

YOUR CHURCH CAN PLANT CHURCHES.

WE CAN HELP.

Supporting Church Toolkit

Welcome!

Thank you for expressing interest in becoming a supporting church. At Send Network, we are passionate about helping churches like yours get involved in church planting!

Supporting churches partner with a church plant by praying, participating and/or providing for their needs. In doing so, they play a crucial role in helping church plant succeed!

The following toolkit will help you lead your church to support church planting. From helping your congregation embrace how church planting builds God's kingdom to the logistics of establishing a healthy partnership, these resources will help you get started.

Whether you are a pastor or lay leader, we are excited to help you lead your church to become a supporting church.

Send Network Team

Table of Contents

3 **Why Become a Supporting Church?**

- [Why Plant Churches?](#)
- [Why Support](#)

7 **How to Become a Supporting Church**

- [How to Connect with a Planter](#)
- [How to Partner with a Planter](#)
- [Supporting Church Pro Tips](#)

11 **Appendix**

- [How Your Church Can Pray](#)
- [How Your Church Can Participate](#)
- [How Your Church Can Provide](#)
- [Sample Partnership Agreement](#)

Why Become a Supporting Church?

Churches Plant Churches

Church plants are healthiest when they're planted by healthy church planters. The healthiest church planters are partnered with a strong Sending Church and multiple Supporting Churches. When Supporting Churches take their responsibility seriously, they find intentional ways to pray, participate and provide for a plant's needs.

Resources in this Section

- [Why Plant Churches?](#)
- [Why Supporting Churches Are Critical](#)

Why Plant Churches?

by Clint Clifton

The majority of Christians I meet like the idea of church planting conceptually but would never give serious consideration toward planting one themselves. One reason many Christians do not more readily consider planting churches is that they can't pinpoint a biblical basis for church planting. They simply do not know that the Bible commands Christians to start new churches.

Church planting is important because the Church is important.

Farming matters because food matters. Hospitals matter because people matter. Church planting matters because the Church matters. Not everyone sees it that way, though. Even some professing Christians don't think the Church is really very important at all. Many in our society consider churches to be irrelevant, corrupt, antiquated, and contentious — which, sadly, is partially true. Civic and governmental authorities often consider churches to be special interest groups that hinder municipal progress and profit. Does this make the church irrelevant? No. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Jesus' Church is the most important institution in the history of the world because Jesus is the most important figure in human history. When all the world's books are closed and time yields to eternity, the Church will be celebrated as the most significant institution of all time.

Church planting is in the Bible.

Just because you can't find the term "church planting" in the Bible doesn't mean church planting is not a biblical idea. If you're looking for it, you'll see church planting all over the New Testament.

1. Jesus was a church planter.

Jesus, the hero of the Bible, established the universal Church and declared the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). He also led a small congregation of disciples, teaching them the Word of God, sharing communion with them and commissioning them to plant more churches.

2. Paul was a church planter.

His commissioning by the church at Antioch (Acts 13) marks the beginning of an incredible church-planting streak by the great apostle. Over the course of 13 years, Paul embarked on three missionary journeys, during which he traveled more than 7,000 miles and planted at least 14 new churches.

3. The apostles were church planters.

The apostles themselves were church planters, and the book of Acts is an account of their church planting ministry. They planted churches with little support from other churches and against great political and religious opposition. Ultimately, their obedience to the Great Commission cost them their lives.

4. The Great Commission is a call to plant churches.

Jesus' "Great Commission," recorded in Matthew 28:19-20, essentially is a call to plant new churches. We can say this because, throughout the rest of the New Testament, baptizing, teaching and making disciples are exactly what churches are commanded to do! Additionally, the dozen men who originally heard Jesus say the words "baptize, teach and make disciples" responded by spending the rest of their lives planting new churches.

We think the Great Commission is a call to a two-week mission trip. The disciples thought it was a call to start new churches.

Who misunderstood the Great Commission?

Virtually every evangelical church in North America would agree that the Great Commission applies to all churches, and all churches and all Christians should endeavor to fulfill the Great Commission. Yet far fewer are able to accept that every church and every Christian should be involved in church planting. This perspective contradicts Scripture. It is important to realize the Great Commission is fulfilled by church planting, and the Great Commission cannot be properly fulfilled without planting churches. Consider how the great preacher Charles Spurgeon urged his congregation, in a sermon titled "The Waterer Watered," on Sunday, April 23, 1865: "We encourage our members to leave us to found other Churches; nay, we seek to persuade them to do it. We ask them to scatter throughout the land to become the goodly seed, which God shall bless. I believe that so long as we do this we shall prosper."

