

We're thrilled you've chosen to get baptized. We view this as a big step towards spiritual maturity. This book is designed to help you during this pivotal time in your spiritual life to better understand:

Salvation: God's purpose for you

Baptism: The outward sign of an inward commitment

Communion: An act of remembrance

Membership: Committing to a church family

**Throughout the book when you see this symbol that is your sign to stop and spend some time writing about what you have just learned. If you think of any questions you have about what you have learned write those down as well and when you go over this book with your leader they can help you.**

## **Key Verse**

*"...You are a member of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." Ephesians 2:19 (LB)*

## **Key Truths**

The church is **a family**.

2. God expects you to be **a member** of a church family.
3. A Christian without a church family is **an orphan**.

# THE FOUR PATHWAY CHURCH COMMITMENTS

## The commitment to **BELONG...**

Is a commitment to **Christ** and to **His church body**.

*"“You are a member of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian.” Ephesians 2:19 (LB)*

*"“We are all parts of Christ's Body, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other and need all the others.” Romans 12:4-5 (LB)*

## The commitment to **GROW...**

Is a commitment to **the habits** necessary for spiritual growth.

*"“Continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:18 (WS)*

*"“Take the time and trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit.” 1 Timothy 4:7 (Ph)*

## **The commitment to SERVE...**

Is a commitment to discovering and using my God-given gifts and abilities in **serv**ing God and others.

*"God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other..."*

*1 Peter 4:10 (LB)*

*"There are different kinds of service to God...together you form the Body of Christ and each one of you is a necessary part of it." 1 Corinthians 12:5, 27 (LB)*

## **The commitment to SHARE...**

Is a commitment to **share** the Good News with others.

*"...you will be my witnesses for me...to the ends of the earth."  
Acts 1:8*

*"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do it with gentleness and respect..." 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)*

## **Notes**

- BELONGING BOOK-

Page 4

3. WHEN WE KNOW AND **LOVE** GOD, AND LIVE IN HARMONY WITH HIS PURPOSE FOR OUR **LIVES**, IT PRODUCES TREMENDOUS BENEFITS IN OUR LIVES:

**This is the kind of lifestyle God intends for us to live!**

*“Jesus said, “I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness!”*

*John 10:10*

If this is true, why aren't most people really happy?

# SALVATION

Salvation is a term that means to be delivered from danger or difficulty. When we apply that term to the salvation Jesus provides it means that he has delivered us from the power or the penalty of sin. In this section of the belonging book you will be reminded of how he did that!

*"So you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have been made like Him. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians - you are one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:26-28 (NLT)*

**Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing "WHY?" They exist year after year. They live with no idea of God's plan for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, "What is the purpose of my life?"**

Everyone wants to be happy! People try to find happiness in many ways:

Some look for happiness through people.  
Some look for happiness through possessions.  
Some look for happiness through popularity.  
Some look for happiness through power.  
Some look for happiness through pleasure.

But, real happiness comes from understanding our **purpose**

**GOD MADE ME TO LOVE AND TO BE LOVED!**

*God says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love!"  
Jeremiah 31:3 (NIV)*

*"God is love...since God loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1 John 4:8,11 (NKJ)*

2. WE WERE CREATED TO **ENJOY** A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND TO **MANAGE** ALL OF THE REST OF GOD'S CREATION! THIS MAKES US SPECIAL!

*"God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."  
1 Timothy 6:17(NIV)*

*"So God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said, ... live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge." Genesis 1: 27-28*

Clear Conscience Romans 8:1	Life & Peace Romans 8:6	Help with Weakness Romans 8:26
Purpose Romans 8:28	Confidence Romans 8:31	Security Romans 8:39
Power & Strength Philemon 4:13	Fulfillment Philemon 4:19	Freedom John 8:32,36

Our human nature has a natural desire to **be the boss** and to ignore God's principles for living.

The ignorance in people to not follow God's way of living is communicated in our words and lifestyle:

"You have to look out for #1."

"I want what I want, when I want it."

"Do your own thing."

"If it feels good, do it!"

"It's my life and I'll do what I please!"

**THE BIBLE CALLS THIS ATTITUDE SIN.**

Who sins?

*"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way." " Isaiah 53:6 (NIV)*

*"If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth." 1 John 1:8 (LB)*

## 2. What is sin?

To sin is to **miss** the mark.

