

*Blue River-Kansas City Baptist Association*

# The Call of the Church Planter & The Phases of Church Planting

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BAPTIST CHURCH



VISION



2020

Blue River-Kansas City Baptist Association

*“You go down to so-and so, and never show yourselves again until you have established a chapel. Hang on by your hands, and then by your teeth, and then by your eyebrows. I will find money to keep you in bread and cheese. You have to establish a self supporting cause, and do not come back till you have done it.”*

– C.H. Spurgeon



### **1. His call**

The church planter must be called by God in the manner that the apostle Paul was called by the Macedonians to “come over and help us”. Without the call of God, the

planter will likely abandon the task when obstacles to church planting present themselves. In Philippi, Paul was arrested, beaten and imprisoned, yet never once wavered in assurance that despite the adversity he was called to Philippi.

This call is not a call of convenience. The church planter must not involve himself in the task simply because there is no other ministry available. Likewise, simply not “fitting in” with other churches is not sufficient calling to plant a new church. Nothing short of a divine calling should cause one to commit himself to church planting.

### **2. Spousal Cooperation**

The call on the church planter is a call on his family. There will be many days and weeks when nearly all of the family’s time and resources may be “poured out” as an offering for the planting of the new church. Without the firm commitment and support of his wife, the church planter will be forced to sacrifice either his church planting efforts or his family relationships. Neither of these is pleasing to God. Without spousal cooperation, the planter cannot be free to be obedient to the task. However, God will richly bless the family who follows Him in church planting. Sovereign God will NOT sacrifice an obedient family to plant a new church.

### **3. Training and Mentoring**

The church planter should avail himself of every biblical church planting training opportunity. An eagerness to learn and a desire to commit to the learning process are valuable assets in church planting.

The planter must have a humble and teachable spirit. It is important for the planter to seek out Godly counsel and direction from men of the Word. The New Testament model indicates that what we know we pass on to others who in turn teach others.

#### ***4. His Commitment***

The church planter must stay with the task that God has laid before him. There will be times when all evidence may suggest “packing up your tent” and heading for home. If it was God who called, then it is God’s work and the planter must be willing to serve until God, not circumstances, indicate otherwise. The men who brought the paralytic to Jesus were not detoured from the circumstance of a crowded house. They did not turn back because the door was blocked. They persisted and brought him in through the roof, a most non traditional method of entering a house. The scripture records “that on seeing their faith” Jesus said to the lame man “your sins are forgiven, take up your bed and walk.” These men were committed in their task, they were persistent, and were creative. These are traits that all church planters must cultivate in their lives.

*“Commence more churches...  
and see them suitably accommodated.”*

*– C.H. Spurgeon*

#### ***1. Preparation Phase***

The partner church must prayerfully prepare itself for the task at hand. A group within the partner church must prayerfully prepare itself for the task at hand. A group within the partner church should be selected who will serve as liaisons between the new work and the partner church. This group may be a mission council or team and must commit themselves to pray for, provide counsel to, support, communicate with, and advocate for the new church in all matters.

The partner church should work to understand the nature of the new church and work toward the development of a strategic plan for the work. It is important that during the preparation phase, much information about the new work “target” are be secured, studied and prayed over. During this time period, the partner church needs to solidify the ownership of the task to which God has called them.

#### ***2. Cultivation Phase***

This is a time when activities and ministries are conducted in the target area in order to discover where God is at work. Concentrated prayer plays an important role in this phase. Through a variety of activities such as Back Yard Bible clubs for kids, block parties, home Bible studies, and door-to-door visitation, God begins to reveal those places where He is at work in the target area.

Relationships are developed and nurtured. This may be a rather unstructured time in the life of the new work and the planted must be sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. Upon arriving at Philippi, Paul tarried for a few days. In some ways the cultivation phase resembles tarring for a few days, getting to know your target area and waiting for God to reveal “Lydia”.

### ***3. Formation Phase***

As God begins to draw a group unto Him for the purpose of forming a new church, many details must be addressed. These include a name, a meeting place, service times, music, children and youth ministries and ministry development. Some of these may have been addressed in the preparation phase, but it is here they begin to take shape. It is in this stage that the group begins to take on an identity as a “body of elect believers”. This is one of the most exciting times in the life of the new church.

### ***4. Maturing Phase***

After the initial burst of energy, it becomes evident that this is a marathon, not a sprint. In this phase, long term plans are laid down and in some sense God begins to install a type of genetic code that will guide this church for the remainder of its life. Issues such as correct doctrine, discipline, and church rules are formalized in this phase. It is critical that missions become a part of the genetic code of this new church so it will reproduce itself soon and often.

### ***Final Thoughts***

Church Planting is something only God can do. Jesus reminds us that Church planting is His work with His words in Matt 16:18 “I will build my church”. Men can draw crowds, men can create organizations, men can buy land and build buildings but only Christ can plant a church.

Prayer is the source of power in church planting. Every new church plant must have a strong and passionate team of people and partners who daily pray for the planter and his team. The Gospel is the central and never changing message of the church plant. While serving, loving, caring and ministry are the activities of a new plant the message is the Gospel, the power to transform lives and to transform communities is the Gospel.

We are living in an age when more churches are being planted around the world everyday than at anytime in history. God is pouring out His spirit and planting churches at a rate that is glorious! We know that we should see where God is at work and join Him. Today God is at work all around us planting churches for His Glory and we are invited to join Him in this awesome task.