Why Support

Why would a church want to support a new church plant? Here are [7 reasons](#) your church should support church planting:

1. New churches reach new people more effectively.

Studies have shown that church plants are more effective at reaching the unchurched in North America. Churches that support church plants help reach people with little to no church background.

2. New churches are needed to reach a growing population.

Even as the population of North America continues to grow, more and more churches are closing their doors. When churches help plant churches, they help reach new and existing communities without a Gospel presence across the country.

3. Church planting is a central biblical model for kingdom growth.

Ed Stetzer writes, “When we look throughout the New Testament, we see church planting as an established pattern... It’s the first thing the disciples did when they responded to the commissions of Jesus. They planted churches.”¹

4. Church plants are healthier when supporting churches are involved.

The survivability of a church plant goes up when multiply supporting churches are involved.

5. Churches that support church planting grow spiritually.

Churches that invest in church planting often are stretched spiritually as they trust the Lord with their people and finances.

6. Churches that support church planting grow missionally.

Churches involved in planting new churches are constantly challenged with a greater kingdom vision, ever-new missional strategies and an increased passion for reaching their own communities.

7. Churches that support church planting grow numerically.

Research by Jeffery Farmer indicates that churches involved in helping start new churches experienced positive increases in worship attendance, baptism and small group participation.²

¹ “9 Reasons an Established Church Should Plant Churches,” BandH Academic Blog (April 26, 2016) <http://www.bhacademicblog.com/9-reasons-an-established-church-should-plant-churches/>.

² Jeffrey Farmer, “Church Planting Sponsorship: A Statistical Analysis of Sponsoring a Church Plant as a Means of Revitalization of the Sponsor Church” (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007).

How to Become a Supporting Church

What does it mean to be a Supporting Church?

Send Network Supporting Churches partner with a church plant by praying, participating and/or providing for their needs.

Resources in this Section

- [How to Connect with a Planter](#)
- [How to Partner with a Planter](#)
- [Supporting Church Pro Tips](#)

How to Connect with a Planter

If you don't know a church planter you want to partner with, then finding one that's a good fit for your church can be a challenge.

Here are a few places to start looking for potential church planting partners:

Explore your networks.

Sometimes the best place to start is by calling people you know. Pastors who have a relationship with good church planters are often looking to help them find more good partners. Who do you know that is already involved in church planting?

Talk to your association, state convention, or Send Network field staff.

Your local association and/or state convention will likely have a church planting strategy your church can help. Reach out and see if there is a church planting partner you can help within those strategies.

Check out SendNetwork.com.

At any given time, Send Network has more than 1,500 active church planters in need of support. You can learn more about [where we plant](#) and the [lead church planting missionaries](#) you can support.

How to Partner with a Planter

Supporting Churches partner with a planter by praying, participating, and/or providing for their needs. Here are [7 steps](#) every Supporting Church can take to partner well:

1. Plan to champion your planter.

Your partnership in this kingdom work is significant. Make a plan to champion it within your church and enlist a member of your staff or church to help lead. Find ways to talk about the partnership and help your congregation understand why and how you're involved in church planting.

2. Get to know the planter's Sending Church.

Most planters have a primary Sending Church. This is the congregation that has committed to take responsibility for a church plant by sending them and helping ensure they get the preparation, coaching and care they need. It is important you work with the Sending Church to provide well-rounded support.

3. Develop a plan to pray for the plant.

When your planter hits the field, he will be in the crosshairs of Satan's attempts to thwart his work. Your proactive prayer and encouragement for your church planter may make the difference between success and failure. For more, see [How Your Church Can Pray](#).

4. Develop a plan to participate in the plant.

Volunteers can be a big help to church planters, but only when their participation in the plant is strategic and volunteers are well-prepared. Sit down with the planter and determine if short-term volunteers or long-term team members are helpful to start the new church and how to use them. For more, see [How Your Church Can Participate](#).

5. Develop a plan to provide for the plant.

There's no getting around it: church planting can be expensive. It is critical that church planters be well funded enough to focus on their work without undue stress. Supporting Churches come alongside Sending Churches to help provide these needed resources. For more, see [How Your Church Can Provide](#).

6. Clarify the partnership's goals and expectations with a written agreement.

A written agreement will help your church and the church planter work through the major issues you may face in years to come. Writing out your expectations and signing an agreement can ensure everyone is on the same page and underlines the significance of what you're doing. For more, see [Sample Partnership Agreement](#).