## 3. What does it do?

It **separates** us from God.

*"The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God."  
Isaiah 59:2 (LB)*

*"All have sinned and fall short of God's glorious ideal."  
Romans 3:23  
(LB)*

## It looks like this...

All the best attempts in the world won't get you to where you need to be.

Many people say things like:

"My mother was a Christian so..."

"I'm a really good person."

"I'll give up all my bad habits."

"I'll work real hard and earn it."

"I go to church all the time."



## **SIN = DEATH**

The result of these attempts is worthless. The Bible teaches us that all of our attempts lead to **death**. A relationship with God is **NOT** based on anything you **DO**.

*"There are ways that SEEM right to man, but they only end in death."*

*Proverbs 16:25 (NIV)*

When our relationship with God is not right, it causes **problems** in every area of our lives: friendships, school, parents, jobs, finances, etc.

**Who sins and why is it bad?**

**JESUS IS THE SOLUTION!**

*Jesus said, "I AM THE WAY, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except THROUGH ME!" John 14:6 (NIV)*

God Himself came to earth as a human being (as Jesus) to bring us back to Himself. If any other way had worked, Jesus would not have had to come.

## **WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO COME?**

*"The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

*Romans 6:23 (LB)*

## **WHY DID GOD SEND JESUS TO DIE IN YOUR PLACE?**

God did this for YOU, because He loves YOU and wants YOU to know Him.

*"God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God, by sin, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8 (NIV)*

**REMEMBER: JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEM WHEN HE DIED ON THE CROSS!**

*"God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus, Himself man, is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind." 1 Timothy 2:5 (LB)*

God has already done His part to restore our relationship with Him. **HE TOOK THE INITIATIVE. NOW HE WAITS FOR EACH OF US** to individually **ACCEPT** what He has done for us.

**YOU**  
**JESUS**

**GOD**

**ADMIT THAT GOD HAS NOT HAD FIRST PLACE PRIORITY IN YOUR LIFE AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE YOUR SINS.**

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from every wrong." 1 John 1:9 (NIV)*

**BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED TO PAY FOR YOUR SINS, AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN AND IS ALIVE TODAY.**

*"If you confess that Jesus is your Lord, and you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (NIV)*

*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name (Jesus) by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12 (NIV)*

**ACCEPT GOD'S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION. DON'T TRY TO EARN IT.**

*"For it is by grace you are saved, through faith - and this not*

*from yourselves, it is the gift of God -not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

*Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)*

Our relationship with God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us!

**INVITE JESUS CHRIST TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE AND BE THE DIRECTOR ("LORD") OF YOUR LIFE.**

*“To all who receive Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who believe this are reborn! ... not a physical rebirth ... but from the spirit of God!” John 1:12-13 (LB)*

*“Jesus says, 'Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...'” “ Revelation 3:20 (LB)*

**UNITE WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION THROUGH BAPTISM.**

*“For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.” Romans 6:4-5 (LB)*

**Why did Jesus come to earth and what did he accomplish by doing so?**

# BAPTISM

**Baptism is an amazing spiritual step that we see believers of Christ in the Bible and still to this day doing out of obedience to Christ. Baptism is the act of someone being dunked under water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this section you will learn more about the meaning and importance baptism.**

*“We were therefore buried with Him through Baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

*Romans 6:4 (NIV)*

**TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE SET BY CHRIST.**

---

*“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river.”*

*Mark 1:9 (LB)*

**BECAUSE CHRIST COMMANDED IT.**

*“Jesus said, 'Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.’” Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)*

### 3. IT DEMONSTRATES THAT I REALLY AM A **BELIEVER**.

*" ... many of the people who heard Him believed and were baptized." Acts 18:8 (NIV)*

*"We know that we have come to know Him, if we obey His commands." 1 John 2:3 (NIV)*

### IT ILLUSTRATES JESUS' **BURIAL AND RESURRECTION**.

*" Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... and He rose again." 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (NIV)*

*"For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ."  
Colossians 2:12 (NIV)*

### 2. IT ILLUSTRATES MY **NEW LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN**.

*"By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead ... so also we may live a new life." Romans 6:4 (NIV)*

*" For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith ... it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)*

Baptism is like a wedding ring -- it is the outward symbol of the commitment you make in your heart.

