

CHURCH PLANTING TIMETABLE

Within the plan and purpose of God, the overall goal is to work prayerfully and diligently toward developing a self-supporting church located on its own property and in its own building in God's timing. Property and building costs vary widely.

EARLY GOALS AND GROWTH

The church should be paying all of its own operating expenses (pastor's salary, building rent, utilities, materials, etc.) within two to three years. To reach this goal, 50 to 75 people are needed. The church should be saving money toward property purchase and building in most cases. In order to reach this goal, 100 to 150 people are needed.

Each new church will proceed on its own timetable and the order of events will vary. A new church needs to "take hold" relatively quickly within the first year or two or its viable future may be in question. Here is a suggested timetable that will enable the reader to get a sense of what is involved in church planting logistically.

PREPARATION BEFORE MOVING TO THE FIELD:

- Investigate the area.
- Pray much and gather a team of prayer partners.
- Familiarize yourself with church legal and business information.
- Develop an initial financial system and plan.
- Write a preliminary constitution.
- Design a church website, publicity plan, and communication strategy.
- Estimate expenses and raise financial support.
 - ~ Initial expenses
 - ~ Five-year support or partial support for pastor
- Acquire equipment for church services.

FIRST SIX WEEKS ON THE FIELD:

- Settle your family into your home and community.
- Rent the best location.
- Acquire more necessary equipment for holding services.
- Commence systematic canvassing, visiting, and interacting with prospective members.
- Begin initial evangelism and discipleship in the community.
- Hold "get acquainted" fellowships which include vision casting.
- Have an official opening Sunday in six weeks.

WEEK SEVEN THROUGH MONTH FIVE:

- Hold regular Sunday services.
- Continue systematic canvassing, visiting, and interaction (20-30 hours).
- Expand evangelism and discipleship.
- Train officers, teachers, and workers.
- Finalize legal incorporation and 501(c)3 application.
- Start Sunday school or some form of group discipleship.
- Develop prayer times.
- Develop a careful financial system.
- Start saving toward property if possible.

MONTHS SIX THROUGH EIGHT:

- Complete the formal organization.
- Hold a charter service.
- Invite people to join the church.
- Adopt a constitution and have the members officially call the church planter as pastor.
- Nominate and elect qualified officers.
- Develop the basic church ministries.
 - ~ Music and worship
 - ~ Evangelism, discipleship, and visitation
 - ~ Fellowships
 - ~ Children's ministry
 - ~ Youth ministry

EIGHT MONTHS TO FIVE YEARS AND BEYOND:

- Expand evangelism and discipleship efforts.
- Provide solid, helpful teaching and preaching.
- Keep improving corporate worship.
- Equip members for ministry.
- See every member involved and serving.
- Limit expenditures and save toward property.
- Pastor the people.

Adapted from CHURCH PLANTING by Bruce McAllister