

EXPLORE

YOUR

CALL

TO CHURCH PLANTING

*A Resource of the
Multiplying Healthy
Churches Team*



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Embrace God-Inspired Motivation

If you are considering planting, reflect on whether you demonstrate these God-inspired motivations:

- **Desire to Reach the Unreached:** You want to reach the unreached in a community, rather than just collect the already saved.
- **Targeting New Groups:** You want to reach a new generation or a new people group in a community.
- **Holy Discontent:** You have a holy discontent with the way things are that will result in a positive vision for genuine restoration in a community.
- **Fresh Expression:** You desire to offer a fresh expression of the body of Christ that is biblically sound and culturally relevant.
- **Movement Mindset:** You want to help usher in a church planting movement to reach an entire city or region for Christ.
- **Blessing Your Current Church:** You desire to bless your current church and commit not to do anything to harm it as you seek to start a new church.
- **Affirmation:** The leaders of your current church affirm that you are gifted to start a new church.
- **Teachability:** You are willing to be assessed, trained, and coached as a church planter.

Reflection Space:

- Which of the above God-inspired motivations resonate most strongly with me?
- How do I demonstrate each of these in my current ministry context?
- What steps can I take to strengthen areas where I am weak?

Why Church Planting Matters

Church planting is an effective evangelism strategy. Church planting has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to reach more new people for Christ. It's been said that it takes 42 members of an existing church to reach one new person for Christ, while it takes eight members of a church plant to reach one new person for Christ.

02

THE CALLING OF PAUL: A CASE STUDY

Studying the calling of Paul (Acts 9:1-22) can offer valuable insights into how God calls people to take His message to a previously unreached people. Begin your study with prayer, asking God to show you His plan for your life.

Acts 9:1-22 Study Questions

Spend 30-45 minutes answering the questions after reading the verses.

Question 1: What was happening in Paul's life when he was called? (See Acts 9:1-2)

Question 2: What are some similarities or applications in your world and life today?

Question 3: How did God get Paul's attention? (See Acts 9:3-9)

Question 4: What lessons can you learn from Paul's story about how God has sought to get your attention?

Question 5: What was Paul chosen to do? (See Acts 9:15)

03

IDENTIFYING YOUR MINISTRY PREFERENCE

Identify what kind of leader you might be. Understanding your leadership style will help you determine how you can best serve in church planting.

Ministry Preference	Biblical Type	Description	Church Planting Note
Initiator	Paul	Catalytic; likes to start projects or ministries; able to envision and actualize an idea.	Many church planters are Initiators. They are comfortable being the pioneer planter but must work hard to develop a realistic strategy and should not move on too soon.
Organizer	Titus	Likes to put chaos in order; can take an idea and develop an action plan to see it accomplished.	Can make great church planters, but may operate best where some preparation has already been done. May be ready to organize something else once structure is in place.
Operator	Timothy	Likes to organize and develop what has been started; good at taking things to the next level and growing the church.	If an operator is called to plant, they may struggle starting from scratch and should consider gathering people experienced at initiating.
Redeveloper	Nehemiah	Great at taking a plateaued or declining church and giving it new life; patient and passionate to see the broken restored.	The Kingdom needs redevelopers to see churches turn around and become an effective witness.

Reflection Space:

Which ministry preference best describes you? How can your strengths contribute to church planting?

04

SEVEN QUESTIONS: ARE YOU CALLED TO BE A CHURCH PLANTER?

Daniel Im lists seven indicators that give a glimpse into whether God is calling you to be a church planter.

Indicator 1: Are you a starter?

Do you have a pattern of starting things (e.g., lemonade stands, Bible studies, outreaches) that are still around after you have left? Church planting requires constant starting.

Your Response:

Indicator 2: Are you an equipper?

Can you lead and equip others to do the work of ministry, or must you always be the one doing it? Church leaders must be equippers, not only doers. (Eph. 4:11-12).

Your Response:

Indicator 3: Are you a dreamer?

Do you long to make a greater impact, see the world in a different way, and help people catch that vision? This hunger and drive are critical.

Your Response:

Indicator 4: Are you a doer (executor)?

Do you follow through and get things done? Many visionaries love the dreaming stage but can't actually execute.

Your Response:

Indicator 5: Do you have a burden and calling to specifically plant a church?

In your time with God, does He continue to bring this up? Is God laying a burden on your heart to start something new for Him?

Your Response:

Indicator 6: Does your family support you?

If married, your commitment to your spouse and children (the most important members of any team) must not be minimized. Their support influences the health of the church plant.

Your Response:

Indicator 7: Does your church support you?

Do others affirm your calling? If your church and friends are hesitant about your calling and gifting, then you also should be hesitant.

Your Response:

05

CHARACTERISTICS OF FRUITFUL CHURCH PLANTERS

Charles Ridley identified 13 characteristics whose intensity and frequency are predictive of an effective planter.

