



Partnership Principles

We believe that God is taking us on a journey toward a deeper understanding of partnership among God's people. We pledge to God and to each other to pursue what partnership means and to practice it as God gives us strength.

Partnership is God's mandate.

In giving us the Great Commission, God calls us to partner with him in global mission. Our God is a missionary God and we are to be a missionary people. Jesus prayed that God's people "be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me" (John 17:23). The oneness of the global Christian community (enhanced by working in partnership) is a powerful testimony to Jesus as God's anointed one. Partnership describes both our relationship with God in mission and our relationship with others as a means of accomplishing that mission.

God Himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is the perfect model of partnership: one essence of three distinct persons of equal importance, each with different roles performed for a common purpose.

Therefore, we do not engage in partnership simply because it is cost-effective or pragmatic. We do so because partnership reflects God's nature, demonstrates Christian unity, and draws people to God. It is how all mission should be done everywhere.

Partnership is mutual.

True partnership embraces the reality that every partner has something to give and something to gain. What they give, they do so sacrificially. What they gain, they receive humbly. No partner is greater than another in what it contributes.

Therefore, we acknowledge every partner's contributions, large or small, according to God's gifts. If we are perceived as the giver, we also receive something valuable in the partnership. If we are perceived as the receiver, we also have something valuable to give. It is the partnership that, by God's grace, achieves the vision.

Partnership is diverse and dynamic.

No partnership is static or exactly the same as another. Partnership can range from a single focus, such as funding, or it can be more full-bodied. It can happen once, intermittently, or be long-term. Relationships change over time depending on the vision, maturity, size, and capacity of the partners. Therefore, we celebrate the various expressions of healthy partnership and reject a "one-size-fits-all" mentality. The various levels, forms, and stages of partnership reflect the diversity of God's people as well as the diversity of needs in the world.

Partnership is most effective through multiple relationships.

No single church entity can bring all the resources necessary to meet the needs of God's people and of the world. God values humility over pride and collaboration over isolation. Therefore, multiple relationships are often the best way to serve God's Church and to meet the world's needs. In almost every case, at least one of the partners in the relationship will have a physical presence where God's people are manifesting the love of Christ.

Partnership is measurable.

Healthy partnership is not afraid to measure the benefits of partnership. We will not shy away from setting goals and measuring results. We affirm the value of asking questions and acknowledge the need for mutual transparency and accountability. Therefore, while we reject excessive quantifying, we affirm that mutual evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative results of a partnership is important if we are to be good and faithful stewards of the resources of God's people

Partnership is relational

Partnership is as much about relationship as it is about strategic outcomes. It is done with others, and those others matter. But we live in a fallen world where personalities and cultures clash; unmet expectations lead to misunderstanding and disappointment; forgiveness is infrequent; and speaking the truth in love is seldom practiced. We must live the Great Commandment. God created us to live in communion with Him, to participate in His nature, and to imitate His character. When the Apostle Paul described his partners in the gospel, he used language such as "I have you in my heart" and "how I long for you with the affection of Christ Jesus." We are called to pray for one another, to suffer with one another, to rejoice with one another.

The best partnerships arise out of rich relationships based on shared passion, mutual goals, and much time spent together. There is no greater work of partnership than the building of relationships in love by which all peoples will see Christ.

Partnership Navigates by Biblical Principles

Should Christians share resources in the global community of Christ? Yes. The Bible is very clear about how Christians are to care for one another. The Apostle Paul encouraged the Galatians to do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (6:10). This was not merely a nice sentiment. It took Paul nearly ten years to organize a large collection of funds from the Greco-Roman cities where he evangelized to be sent back to Jerusalem. This reveals many important principles for sharing resources in the Body of Christ (Acts 21:17-19; 24:17; 2 Cor. 8-9).