**BAPTISM IS AN OUTWARD SIGN OF AN INWARD COMMITMENT.**

**BECAUSE JESUS WAS BAPTIZED THAT WAY.**

*" As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. "*  
*Matthew 3:16 (NIV)*

**EVERY BAPTISM IN THE BIBLE WAS BY IMMERSION, WHICH MEANS THEY WERE FULLY DUNKED UNDER WATER.**

*(Example) " ... then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water..." Acts 8:38-39 (NIV)*

**THE WORD "BAPTIZE" ACTUALLY MEANS, "TO DIP UNDER WATER."**

**4. IMMERSION BEST SYMBOLIZES A RESURRECTION AND BURIAL!**

*"When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 (LB)*

**EVERY PERSON WHO HAS BELIEVED IN CHRIST.**

*"Those who believed and accepted His message were baptized..."*  
*Acts 2:41(NIV)*

*"Simon himself believed and was baptized..." Acts 8:13 (NIV)*

*"But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News ...  
and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and  
women." Acts 8:12 (NIV)*

**AS SOON AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED!**

*" Those who believe ... were baptized ... that day!"*  
*Acts 2:41(NIV)*

**What if I was baptized as an infant?**

Some churches baptize infants. At Pathway Church, we don't. We only baptize those who have made a decision to believe in Christ's death as the payment for their sin. In the Bible, men and women were baptized following their belief in Jesus.

The custom of infant baptism began about 300 years after the Bible was completed. It's a ceremony intended to emphasize a commitment between the parents and God on the behalf of the child. During this ceremony, the parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his own personal confession of Christ.



At Pathway Church, we have a dedication service for infants and children that emphasizes the parent's role in raising a child to follow Christ.

Therefore, if you were sprinkled as a baby, we encourage you to be baptized by immersion as a believer.

While we do not judge another's spiritual experience in this practice, we must stand by our conviction. Therefore we practice believer's baptism by immersion and require it for membership.

What should I wear when I am baptized?

Wear shorts with a dark t-shirt, or swimsuit with a dark t-shirt. Bring a change of clothes, hair dryer, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. We will provide a robe and towels for you.

Will I have to say anything?

After you are in the water and the person baptizing you will ask, "Tell us what you believe about Jesus." Then you will explain who Jesus is to you and what you believe about Him. They will then briefly lower you just under the water completely and back up. Then you can leave the baptistry to dry off, and you can watch the others being baptized. Later you will be mailed a certificate of your baptism. We encourage you to invite all your friends and relatives to attend.

While baptism is a one-time experience, Jesus gave us another action that is intended to continue throughout the life of the Christian. It's called the Lord's Supper, and it's a powerful way for Christians to remember and celebrate what God did for us in the life of Jesus.

# COMMUNION

**During the last meal that Jesus ate with his disciples, often referred to as the Lord's Supper or Last Supper, Jesus gave his followers something to do to remember Him. In this section you will learn what Jesus told his followers to do and why! It is what we call communion.**

*“and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper He took the cup saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”*

*I Corinthians 11:24-25 (NIV)*

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

## 1. IT IS A **REMINDER**.

*" ... and when he had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; eat it in remembrance of me.' "* (v. 24)

## IT IS A SYMBOL.

*" In the same way, He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; drink it to remember me.' " (v. 25)*

## IT IS A STATEMENT OF FAITH.

*"For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes back." (v. 26)*

Only those who are already **believers**. (See Mark 14:22-26)

*"For if you eat the bread or drink the cup unworthy, not honoring  
the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself." 1 Corinthians 11:29*

*"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A person ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup." 1 Corinthians 11:27-28 (NIV)*

**You prepare yourself by ...**

### **1. Self-examination**

1 Corinthians 11:27 (NIV)

*“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.”*

**2. Confession of sins**

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

**3. Recommitment**

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

**4. Restoring relationships**

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)

*“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”*

**What is communion and why is it important?**

## REASONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. *A Biblical Reason:* The concept of membership is **biblical**.

While the term is not found in the Bible, the concept is implicit. In the Bible believers clearly identified themselves with a specific local body and were challenged to become devoted participants.

2. *A Cultural Reason:* Formal membership is an **antidote** to the problem of “consumer religion” in our society.

We live in an age of low commitment, church hopping and convenience. Membership swims against the current of consumer religion. Membership is character-based (not convenience-based).