1. Visioning capacity: Generating vision, initiating plans, and building things from the ground floor up.
2. Intrinsic motivation: Working as a self-starter who demonstrates diligence and excellence.
3. Creating ownership: Passing the baton on to others, building teams, and delegating successfully.
4. Reaching the unchurched: Consistently reaching out and influencing people toward Christ and His church.
5. Spousal support (if married): Collaborating as partners and a team in marriage and ministry.
6. Effectively builds relationships: Evidencing the ability to meet new people and engage them in relationships at varied depths.
7. Committed to church growth: Embracing the need to grow the church spiritually and numerically, and implementing church growth principles effectively.
8. Responsive to community: Understanding local communities and implementing culturally responsive ministries.
9. Uses the gifts of others: Assessing, developing, and releasing others to serve in their area of giftedness.
10. Flexibility and adaptability: Negotiating changes successfully while staying centered on the overall vision.
11. Building cohesive groups: Orchestrating widely differing people to function as a unified body.
12. Resilience: Staying the course in the face of major setbacks, disappointments, and opposition.
13. Exercises faith: Evidencing a strong, vital relationship with God and willingly taking significant faith risks.

A Note of Encouragement

Church planting is difficult for the most qualified men. No one demonstrates all 13 characteristics all the time, but they need to be evident in your life, at least in an embryonic form. God loves to use us in our weakness so His strength will be made known (2 Cor. 12:10).

Self-Assessment:

Rate yourself (1-5, with 5 being strongest) on each characteristic above.

06

CONSIDERING BIVOCATIONAL OR CONVOCATIONAL CHURCH PLANTING

God’s Kingdom is in need of both bivocational and convocational church planters. You may feel equipped and called to a marketplace career but still be called to plant a church.

Key Definitions

Bivocational Church Planter: One who works a second job to supplement the church salary, with the hope that the church will eventually provide full financial support to leave the bivocational job.

Co-vocational Church Planter: One whose primary vocation is in the marketplace (e.g., teacher, mechanic) and who is at the same time called to start a church, with no intention of leaving their marketplace calling.

Benefits of Bivocational and Convocational Planting

Benefit	Description
Missional Engagement	Increases your “street cred” both inside and outside the church.
Financial Stability	Increase financial stability for the planter’s family, the church plant, and the church planting entity, as the minister pays their own way.
Shared Leadership	Limitations on time in direct local church activities require the leader to recruit others to assist them out of necessity.

Personal Reflection:

Would bivocational or convocational planting be appropriate for your context?
What are the benefits and challenges you would face?

07

ASSESS YOUR CALL TO CHURCH PLANTING

Use this self-assessment tool (built from the book by Clint Clifton) to evaluate your call. Score yourself on a scale from 1-5:

- 5 = Always
- 4 = Usually
- 3 = Sometimes
- 2 = Rarely
- 1 = Never

Statement	Score
I believe that there is no greater honor in life than to serve King Jesus by building His church on earth.	—
I believe Jesus can send me any place He wishes, and I should joyfully obey Him.	—
I believe that God will accomplish His purposes through me and in me.	—
My aspiration is to make Christ known, and I am willing to remain unseen to put Jesus on display.	—
I have been part of a healthy local church that has mentored me, teaches biblical doctrine, has godly leaders, and views other churches as allies.	—
I am seeking the guidance, wisdom, and assistance of a mature congregation and a faithful body of leaders.	—
I am willing to ask those who know me well to give me an honest assessment of my weaknesses as they apply to the church planting initiative.	—
I have a sincere aspiration to the office of elder.	—
I am seeking to meet the biblical qualifications of eldership.	—
I am willing to be affirmed and sent out by the leadership of my local church.	—
I have asked my spouse to affirm or deny my fitness for the office of pastor and my readiness to pursue church planting currently.	—
I have an ability to cast vision in a way that people who hear will believe the church truly will come to fruition.	—
I have the personal drive to initiate the many conversations, relationships, and partnerships necessary to plant a church.	—

My life truly is characterized by evangelistic fervor. I do not struggle with boldness, clarity, or consistency in sharing the gospel with non-Christians.	—
I have a “woe-unto-me-if-I-preach-not-the-gospel” burden. The Word of God is like a fire in my bones.	—
I do not give up easily or grow discouraged quickly. I press through problems, rather than retreating from them.	—
I am developing a soldier-like, brave, faith-filled, whatever-it-takes, gut-level missionary drive to plant a church.	—
I am willing to serve God in relative obscurity as a church planter.	—
I will not abandon Christ’s call, no matter how difficult the conditions may be or how discouraged I may become.	—
YOUR TOTAL SCORE	—

YOUR TOTAL SCORE: ____

Scoring Guide:

- 90-95: Strong confirmation of calling.
- 75-89: Clear indication of calling with some areas to develop.
- 60-74: Some evidence of calling; consider additional training and mentorship.
- Below 60: Seek counsel before proceeding; consider alternative forms of ministry.

Reflection Space:

What areas are strongest in my assessment? Where do I need to grow?

08

NEXT STEPS

Take Time to Reflect

Review your responses throughout this workbook. Consider:

- Which sections resonated most with you?
- What convictions has God impressed upon your heart?
- Where do you feel uncertainty or hesitation?

Gather Your Team

Talk through your answers to these questions and the results of the assessment with spiritual leaders and mentors in your life, including:

- Your current pastor or pastoral leadership
- Trusted mentors who know you well
- Your spouse (if married)
- Wise counselors from your church

Take Next Steps

Based on the feedback and your own convictions:

- Seek training and resources for church planters
- Connect with your denominational leadership
- Consider a formal assessment process
- Commit to ongoing prayer and discernment
- Contact your local association or the Multiplying Healthy Churches Team of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board for more information at 615-815-5095 or lmcmullen@tnbaptist.org or the QR code below:



