

Top 10 Tips for Successful Support

These 10 principles were developed by the first 20 RCA parenting churches in 2004.

Please prayerfully reflect on these principles as you consider planting a church.

1. Prayer and Spiritual Empowerment

The Holy Spirit is the catalyst and true initiator for the church. Prayer releases the power of the Holy Spirit to grow the church. It's important to have prayer teams interceding for a new plant, as well as to trust in the Holy Spirit and his leading.

2. Faith and Biblical Foundation

Biblical foundation is the map and compelling commission for starting a new church. Faith enables us to embrace the risk, accepting that we may not have every answer nailed down before we start the journey. The risk is so great that only God can accomplish it, so we must relinquish control to God.

3. Vision and Value

It's important to lay out the vision and values of a new plant. A new church plant's values should include a love for the lost, a passion for evangelism, and a commitment to move where God is moving. The vision gives a clear picture of the preferred future, offers parameters within which the process of growth will happen, and serves as a guide when storms come along. It should answer the question, "Why are we doing this?"

4. Parent Church Leadership

Parent churches are the initiators of the vision; they carry the responsibility. They should have a passion for the lost and should be able to fill a nurturing and birthing role and provide a model for the church plant. Parent churches are influencers that empower a plant to grow.

5. Planter Selection

A planter must be the right person in the right place at the right time. They should be selected for their leadership and communication abilities, teachability, and heart for evangelism. Potential church planters should be assessed before planting.

6. Resources

It's important to have visionary givers who are willing to take a financial risk. Resources aren't just monetary—they include coaches, models, and training; prayer support; people who have walked before us and are willing to share their experiences; and other gifted leaders. A church with well-balanced resources doesn't only consider money, but recognizes the value of other resources as well. Sow generously and take a systematic approach.

7. Communication

Communication must be a two-way street between the parent church and the plant.

There must be preaching, teaching, and storytelling, all of which must continually communicate the vision of the church.

8. Demographics

Many new church plants look for new communities. It is important that a planter is well matched to his or her location. The plant's vision must also be aligned with its location and with the people to be reached—it needs to target the right group. Spiritual mapping and spiritual discernment can help you decide what groups to reach out to. View ethnic diversity and transition of community as a ministry opportunity.

9. Relationships

There must be a spirit of love between the leader(s) of the parent church and the new church leaders. Evangelism happens best in relationships; there should be a spirit of “doing it together.” It is important to have good communication, trust, empowerment, love, friendship, and fellowship between the pastor of the parent church and the church planter.

10. Coaching

The best coaches closely evaluate and understand the personality, wiring, and needs of the planters they coach. This kind of coaching allows for self-discovery, which is part of discipleship. The planter should submit to the coach's leading and should demonstrate teachability and a desire to improve. The planter-coach relationship needs to be built on accountability and transparency.