

OTHER RESOURCES

Challenges to Partnership Development

Eleven things that can hinder partnership development

1. **Lack of knowledge**

For most people the skills needed for partnership development do not come naturally. We need to be properly trained. Our most natural instincts in these areas are often not helpful. Take time to educate yourself in the area of partnership development. Read through these notes several times, and talk about partnership with your coworkers. If you are called to full-time missions work, *take the time to get the right training so that you can serve in your calling for a lifetime.*

2. **Lack of tools**

Any job has tools, and living as a missionary with a partnership team is no different. Take the time to gather the proper team-building tools and develop your skills with them.

3. **Ineffective or inconsistent efforts**

Mass mailings, social media, and emails are often our first thoughts of how to raise funds, but these mediums are often ineffective. Take time to be properly trained in effective communication. Once trained we need to be consistent in our efforts. Good partnership development habits flow out of a lifestyle and are not an occasional event.

4. **No plan**

Partnership development is not a natural thing, especially in the beginning. You have to be intentional about building your team. It takes time; you must set aside the proper time to get it done. Have a plan laid out for letters, postcards, phone calls, and appointments that will reach all of your contacts in an effective time frame. Hold yourself to your plan. You are never too busy to develop partners.

5. **Bad theology**

For many their thoughts of money, missions, and funding missionaries are developed by fear, mission traditions, and culture, not the Scriptures. We must have our minds renewed and have a kingdom mindset in funding the Great Commission. Currently, there is a powerful stronghold on the mind of much of the Church. Many Christians, including missionaries, have a wrong concept of money, wealth, poverty, etc. Even the powerful testimonies of “by faith alone” or stories of miraculous provision can be counterproductive. These stories are the exception not the rule. What God rarely does we should rarely do, and what God does regularly we should regularly do. Practice the biblical principle of sharing your vision and asking others to join you. There are thousands of people who have tried the no-ask approach who are no longer in missions.

6. **Pride**

Sometimes we can be very creative and spiritual when it comes to explaining our lack. But often at the root it is pride. Often we can be fiercely independent and it is seen as a virtue. God has placed us within a spiritual family, and we function best when we are interdependent on one another. Interdependence requires humility, but pride brings God's resistance. Don't draw back from financial partnership; ask God for the grace to do it humbly.

7. **Fear**

Fearing failure and rejection, being concerned at the possibility of being controlled or manipulated by supporters, fearing what our family might think, and worrying about always being in need, etc., are signs that we are still under an unbiblical stronghold. We need to have our mind renewed.

8. **Lack of personal giving**

As born-again believers we should tithe. Tithing is worship and good stewardship, and empowers ministry. Because God has been generous toward us we should be the most generous people on the earth. Additionally there is the simple principle of sowing and reaping. We can't expect to reap if we haven't sown. Tithing as well as a dozen other financial responsibilities from Scripture are not suddenly relaxed because we are missionaries. We must be doers of the Word.

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. (Prov. 3:9-10, ESV)

One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. (Prov. 11:24-25, ESV)

You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. (Deut. 15:10, ESV)

9. **Lack of confidence**

Clarity is confidence. We must have clarity and conviction about our ministry. We must believe that partnership is God's preferred way to fund His workers. And we must believe that God has a team for us. When you have confidence in these three areas then you will be able to share and invite with confidence, and this will lead to others having confidence to partner with you. Confidence may be your most important asset.

10. **Wrong motives**

We should always walk in humility, embracing the Sermon on the Mount teaching and loving our neighbor as ourselves. We should first seek the kingdom and its righteousness, and then all we need will be added to us.

Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered. (Prov. 21:13, ESV)

Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich. (Prov. 21:17, ESV)

²¹Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;²²and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:21-22, ESV)

¹Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;²but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. (Ps. 1:1-3, ESV)

11. **Lack of passion**

Without clarity and conviction about your ministry, you will not press through the challenges of developing financial partnership. Without a holy conviction you will lack the diligence needed to build your team. A lack of passion about your ministry will lead to a low volume of fruit.

Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. (Rom. 12:1,1 ESV)

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you any areas of your life where you are not lining up properly with the Word of God. Repent and ask the Lord for grace to obey.

Six failures of partnership development

1. **Failure to do a face-to-face meeting**

Face-to-face meetings are your best form of communication. Meetings give you a chance to build relationship with a brother or sister in Christ and share your vision with them. Most will give because they are asked to give. They don't mind being asked, and they will really appreciate you asking them at a face-to-face meeting. By this they feel valued and respected.

In my personal training experience about 33-36% of the people approached for partnership say yes. When the face-to-face meeting is replaced by a video meeting it drops to 8%. When done through mass mailing or social media it drops to about 1%.

2. **Failure to make the phone call**

The first call is the toughest, but after that it becomes really fun. This is your chance to share a little of the excitement you have for your new ministry. This is your chance to invite your friend to talk a little more. *Don't back away; people want to hear how the Lord is moving.*

Do not allow time to lapse between your letter, postcard, and phone call. Start making your calls seven days after mailing your postcard. I have seen many well prepared missionaries trip and stumble at the phone call. It's the first time in the process where we actually have to talk to a real person. Pray. When the day comes, pick up the phone and dial as fast as you can, and don't stop until you have made several calls.

3. **Failure to secure the appointment**

Sometimes when we call a friend and the call is going really well and we both are excited and having fun, we can simply forget to schedule an appointment. At other times appointments can be cancelled because we failed to give multiple points of contact or our communications were not clear and the person didn't really understand what we were asking of them. Remember to give them enough points of contact and state very clearly why it is you want to meet.

When on the phone, treat them with respect; be flexible to their schedule, meet them at their convenience. Don't use strong or manipulative language, but always remain proactive. Be sure they have heard your excitement. You may want to send an appointment reminder by text, email, or postcard.

4. **Failure to give a personable and personal presentation**

It's important that early on in the appointment we take time to build rapport with the person. Get to know them; ask them about their family, their work, or hobbies. Ask them about their church; try to hear their level of involvement. Show that you care by listening well and asking secondary questions. At this stage you want them talking way more than yourself.

When it comes time for you to share, be conversational rather than presentational. Be sure this part is also organic and natural. Remember you are simply sharing what the Lord is doing through you and your organization. Be sure to share the why behind the ministry and not just what you do. People will make their decision based on why not what.

In the event that you are using some sort of media, keep it short (under three minutes). Before the meeting, make sure all batteries are charged and videos are queued. Don't overly trust in media to tell your story or to do the ask for you; no one can tell your story better than you.

5. **Failure to ask for partnership**

Don't chicken out. If you're afraid to ask the partnership question, it may be that you are still under a stronghold. Having a biblical understanding of partnership will make it much easier to ask. Remember, you are inviting them to be a part of your team—a way for them to join the Lord in what He is doing in the earth. *Many people will say yes when they are asked, but very few will say yes without being asked.*

Be clear and ask, "*John and Jane, would you partner with me in ministry?*" and then wait for an answer. Don't speak for them. Let them be the next to speak.

6. **Failure to follow up**

If you have given a clear presentation and made a clear invitation to partner with you in ministry, there is a really good chance that they will say yes. In the event that they cannot say yes right away, ask if you may contact them in a few days once they have had more time to pray. **Don't leave it open-ended—name a specific date when you will contact them.** "*Could I contact you on Monday the 7th? Would that be enough time for you?*"

Follow through on all the steps. If you are having trouble connecting by phone, stay with it and don't give up. Be sensitive. Don't give up.

