracuse has with the Universal Body of Christ in general and the Calvary Chapel movement in particular.
3. Regularly attend Church services for more than six months. Regular attendance is defined by the Elders as Sunday services at least three times a month. This allows the person to evaluate Calvary Chapel to determine if they want to commit to this fellowship and it also gives the leadership the opportunity to get to know the person.
4. Baptized as a result of their belief and confession that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior.
  - a. The Leadership of Calvary Chapel does not believe that baptism is a requirement for salvation. A person is saved by simple faith in Christ and His resurrection (Acts 16:29-31, Romans 10:9, Ephesians 2:8-9).
  - b. However, we do believe in what's called Believers Baptism. A person believes and then receives the ordinance of baptism. This becomes a public profession of the personal faith in Christ, an external expression of the internal reality in Christ.
  - c. Some Protestant Evangelical Churches practice Covenantal Baptism where infants are baptized as a sign of the covenant of faith on the family. Eventually, the child will need to express personal faith in Christ.
  - d. We reject the idea of baptismal regeneration in the practice of infant baptism or as a completion of the saving process in adults.
5. Attend on or more specified informational meetings to become a member. We routinely schedule Connection meetings to help people assimilate in our local Body. They are:
  - a. **A – Calvary Attenders:** people who are comfortable attending with no deeper level of commitment
  - b. **B – Calvary Basics:** people attend this meeting to learn more about the Calvary Chapel movement and Calvary Chapel of Syracuse. This meeting relates information about our doctrine, distinctives, and values as well as allowing people to ask questions of the Pastor and Leadership. Normally, we distribute copies of “*Calvary Distinctives*” and “*Harvest*”, two books by Pastor Chuck Smith that describe our distinctives and history.
  - c. **C – Calvary Connection:** people attend this meeting to complete the membership process. This can be done in a group or individual setting.

## **Rights of Being a Member**

Membership does have its privileges. Being a member allows an individual to fully function with our fellowship. Only members can serve in teaching positions within Children's, Women's, or Men's ministry.

Members also have the privilege of participating in the decision making process for major decisions within Calvary Chapel of Syracuse. The Board of Elders is required to gain the approval of the congregation when removing a Pastor, selecting a Pastor, the sale of real estate, or incurring indebtedness in excess of \$100,000. Even though we are an Elder led Church, this provides accountability for the Leadership with the members of the congregation. This principle is displayed when the Apostles allowed the congregation to select the first Deacons (Acts 6:1-8) and shows a cooperative effort between the congregation and the leadership to lead and meet the needs of the Body.

## **Removal of a Member**

Membership is a voluntary relationship between a person and Calvary Chapel of Syracuse. There are no rights, benefits, and privileges expressed or implied in Church membership outside of those explicitly stated in the Bylaws. The relationship between the member and the Church is not binding upon the individual or the Church and can be terminated for the following reasons:

1. The individual can terminate their membership by simply contacting the Pastor or one of the Elders in writing.
2. If the individual is not attending services for an extended time (more than 6 months), the Board of Elders may terminate their membership. Of course, the Elders will try to contact the person to determine their status before making such a decision.
3. If an individual's life is not consistent with the teaching of the Scriptures or the doctrinal statement of Calvary Chapel, the Elders can remove their membership. This will normally be the last step in the process outlined by Christ (Matthew 18:15-17).

## **Responsibilities of Being a Member**

Just as there are rights with being a member of Calvary Chapel, there are responsibilities as well. Being a member implies that a person will be committed to the Lord Jesus and to this local congregation with their Time, Talents, and Treasure.

1. Time – Christ has given us each twenty-four hours in each day to use for His service. Part of that time will be committed to participating in the services and activities of Calvary Chapel.
2. Talents – Christ has given us all talents to use for His glory. We are all gifted so differently and bring those talents to Him for His service. Some are gifted as pastors, evangelist, musicians, teachers, and others maybe as helpers. Regardless of the gifting, we are all called to serve and be a part of the Body (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).
3. Treasure – Christ has given to us all the resources through our vocation to provide for our families. Giving can be a very difficult topic to discuss due to the abuse with some so called Christian ministries. Here are some of the principles that guide us at Calvary Chapel of Syracuse
  - God calls us to give to His work and even challenges us to trust Him as we do that (Exodus 35:4-8, Malachi 3:8-12, Matthew 6:19-21).
  - Jesus tells us that it is more “blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).
  - The New Testament tells us to give as we have determined, not grudgingly or of necessity for God’s loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7). You decide at what level to give (1 Corinthians 16:1).
  - Giving is something that is between you and God. It is not the business of the Leadership of this Church. Your record of giving is maintained confidentially by our Treasurer to comply with the laws of the land.

## **Route to Become a Member**

If you desire to be a member of Calvary Chapel of Syracuse, then contact one of the Elders to review the membership packet with them. Ensure that you understand the requirements, rights, and responsibilities of being a member. Seek the Lord and ask Him for His guidance. Then, we can schedule a time to meet with one of the Pastors, Elders, or set up a Calvary Connection Meeting. Please feel free to contact the Pastors to discuss any questions you might have concerning membership.