7. Enlist other churches to become Supporting Churches.

Church planting is costly and difficult. Most of the time, it takes a coalition of churches to plant a new church. You can help the planter expand their team!

Supporting Church Pro Tips

Here are some tips to keep in mind as you seek to support church planters well:

DO

- **Pray** intentionally, strategically, consistently, personally, and corporately for the church plant.
- **Recognize and celebrate important occasions** like birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays with the planter.
- **Plan for a long-term partnership** of three to five years.
- **Educate yourself and your church** on the context where the planter and his family will be working.
- **Find creative ways to support the plant** by using skill and talent within your own congregation, for example, managing websites, helping with legal and financial counsel, etc.
- **Use your influence to support the plant.** Talk about the plant in your sermons and work it into your everyday conversations to build excitement in your congregation.
- **Connect with the planter and his family relationally.** Become personally familiar with the family, so you can minister to them more effectively.
- **Be proactive**, and actively look for specific ways to help instead of waiting for your planter to ask for your assistance or support.
- **Ask your planter if teams are helpful and prepare them well.** Make sure they support the strategy of the church plant in word and deed.
- **Work supporting into your general budget.** Be intentional, strategic, and generous with your financial support.

DON'T

- **Forget the spouse and family.** Look for ways to bless the family outside of the church plant through gifts, gift cards, vacations, etc.
- **Have rigid preconceived ideas of what supporting will look like.** Be flexible and follow the planter's lead on the level of support and interaction he would like.
- **Focus on only financial support.** There are many equally important means of support you can offer a planter including short-term mission teams, emotional and spiritual support.
- **Commit to something if you can't follow through.** Be realistic in your offers of support, so you don't overpromise and under deliver.
- **Be surprised by the strategy and methods used by the planters.** They are working in a different environment and context, and their church may look and feel much different than what you are used to.
- **Be intimidated.** Churches of all sizes are able to be effective and strategically support church plants.
- **Assume your support is too small to be important.** Even if your support seems small to you, it can make a huge difference in the life and ministry of a church planter.

Appendix

Additional Resources

The following additional resources are designed to help you become an even more effective supporting church.

Resources in this Section

- [How Your Church Can Pray](#)
- [How Your Church Can Participate](#)
- [How Your Church Can Provide](#)
- [Sample Partnership Agreement](#)

How Your Church Can Pray

When you think of leading your church to pray for church planting, think intersection rather than addition. What do you already do in the regular rhythms of your church that you can intersect with prayer for church planting?

Here are a few ways you can pray for planters in the life of your church:

Pray personally.

Embracing prayer for church planting begins with you. As you pray for your planter, God will burden your heart more for planting.

Pray corporately.

Prayer for church planting can be a strategic way to shape your church's heart for the kingdom. Tell the stories of individual church planters, show their videos, pass out prayer cards, and pray for church planters by name. Pray together in small groups and worship services that God would bless the work of individual church planters.

Pray consistently.

Work prayer for church planters into the regular rhythms of your church, so that you as a church pray every week or month for church planters. Consider challenge small groups to adopt a planter, praying for a planter during Wednesday night activities, and updating the congregation about church planting partners during offerings.

Pray strategically.

Get to know the strategic aims of your church planting partners, and pray that God would direct and work through your planter toward these kingdom goals. Pray that God would use your church to help with these strategies however he sees fit.

Pray expectantly.

We pray to the one, true and living God of the universe. He is mighty to save and to work his good purposes even in the most difficult of circumstances. Pray expecting that God will move, and that you will get to be a part of this great work on the edges of lostness.

How Your Church Can Participate

Planting a church is often difficult and lonely work. The long-term success of a plant is intimately tied to the spiritual, emotional and physical health of the planter and his family. One of the best ways to join your planter in his work is by taking a proactive role in encouraging and caring for him and his family.

Here are a few practical ways you can participate in planting by caring for your planter:

1. Call them, ask good questions and pray for them.
2. Have small groups write personal notes of encouragement.
3. Remember birthdays by sending a gift card with a personal note from the church's staff on the planter's and spouse's birthdays.
4. Remember their anniversary by sending a gift card with a book on marriage and a personal note on their anniversary.
5. Remember the planter's children at Christmas by sending gift cards to them with a short note thanking them for what they do for Jesus!
6. Once a semester, work with the planter to schedule a spa day for his spouse.
7. Once a semester, send a team to babysit the planter's kids for an overnight getaway with his wife, and pay for their getaway.
8. Once a year, invite the planter and his wife, if possible, to your church to love on them and have him preach at your church.
9. Once a year, send your lead pastor to visit your planter's church. Take the planter and his family out to lunch after church and pick up the tab.
10. Once a year, provide access to a biblical counselor for your planter and his family to utilize. Offer this whether you think it is needed or not.