If they have said yes to partnership, but they are not going to start their support until you are in your field of service, then the above still applies. Thank them and set a date. *“John and Jane, thank you for partnering with us in ministry; we look forward to your official start date of May 9th. May I go ahead and start sending you our newsletter?”* Then, follow up the appointment, at least once a month, with a newsletter, card, or email thanking them and *mentioning the start date a week prior.*

Partnership Development mistakes to avoid

- » Trying to develop a partnership plan that does not meet face to face or that does not hear no. You are going to hear no.
- » Trying to tell your story by social media, video, phone, or some other means rather than face to face.
- » In an effort to try and save time, you do a group ask instead of individual asks.
- » Asking for financial partnership by social media, email, or in a newsletter.
- » Having a low level of faith and low expectations.
- » Not having a plan for making all your calls and appointments.
- » Lack of diligence.
- » Presuming that people don't want to partner with you rather than just inviting them to be a part of your team. Don't make the decision for them.
- » Trying to “raise funds” instead of building a “ministry team.”
- » Starting your partnership development without proper understanding and proper training.
- » Being busy with ministry activities and responsibilities and not giving proper time for partnership development.
- » Failing to invite them into financial partnership because of fear; instead you only ask them to be a prayer partner. Assessing someone's financial capabilities and making decisions for them instead of asking and letting them make their own decisions.
- » Launching out into full-time ministry before you have been properly trained and before you have completed your team.
- » Starting your partnership development without accountability and encouragement from a coach.
- » Settling for a less than proper budget.
- » Not ministering to your team well (lack of communication, gratitude, and personal attention).
- » Not being prepared for your face-to-face meetings.
- » Not following through on calls before and after appointments.

Reminders for partnership development

Things to keep in mind

There is a process to raising sufficient prayer, encouragement, and financial partnership to enable a missionary to serve full-time in their field. Just as consistent prayer and encouragement are crucial to your ministry, consistent financial support is also necessary.

Few workers look forward to the fundraising element of missions. Remembering a few things may help you:

1. **God has called you**

Because God has called you, He will also provide the support that you need. You can't do His part, and He won't do your part. A worker is worthy of a wage. The support is there. Your job is to gather the provision the Lord already has for you.

2. **You are not asking for money for yourself**

You are quite capable of supporting yourself through work here or back home, but that's not what you came here for. Instead, *you are raising money for a ministry*—a ministry that would not happen in the same way, if you were to stay at home. Jesus, the apostles, and Paul, most of the time, trusted in the provision of God that came through other people. “*The worker deserves his wages,*” (Lk. 10:7, NIV).

3. **Most missionaries look back on the process of building a team as being very positive and even fun!**

It builds a prayer team for your ministry. When people support you and your ministry, they will pray for you. Prayer follows finance.

- » Raising a partnership team will build your own faith.
- » Your partnership team will strengthen the movement you are called to. Your organization is only as strong as it has properly funded and fully available people.
- » Team building trains you for other areas of ministry.
- » Partnership development creates friendships that might not have otherwise happened.
- » Partnership development provides a platform for the gospel and your organization.
- » Partnership development requires humility and promotes interdependence (Body life).

4. **Focus on relationships and ministry—not money**

We must develop partners to do what God has called us to, but the money is incidental. Our emphasis will be on building, maintaining, and deepening personal relationships with friends who are or may become ministry partners—not on seeking funds.

Focus all of your contact time, *prior to partnership development*, on building relationship. Be sure to connect by phone, email, text, postcard, and face-to-face appointments over lunch or coffee. You may invite them to see the work that you are doing.

Don't use your letters or an email to ask for money or talk about how great your need is. When you do ask for financial partnership, it will be in face-to-face appointments.

5. **Partnership development is a very significant ministry (yes, ministry!).**

Most Christians are not called to full-time ministry. Partnering with others who are called through prayer, encouragement, and finances could very well be the best or only ways for them to connect with global missions.

The "house of prayer message" is not yet common in most churches. Therefore, your opportunity to share with individuals is a chance to encourage them with God's heart, with what He is doing world-wide, and how they can participate.

