

Commissioning Pro Tips

In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit moved the church at Antioch to “set apart” Paul and Barnabas to take the gospel where it was not already known. The church prayed and fasted, then laid hands on their missionaries and sent them. By the end of Acts 14, Paul and Barnabas had completed their work and returned to Antioch to report what God had done and to celebrate with their Sending Church.

Here are 6 things to consider as your church commissions a planter:

1. Affirm your planter

It’s not hard to see that this first sending activity was Spirit-led, weighty and mutually edifying. It should be this way with all Sending Churches and their partnerships. As God leads, churches should formally set apart those God calls, acknowledging both the opportunity they have to partner in God’s kingdom work and the responsibilities they assume as they do so.

2. Identify a champion

Every church plant needs a champion within the Sending Church. You should make a plan to champion your partnership within the church and enlist a member of your staff or church to help lead. Who would be the best leader from your Sending Church to act as the primary advocate among the sending congregation?

3. Formalize the partnership

A formal agreement will help the Sending Church and the church planter work through the major issues they will face in coming years. Writing out your expectations and signing an agreement helps make sure everyone is on the same page and also underlines the significance of this partnership.

4. Celebrate publicly

The Sending Church has the unique privilege of celebrating and commissioning the church planter as they launch them to this new work. Take this opportunity to affirm with the congregation your commitment to church planting, to share what God has done and to pray for what He will do through this new work.

5. Plan for accountability

Partners genuinely interested in achieving the goal(s) of the partnership will want to hear about progress. They will want to celebrate success and help overcome obstacles. They will care about the health of the partner and opportunities to strengthen the relationship. Sending Churches should plan to proactively touch base with their planter on key areas of health and success.

6. Commit to the long haul

Starting a new church in a lost place is difficult work. It takes time to reach people and disciple them to the maturity necessary to sustain a healthy, multiplying church. Be patient with your church planter and be willing to continue investing in the plant long enough to see the new church succeed.