How Your Church Can Provide

There's no getting around it: church planting can be expensive. From personnel to meeting space, the costs add up fast. Indeed, the simple cost of living can be staggering for those planters in large cities. Yet, it is critical that church planters be well funded enough to focus on their work without undue stress.

Here are [6 ways](#) your church can provide for church planting:

1. Provide regular support.

Financial stability is key for both the health of the planter and the growth of the new church. Regular, ongoing financial support is the core of a church plant's budget until it is able to support itself. Consider making a long-term (3-5 year) commitment to support your church plant from your budget.

2. Help with start-up costs.

A new church will incur a number of costs as it gets started. A sound system, for example, is a large expense that normally cannot be covered by a church plant's own income. Your church can really bless a church plant by helping cover these kinds of expenses.

3. Care for his family or team.

Moving and planting can be quite stressful on a church planter, his family, and team members. Your church can provide a date night for your planter and his wife, send gifts to their children, or help cover some of those expenses. These thoughtful gifts will go a long way in helping your planter and his team know they are not forgotten on the front lines.

4. Provide for one-time needs.

A failed laptop or dropped projector can cripple a young plant, and the replacement costs can drain their accounts of critical funds. Your church can listen intentionally for these needs and step in to help.

5. Help the church multiply.

Where one church plant is needed, there's normally a need for many more. So, it is normal and good for a new church plant to plant another church within their first five years. Supporting Churches can multiply their kingdom investment by aiding your planting partner's efforts to multiply.

Sample Partnership Agreement

NAMB recommends that Supporting Churches and church plants formally document their relationship, goals and expectations in a clear, written church planting agreement. The following sample is designed to facilitate discussion around such an agreement. The specifics of the agreement below should be examined and adjusted to fit the relationship.

Purpose

We enter this Church Planting Agreement to clarify the roles and responsibilities we each assume as Sending Church and Church Planter in the planting of a new church.

Parties

We understand that the Church Planter and Supporting Church Pastor/Representative listed below enter this agreement on behalf of the groups we represent.

Supporting Church: _____
Church Name *City, State/Province*

Supporting Church Pastor/Representative: _____
Name, Role

Church Planter: _____
Name

Church Plant: _____
Church Name *City, State/Province*

Objectives

We enter this agreement for the following reasons:

- To establish a successful partnership that facilitates planting a healthy, multiplying church;
- To develop mutual participation, trust, and ownership;
- To clarify our understandings of ministry, support, doctrinal beliefs, and accountability; and
- To establish expectations of around prayer, encouragement, communication, and ministry updates.

Responsibilities

We, the Supporting Church, agree to the following responsibilities:

1. We will advocate for the church planter and plant by leading our church and others to pray for and support the work.

2. We will develop and implement a plan to proactively encourage and care for the planter, his family and his team for [at least the first 3 years].
3. We will send volunteers as requested by the church planter to assist the church plant.
4. We will provide financial support for the planter and the church plant by [giving \$___ per ___ for ___ years].

I, the church planter, agree to the following responsibilities:

1. I commit to integrity and openness in my life, ministry and leadership.
2. I will live my life and minister in accordance with the Send Network’s [Planter Code of Conduct](#).
3. I will proactively discuss personal struggles and strategic decisions with the appropriate leadership of my Sending Church.
4. I will lead the church we plant to affirm the beliefs expressed in the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*.
5. I will lead my church to cooperate with Great Commission Baptists to plant churches locally and globally by giving through the Cooperative Program and Annie Armstrong Offering.

Together, we agree to the following responsibilities:

1. We will maintain faithfulness to the teachings and example of Jesus Christ in our lives, ministries, and leadership.
2. We will communicate regularly and proactively [no less than once a ___] to help maintain a relationship that serves the kingdom and honors Christ.
3. We will discuss misunderstandings and/or disagreements with humility, seeking clarity and reconciliation when necessary.
4. We will review this agreement annually to ensure our partnership continues to serve objectives for which it was established.

Agreement

For the glory of God and the expansion of his Kingdom, the undersigned parties enter into this relationship, to plant a new church in _____
(name of city and state).

This agreement is a commitment of the undersigned parties to provide support to the church plant as described above. This agreement may be extended with mutual support. This agreement may be ended if the terms of the agreement are not upheld.

Supporting Church Representative

Date

Church Planter

Date