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory; and that this triune God created all, upholds all, and governs all.
2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, fully inspired without error in the original manuscripts, and the infallible rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love; that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer; and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.
4. We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit; we believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, teachings, substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and His personal, visible return to earth.
5. We believe in the Holy Spirit, who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment and to regenerate, sanctify and empower for ministry all who believe in Christ; we believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is an abiding Helper, Teacher and Guide; we believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and in the exercise of all the Biblical gifts of the Spirit.
6. We believe that all men are sinners by nature and choice and, therefore, under condemnation; that God by the Holy Spirit regenerates those who repent of their sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord; that Jesus Christ baptizes the seeking believer with the Holy Spirit and power for service.
7. We believe in the universal Church, the living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members; we believe that the local church is a manifestation of the universal Church and that individual believers function within the local church to know Christ and to make Him known.
8. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ committed two ordinances to the Church: Baptism and Communion; Baptism is usually by immersion in water of those who profess a personal commitment to Christ; Communion is celebrated on a routine basis and is open to all Christian believers regardless of denominational affiliation or tradition.
9. We believe in the personal, visible return of Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom; in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, eternal blessing of the righteous and endless suffering of the wicked.

## STATEMENT OF VALUES

The Vision of Calvary Chapel of Syracuse is *to know Christ and make Him known*.

We seek to accomplish this vision through holding to the historic doctrines of the Bible and through implementation of the following values in our ministries. These values connect what we believe with what we do.

God has communicated His truth through general revelation in creation and His special revelation in the Bible. More importantly, He has given the greatest expression of Himself in the Person of Christ. Our deepest desire is to know Christ and grow in our relationship with Him. Subsequently, we will seek to reveal Christ through making him known to the world through thought, word, and deed. Therefore, Calvary Chapel is committed to the following values:

- Praising Jesus Christ
- Preaching the Word
- Praying for our world
- Practicing the Truth
- Proclaiming the Gospel
- Participating in Fellowship

### Praising Jesus Christ

We believe in a consistent emphasis on Christ as the center of all we do and say (John 14:6; Col 3:17). We strive for an undistracted, corporate worship of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, utilizing both traditional and contemporary methods. (1 Corinthians 14:33). Although we believe in the present existence of the charismatic gifts, we discourage individuals from practicing them during our corporate worship so as not to distract from worship and allow other worshippers to understand their praise and agree with their worship (1 Corinthians 14:16).

### Preaching the Word

We believe in the systematic exposition of the Scriptures from both the New and Old Testaments so a large portion of our service is dedicated to preaching the Word (Isaiah 28:13; 2 Timothy 3:16, 4:2; and 2 Peter 1:21). In addition, to minimize distractions during our services, we provide age appropriate ministry so that children can be cared for or taught at their level of understanding (2 Timothy 3:15). We also encourage members of Calvary Chapel to participate in a systematic study of the Scriptures whether in private or small groups (2 Timothy 2:15, Psalm 1, and Psalm 119:9-11).

### Praying for our World

We believe that God is a prayer hearing and prayer answering God (Psalm 65:2). We provide forums for members to pray together for one another, our Church, and our world (James 5:16, Ephesians 6:18-19). In

addition, we seek to make prayer a priority in the planning and practice of ministry (John 15:1-5, Acts 13:1-3).

### Practicing the Truth

We believe that the greatest evidence of a person possessing a personal relationship with Christ is a life of obedience. We are convinced that God's word activated and empowered by the Holy Spirit will accomplish His work in the lives of His people (Zechariah 4:6). We desire to express love for God and one another that is informed by the truth of Christ.

- We are committed to authentic relationships between believers and between members of Calvary Chapel with the leadership (Ephesians 4:25, 30-32; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
- We encourage honest, kind, and open communication in appropriate forums (Matthew 18:15-20, Galatians 6:1-2, and James 5:13-16).
- We encourage interpersonal relationships that help deepen and develop Christ-like character through discipleship (2 Timothy 2:2).
- We participate in opportunities to apply our teaching and discipleship to preserve marriages (Matthew 5:27-32, 1 Corinthians 7:10-16).
- We provide guidance and resources to help in the issues of marriage and parenting (Ephesians 5:22-6:4, 1 Peter 3:1-12).
- We are committed to continually evaluating all we do that we might foster excellence for Christ avoiding traditionalism and seeking to release the creative gifts of the believers here at Calvary Chapel.

### Proclaiming the Gospel

We believe in an intentional approach to reaching the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ both locally and globally. We provide outreach locally by welcoming visitors to Calvary Chapel and providing a relaxed environment for spiritual conversations (James 2:1-4, Galatians 2:11-14). In addition, we believe in impacting our community with the love of Christ regardless of the response. We also believe in participating in traditional world missions by providing financial support to missionaries and mission organizations along with participating in short and long term missions (Matthew 28:18-20).

### Participating in Fellowship

We believe that God has called us into a family here at Calvary Chapel. Therefore, we spend time together participating in fellowship, connecting with each other (Acts 2:42). Our coffee house is an expression of this value. We provide a venue where we can spend time together in a relaxed atmosphere before and after service to encourage connection and communication. In addition, we provide small groups where individuals can meet to discuss the Scripture and connect in a more intimate way than can be provided in a service.



## **Calvary Chapel Membership Application**

<b>Personal Information</b>			
Name:			
Address			
State	Zip	Phone:	
E-Mail			
Are you at least 18 years old?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you personally trusted Christ for salvation?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you been baptized since trusting Christ?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When were you baptized? (approximately)			

<b>Personal Questionnaire</b>
How long have you been coming to Calvary Chapel?
<b>Statement of Faith:</b> I have read and agree with the Statement of Faith What areas in the Statement do you have some disagreement if any?
<b>Statement of Values:</b> I have read and agree with the Statement of Values What areas in the Statement do you have some disagreement if any?

I agree to the requirements for membership of Calvary Chapel and commit to following Christ, seeking to obey his commandments, and submitting to the Holy Spirit leading me through the Body of Christ at Calvary Chapel.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Elder/Pastor

### **Review and Approval:**

Approved by the Board of Elders: Yes: ☐ No: ☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date