



## Ministry Partners

Ed Stetzer did a survey of 600 church planters and discovered that those with a church planting team had a higher attendance than those with solo planters. He writes, “The attendance is almost double.”<sup>1</sup>

Ministry partners are people that you as the ministry leader have personally done life with and there is a strong connection between you and their family. Your relationships have experienced life and ministry pressures. Your loyalty and affection for each other runs deep and there is confidence in each other’s calling, strengths, and giftedness. Throughout the New Testament, we see the importance of team ministry.

### Read Luke 10:1-12

- What is the significance of Jesus sending out his disciples in pairs?
- What are the advantages of team ministry?

### Read Acts 6:1-7

- What are the characteristics of servant leaders?
- What were the results?

### Read Acts 13-15

- What insights can we gather from the formation of the missional team?
- What Biblical characteristics do you want in your new ministry or mission?

Identify and invite new ministry partners to join your team. This is crucial for any new ministry or new mission church. In Acts 1:12-26, we see the formation of a ministry team,

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<sup>1</sup> Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern World*, page 158.

and we discover the process which the assembly of people used to identify and raise new leaders.

## A Spirit-Led Process

Throughout the book of Acts, starting new ministries and church planting was a natural mind-set. Church leaders thought of church planting as just one of the things the church does along with everything else. Paul was continually engaged in sharing the Gospel, discipleship, and church planting. Below is a list of churches planted by the Apostle Paul recorded in the book of Acts and supported by historical timelines.

### First Missionary Journey

- **Antioch of Pisidia** (Galatia)
- **Iconium** (Galatia)
- **Lystra** (Galatia)
- **Derbe** (Galatia)
- **Churches in Cyprus** (Salamis and Paphos)

### Second Missionary Journey

- **Philippi** (Macedonia) – First church in Europe
- **Thessalonica** (Macedonia)
- **Berea** (Macedonia)
- **Athens** (Greece) – Possibly a church formed from converts
- **Corinth** (Greece)

### Third Missionary Journey

- **Ephesus** (Asia Minor) – Became a hub for planting other churches in Asia
  - From Ephesus, churches were likely planted in:
    - **Colossae**
    - **Laodicea**
    - **Hierapolis**
    - **Smyrna**
    - **Pergamum**
    - **Thyatira**
    - **Sardis**
    - **Philadelphia**

## Post-Acts Ministry

- **Crete** – Paul left Titus to continue establishing churches
- **Nicopolis** – Mentioned in Titus, possibly a base for ministry

As the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul and others, church planting happened on a frequent basis as a natural outgrowth of the Gospel reaching the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

## Shifting the Ministry Mind-set

A natural church planting mind-set can be described in terms of three key mind-set shifts. The hard truth is that if you and your team cannot make these mind-set shifts, it is highly unlikely that your church can plant churches naturally and effectively.

1. **You must be willing to give away resources and lose control of your money, members and leaders.** Paul “empowered” new leaders. He gave them ownership, and in doing so, he surrendered a lot of control. If your ministry adds people who are assimilated into your church and incorporated into Bible studies and new ministries in your church, it swells your numbers. But if you organize new people into new churches, you lose money, members, numbers, leaders, and control. Yet that is exactly what Paul did.
2. **You must be willing to give up some control of the shape of your ministry itself.** A new church will not look just like the original. It will develop its own voice and focuses. There is one body of true and faithful doctrine at the heart of Christianity. However, if you insist that the new church must be a clone, you reveal that you are not willing to admit the reality of contextualization in the biblical sense of adapting and incarnating to reach new people with the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:22). Different generations and cultures will produce a different kind of church. This is not to undermine faithful doctrine but recognizes the cultural nuances in the city.<sup>2</sup>
3. **You must expect new ministries and new churches to “get messy” at times.** New churches reach new people with different worldviews, cultures and perspectives. New churches typically draw a healthy portion of their new members from the ranks of the unchurched. The Gospel transforms lives, but this transformation takes time (Romans 12:2). Paul’s letters to the earliest Christians frequently reflect upon the “messy” nature of new ministries among new believers (1 Corinthians 3; Galatians 3:1; 1 Timothy 1:3-11).

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*, pages 357-358.

# Practical Steps

## Meeting People and Making Contacts

*Farming* is the process of going door to door by giving an opinion poll such as, “What are the greatest needs in this community? How can I pray for you?” This door-to-door approach is a light touch for meeting members of the community.

*Servant Evangelism* is a simple approach to share God’s love by doing acts of kindness in your community.

*3/5 Rule* is five contacts a day (name and phone number) until you get three meetings or sit downs with the person to share the vision for the new ministry or new church and/or to share the Gospel.

*New Movers’ Lists* are available to help expand contacts in the community.<sup>3</sup>

*Websites, Livestreaming and Social Media* provides access to thousands of people and can be focused on local geographies and demographics. Ministry for today must include use of technology to help reach new people with the Gospel.

## Growing a Team

To have a ministry launch team of 40 adults in 12 months, how many contacts must one make to achieve that goal? Let us say you can get 10% of your contacts to join your launch team. You would need to make 400 contacts to see that happen in 12 months. What is a “contact”? A contact is a name, phone number, or email. What is a “meeting”? When you have a personal appointment with the person to share the vision for the new ministry or new church and/or to share the Gospel.

## Developing Communications Systems

Effective ministries need excellent communication systems to cultivate relationships and create momentum. These ministries need to become great collectors of contact information. They become great at follow up communication and clear next steps. They make strong impressions with follow up emails, cards, and communications.

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<sup>3</sup> Gary Rohrmayer, *First Steps for Planting a Missional Church*, page 60.

## Resources

*[Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches that Multiply](#)* by Ed Stetzer

*[Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City](#)* by Timothy Keller

*[Together in Mission2: The Rev7:9 Intro Manual](#)* by Dr. Jon Diefenthaler, Dr. Robert Scuderi,  
Dr. Yared Halche, Dr. Tesfai Tesema

*[Luther and World Mission: A Historical and Systematic Study](#)* by Ingemar Oberg