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## Kirchensteuer — Church Tax in Germany

Kirchensteuer is a mandatory tax for members of recognized churches in Germany, automatically deducted from salary at 8-9% of income tax depending on the state.

**Deutsche Begriffe:** Kirchensteuer | Kirchenaustritt | Konfession

### What is Kirchensteuer?

Kirchensteuer (church tax) is a mandatory tax for members of churches recognized in Germany. It is automatically deducted from salary.

### How much is it?

State	Rate
Bayern, Baden-Württemberg	8% of income tax
Other states	9% of income tax

#### **Example (9%):**

- You earn 3,000€ gross
- Your income tax: 400€
- Kirchensteuer: 36€ (9% of 400€)

### Who pays?

Members of registered churches:

- Catholic Church
- Protestant Church (Evangelical)
- Some other religious communities

### **NOT paying:**

- Atheists / non-religious
- Muslims
- Orthodox Christians (usually)
- People who have left the church

## How does it work?

1. During Anmeldung you state your religion (Konfession)
2. Your employer automatically deducts the tax
3. Money goes to your church

## How to stop paying?

### **Leaving the church (Kirchenaustritt):**

1. Go to **Standesamt** or **Amtsgericht**
2. File a declaration of withdrawal
3. Pay a fee (10-60€ depending on the state)
4. Receive a certificate
5. Submit to your employer

### **In Hamburg:**

- Standesamt Hamburg
- Fee: 31€
- Online appointment: [hamburg.de/terminvereinbarung](https://hamburg.de/terminvereinbarung)

## Consequences of leaving

### **You lose:**

- Right to church wedding
- Right to church funeral
- Right to be a godparent
- Access to certain church services

### **You keep:**

- Can still attend church
- Children can be baptized (if other parent is a member)

## Is it worth paying?

### **YES, if:**

- You are a practicing believer
- You use church services
- You want a church wedding/funeral

### **NO, if:**

- You don't practice
- You don't identify with the church
- You want to save ~300-1,000€/year

## Important

- Leaving is **irreversible** (returning requires a procedure)
- You cannot choose to pay less
- The tax is deductible from your tax base

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