

EPC Church Planting

Parent, Partner & Patron: An Introduction

EPC church planting success is measured, not only in the number of new churches planted, but also by the number of existing EPC churches that are engaged in church planting. To that end, the EPC Church Planting National Leadership Team has created a paradigm to measure participation. Our goal is for every EPC church to be a parent, partner or patron of church planting.

1. Parent Church: A parent church is one that takes full responsibility for birthing a new congregation. This includes but is not limited to.
 - a. Recruiting and hiring a church planting pastor
 - b. Financing 80-90% of the new church startup costs for a minimum of three years. (This includes planters' salary and benefit package, office / worship space, part-time staff such as worship or children's leaders and miscellaneous costs.)
 - c. Identifying the target area and committing human resources from within the parent congregation to create a launch team working with the planting pastor. (A launch team is comprised of 4-8 individuals who take on specific areas of responsibility such as discipleship, outreach, children, worship, care, etc.)
 - d. Assist in the establishment of a core team. A core team is 20-60 individuals, couples or families that are committed to attend and support the ministries of the new church plant. Church members who live in close proximity to the new church plant should be encouraged to prayerfully consider leaving the parent congregation and joining the new church plant.
 - e. Ongoing prayer support. A prayer team specifically should be set apart to pray for the church plant. Ongoing prayer in public worship services of the parent church is also expected.
 - f. Review and oversight of the planting pastor by the parent church head of staff and Session.
 - g. HR, Finance and Bookkeeping support under the direction of the parent church business office.

2. Partner Church: A partner church is one of several churches which band together in order to birth a new congregation. The responsibilities of partner churches vary depending on best practices in their setting.
 - a. Partner church planting works best when costs for starting a new church plant are beyond the resources of one congregation. A significant investment from several churches in a city or region makes the burden lighter for all.
 - b. It is usually best in the partner model that one church takes on the role of caring for the planter as described in the parent model above. In this model the lead church's business office also handles benefits, payroll, etc.

- c. However, an oversight team representing each participating church can also be a strong model. What is key, is that each area listed in the parent model is covered using each of the partner churches.
3. Patron Church: A patron church is a congregation that invests financially in church planting but is not involved hands on. This could also be an individual member of a local congregation who is interesting in a legacy gift for EPC church planting. A patron church / individual may offer a one-time gift or determine to participate in ongoing support of EPC church planting. However, even patron churches / individuals should be faithful in prayer for church planters and should receive an annual report from all church planters in which they are investing.

The purpose of this document is to give a brief description of the EPC church planting model as well as a working definition of all three categories. It is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to introduce our model.

A more detailed understanding can / should be sought out with the EPC National Director of Church Planting. Contact information below.

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