3. *A Practical Reason:* Membership defines who can be **counted** on.

Every team has a roster. Every school has an enrollment. Every army must enlist before going into battle. Membership identifies who we can count on to accomplish God’s purposes in the world and who identifies with our family.

4. *A Personal Reason:* Membership facilitates spiritual **growth**.

The Bible places special emphasis on our need to be accountable if we want to grow spiritually. We cannot be accountable unless we are committed to a local body of believers.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE AT PATHWAY CHURCH

We believe the Bible is the Word of God. It is divinely inspired and the supreme and final authority for faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16,17)

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son,

and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man. (Luke 2:26-32, Colossians 1:15-18, Hebrews 2:14-18)

We believe that man was created in the image of God: That he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word and deed. (Romans 3:23, 5:12)

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. (Colossians 1:14, Romans 3:23-26)

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and His present life for us as high priest and advocate. (1 Corinthians 15:4, Acts 1:9-11, 1 John 2:1-2)

We believe in “the second coming”: The personal return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Matthew 24:29-31)

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God, a relationship in which they are secure. (Acts 16:31, Romans 8:38-39, Hebrews 3:5)

We believe that after a person is saved by faith in Jesus Christ, he should publicly confess Christ and be baptized. We practice baptism by immersion only. (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:3-4, Matthew 10:32-33)

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust: the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious

punishment of the lost.

(I Thessalonians 4:16-17, Revelation 20:11-15)

## **THE CORE VALUES OF PATHWAY CHURCH**

At Pathway Church, we have identified 5 key biblical characteristics of a fully devoted follower of Christ. We encourage every member to aspire to and embody these characteristics in their personal walk with Jesus Christ.

### **1. PASSION FOR GOD**

A fully devoted follower of Christ is committed to worship that draws our people into a close and real relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. We are committed to a lifestyle of prayer as a significant way our hearts and service can come under God's direction and control.

*Psalm 16:7-9, 11*

### **2. DEVOTED OBEDIENCE**

A fully devoted follower of Christ is committed to the explanation and application of the truth of the Bible, our rule of faith and practice, to all the issues of life. We are committed to the process of bringing people of all ages to their full maturity in Jesus Christ.

*John 14:21*

### **3. JOYFUL SERVANTHOOD**

A fully devoted follower of Christ is committed to the involvement of

every believer in appropriate gift-based ministries. This servanthood will bring a sense of inner joy as the believer serves Christ in ministry.

*Ephesians 4:11-13*

#### **4. COMPASSIONATE OUTREACH**

A fully devoted follower of Christ is committed to effectively presenting the Gospel to every person, including cultures around the world, to connect them to Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

*2 Corinthians*

*5:14-15, Matthew 28:19-20*

#### **5. AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY**

A fully devoted follower of Christ is committed to loving and caring for one another in a lifestyle that exemplifies authentic Christian community. We are committed to nurturing relationships that are based on God's love and forgiveness, with the intent of bringing each person to wholeness in Christ. We are committed to nurturing families to be strong and provide a foundation for wholeness in the lives of their children.

*1 Thessalonians 2:8, 1 John 1:3*

*1*

*John 4:11, Galatians 5:1*

*Ephesians 5:21-6:4*

**Why is it important to be a member of a church?**



# MEMBERSHIP

*“Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.”  
Philippians 3:17 (NIV)*

## **THE MISSION STATEMENT OF PATHWAY CHURCH:**

Connecting people to Jesus and helping them become His fully-devoted followers.

- BELONGING BOOK -

Page 25

### **Notes**

*“Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, 'Look, here is water! Why shouldn't I be baptized right now?' Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' The man answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So they went down into the water and Philip baptized him.” Acts 8:35-38 (NIV)*

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are "perfect" you'll never be ready.

## **YOU CAN TAKE THESE STEPS BY PRAYING A SIMPLE PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO GOD. IT MIGHT BE SOMETHING LIKE THIS...**

“Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I’ve ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I’m sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation and am willing to be immersed in water as an expression of my commitment. Please help me to grow now in my walk with you. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

**REMEMBER:** God has no grandchildren, only children.  
Each person must make his or her own commitment to Christ.  
It's bigger than your parent's decision.

**Why should a believer be baptized and what does it symbolize?**

**YOU  
Separation  
GOD**

8/26/2013