



Best Practices of a Supporting Church

A supporting church comes alongside a Sending Church by praying, participating and/or providing for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the plant, planter and his family. In many ways, strong supporting churches can play a primary role in a church planter's long-term health and success.

Here are some of important practices and characteristics to keep in mind as you seek to be a strong supporting church.

DO:

- **Pray** intentionally, strategically, consistently, personally and corporately for the church plant.
- **Recognize and celebrate important occasions** like family birthdays, anniversaries and holidays with the church planter.
- **Plan for a long-term commitment** of three to five years.
- **Educate yourself and your church** on the ministry context where the planter and his family will be working.
- **Find creative ways to support the planter and plant** by using the depth of skill and talent within your own congregation to manage websites, give legal and financial counsel, etc.
- **Use your influence to support the planter and plant.** Talk about the plant in your sermons, and work it into your everyday conversations to build excitement in your congregation. Encourage other local pastors to support this or another church plant.
- **Connect with the planter and his family relationally.** Become personally familiar with each member of the family, so you can minister to them more effectively.
- **Be proactive**, and actively look for specific ways to help instead of always waiting for your planter to ask for your assistance or support.
- **Send people well.** Prepare short-term support teams in advance for the culture and environment they will face.
- **Work it into your general budget.** Be intentional and strategic about planning your financial support.

DON'T:

- **Forget the spouse and family.** Look for creative ways to bless the family outside of the church plant through gifts, gift cards, vacations, etc.
- **Have rigid preconceived ideas of what being a supporting church 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 intimidated.** Churches of all sizes are able to be effective and strategic supporting churches.
- **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 in an established church.
- **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.