

A FREE GUIDE FOR CHURCH LEADERS

How to Invite Honest Google Reviews for Your Church

A simple way to ask members, regular attendees, and visitors to share their experience, within Google's rules.

Inside this guide

1. Know Google's rules first
2. Get your review link and QR code
3. Decide who to ask
4. Ask in the right places
5. Help members who aren't comfortable with technology



FIVE MORE
TALENTS

Word of mouth, for people you haven't met yet

When someone searches for a church nearby, Google shows star ratings and review counts right next to each church's name. Before they visit your website, a newcomer has often already read what others say about you.

Google's own help pages say that more reviews and positive ratings can help a business's local ranking. But the bigger reason is simpler. A review is an honest word from someone who sits in your pews, written for a neighbor who is wondering whether they would be welcome.

2 in 3

unchurched Americans say they would attend church if a friend or family member invited them.

Source: Lifeway Research

A review can't replace a personal invitation. But it gives your members a way to extend a welcome to people they will never meet in person.

"Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips."

Proverbs 27:2 (ESV)

Some pastors hesitate to ask for reviews because it feels like self-promotion. It helps to see it the other way around: you are not writing your own praise. You are giving the people who know your church a simple way to tell the truth about it.

Part of a seven-step series. This is Step 3 of the **Found on Google** series, seven short guides that help neighbors searching online find your church. Each step builds on the one before it. When you finish, continue with the Step 4 guide, **Respond to every review**.

1

Know Google's rules first

Google takes fake or biased reviews seriously and can remove reviews or restrict a profile that breaks its rules. Here is what its policies allow and what they don't.

ALLOWED

- Asking anyone with a real experience of your church to share it.
- Asking everyone, whether you expect a glowing review or not.
- Sharing your review link or QR code in print, by email, and online.
- Displaying your QR code at church, such as in the bulletin or on a sign.

NOT ALLOWED

- Offering anything in return, even a coffee card or a raffle entry.
- Asking only the people you expect to be happy.
- Telling people what to write, such as naming the pastor or a phrase.
- Pressuring people to write a review on the spot while at church.
- Setting a quota, such as asking a volunteer to "get 20 reviews."

WHO SHOULDN'T WRITE REVIEWS

Google doesn't allow reviews based on a conflict of interest, which includes current or former employees and family relationships. That means **pastors, paid staff, and their immediate families should not review your church**, however well meant. Let members, attendees, and visitors speak.

2

Get your review link and QR code

Google gives every verified profile a short link that takes people straight to the review form. The QR code can only be made on a computer.

1. Sign in and open your Business Profile (search Google for **my business**).
2. Select **Read reviews**, then **Get more reviews**.
3. To copy the link, select **Copy**. Paste it somewhere safe, such as your church's shared documents.
4. To save the QR code, right-click it and select **Save image as**.

3

Decide who to ask

Anyone who has a genuine experience with your church can leave a review. Good people to ask include:

- ☐ **Members and regular attendees.** They know your church best. Include long-time members and newer families. Newer families often write the most helpful reviews, because they remember what it was like to visit for the first time.
- ☐ **Visitors who have come more than once.** A short, friendly note after their second or third visit is a natural time to ask.
- ☐ **People who attended an outreach event,** such as a Vacation Bible School, an ESL class, a concert, or a community meal.

Ask everyone the same way. You don't need to hand-pick people, and Google's rules say you shouldn't. A few honest, mixed reviews are more believable to a visitor than a wall of identical praise.

4

Ask in the right places

WHERE	HOW
Announcement	A brief mention during announcements, pointing people to the QR code in the bulletin so they can leave a review later at home.
Bulletin or insert	Print the QR code with one or two sentences of explanation.
Church email	Include the review link in your newsletter once or twice a year, and in your welcome email to new members.
Visitor follow-up	Add a gentle, optional line to the note you send after someone has visited a few times.
A personal word	When a member tells you how much the church has meant to them, it's natural to say, "Would you be willing to share that on Google?"

Plan a steady rhythm rather than one big push. A few new reviews each month keep your profile current and show visitors that people are still coming.

SAMPLE WORDING

Words you can borrow

BULLETIN OR ANNOUNCEMENT

Many of our neighbors look for a church on Google before they ever visit. If Grace Presbyterian has been a blessing to you, would you consider sharing your honest experience in a Google review? Scan the code on the back of this bulletin when you're home this week. Thank you for helping us welcome the people God is bringing our way.

EMAIL TO MEMBERS

Dear church family,

When people in our town search for a church, one of the first things they see is our Google profile, including reviews from people who worship here. Would you take two minutes to share your own experience of our church in your own words? You can do so here: [your review link].

There is no need to write much. A few honest sentences help a visitor know what to expect.

With gratitude,
Pastor [Name]

5 Help members who aren't comfortable with technology

Some of your most faithful members may want to help but not know how. Print these steps on a half sheet, or have a helpful volunteer walk them through it at home or by phone:

1. Open the review link or scan the QR code with your phone's camera.
2. Sign in to your Google account. If you don't have one, you can create one with any email address, not just Gmail.
3. Tap the stars to choose a rating.
4. Write a few sentences about your experience, in your own words.
5. Tap **Post**.

Let people know that reviews appear publicly under the name on their Google account. Some members will prefer not to, and that is fine. Never press anyone who hesitates.

Common mistakes to avoid

MISTAKE	WHY IT CAUSES TROUBLE
Thanking reviewers with a gift or a drawing	Google treats any incentive as fake engagement and can remove the reviews.
Asking the pastor's family or staff to review	These are conflict-of-interest reviews, which Google doesn't allow.
Passing a tablet around at fellowship hour	Pressuring people to review on the premises is against Google's rules.
Suggesting words or keywords to include	Google doesn't allow requests for specific content, and it makes reviews sound less genuine.
Asking once and never again	Old reviews age. Visitors notice when the newest review is years old.
Asking and then not replying	Every review deserves a reply. That's the next step in this series.

REVIEWS NOT SHOWING UP?

Google checks every review against its policies, which can take a few days. Reviews removed for breaking the rules won't be restored. If a member has trouble posting a review from an older phone, updating the Google Maps app usually helps. Keep asking steadily, and never try to work around Google's checks.

THE FOUND ON GOOGLE SERIES

Seven simple steps to help neighbors find your church

1 Claim your church's Google Business Profile

2 Make your Profile Strength look good

3 Invite honest reviews

THIS GUIDE

4 Respond to every review

5 Add photos and videos

6 Post regular updates

7 Match your details across 40 directories

Next up: **Step 4, Respond to every review.** Take one step at a time. Each one makes it a little easier for people searching nearby to find your church and walk through the door.

If you'd rather not carry this alone, or just want someone to look over what Google shows your neighbors, we'd be glad to talk. Five More Talents serves conservative, Bible-believing churches with websites, local search, and online outreach. You lead. We support.

Schedule a free 20-minute Outreach Discovery Call

go.fivemoretalents.com



Five More Talents · Helping churches reach more people without compromising their convictions · fivemoretalents.com