

# How to Become a Congregational Member

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Welcome! We're glad you're interested in becoming part of our congregation. Membership at Palominas Chapel is a spiritual designation that involves joining our local assembly of believers in worship, fellowship, and service to God.

## Important Distinction: Membership vs. Salvation

Membership in our congregation is different from salvation. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ and is solely the work of God. Our congregation can only recognize and affirm the evidence of salvation as shown through your faith, spiritual fruit, and obedience to Scripture.

## The Path to Membership

Becoming a member involves meeting specific requirements over a 12-month evaluation period beginning from your first attendance. During this time, the Pastor will observe evidence of your spiritual walk and readiness for membership.

## What's Required for Membership?

Members in good standing must meet all of the following requirements. Only formal acceptance by the Pastor after the evaluation process establishes membership in good standing.

### 1. Public Profession of Salvation and Dedication to God

You must publicly declare (or attest when requested) that you have accepted salvation through Jesus Christ, are fully dedicated to God the Father (Jehovah), have received the Holy Spirit, are walking in repentance, and are committed to obeying God's will.

### 2. Holy Spirit Filled and Displaying Spiritual Fruit

Your life must display the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)—along with other biblical fruits including righteousness, truth, and good works.

### 3. Faithful Attendance

Members must maintain faithful attendance at worship services and congregational functions, demonstrating active participation in Palominas Chapel's mission and work. The expected specific attendance percentage is established in policy. Exceptions for illness or other legitimate issues may be approved by pastoral leadership.

## **4. Biblical Giving**

Members must practice “recordable” biblical giving through tithe of increase plus offerings, given voluntarily as spiritual stewardship, not as membership dues. Pastoral leadership assesses biblical stewardship based on heart attitude, circumstances, and spiritual fruit in accordance with Scripture—recognizing that individual situations vary. Pastoral counsel is available for those whose situation requires discussion. Those who donate through check or electronic transfer will have access to a record of giving. (Leviticus 27:30, Malachi 3:8-10, 1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Matthew 23:23).

## **5. Submission to Pastoral Authority**

Members must demonstrate submission to pastoral authority by adhering to preached standards and teaching. Members must not actively oppose, contradict, or undermine established doctrine.

## **6. Participation in Ordinances**

Members must participate in the ordinances: public confession of faith, water baptism, the Lord's Supper, and feetwashing as symbolism, and hospitality in practice.

## **7. Adherence to Conduct and Lifestyle Standards**

Members must adhere to conduct and lifestyle standards established in the Statement of Faith and Code of Conduct. All members are required to read and sign the Code of Conduct.

## **8. General Doctrinal Agreement**

Members must accept the broad doctrinal framework established in the Statement of Faith and not oppose or undermine it. See the Statement of Faith FAQ for details. Members are not required to articulate or defend complex theological positions but must not oppose, contradict, or teach against established doctrine.

## **9. Commitment Against Contrary Teaching**

Members must not teach, promote, or advocate doctrine contrary to established teaching. Questions for personal understanding are welcome, but attempting to persuade others toward different positions causes division.

## **10. Active Mission Work**

Members must actively work to further the Corporation's mission as expressed in the motto "Learn, Live, Lead" through observable participation in evangelistic efforts, discipleship activities, congregational service, and faithful support of pastoral vision.

## **The Evaluation Period**

The evaluation period is ongoing and continuous. Any lapse in demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit or adherence to biblical standards during any rolling evaluation period can disqualify a person from membership.

**How Membership is Established:** Formal membership in good standing is established ONLY when the Pastor has explicitly communicated acceptance following the evaluation process. This communication may be verbal or written, but there must be clear pastoral affirmation of membership status.

**Participation Does Not Equal Membership:** Attending services or helping with congregation activities doesn't automatically make you a member. Only formal acceptance by the Pastor after the evaluation process establishes membership.

**If You're Unsure:** If you're unsure of your membership status, please request a meeting with Pastor Nathan Harding for clarification.

## The Final Step

After meeting these requirements over the 12-month period, you'll meet with the Pastor for formal acceptance as a member in good standing. The Pastor will use spiritual discernment to determine whether you're genuinely demonstrating these qualities and are ready for membership.

## What Does Membership Give You?

Members in good standing receive spiritual privileges including:

*Please see the FAQ "Privileges of Membership"*

## Remember: Ongoing Evaluation

Membership is evaluated continuously. The 12-month period is ongoing—you must maintain these standards throughout your membership. The goal is genuine spiritual growth and faithfulness, not just meeting a checklist.

## Questions?

If you have questions about membership or would like to discuss your status, please contact Pastor Nathan Harding to schedule a meeting. We're here to support you on your spiritual journey!

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*Rules for congregational membership are a requirement of Arizona State law guiding Corporations. This summary does not supersede the established bylaws of the Corporation.*