

Am I Called To Be A Church Planter?

If you feel that you may be called to church planting, or simply wondering what's next for you, take a second to answer these questions.

1. Do you like trying new things?

Church planting is essentially an entrepreneurial enterprise. You may at times have to do things that are not your favorite, but if trying new things in itself isn't fun to you, this could be a problem. At the same time, if you like a different challenge twice a week, this could be the place for you!

Planting a church means that you will be doing something different almost every single day. You have to be willing to learn and change and grow. At the same time, there are many things that need to be accomplished every single week, the weekends just keep on coming.

2. Are you Flexible and adaptable?

Working unexpected jobs, filling unexpected roles, navigating financial challenges, and dealing with difficult people are all parts of this job. If you can roll with that, taking each day for what its worth, you probably have the best chance of enjoying this challenge. On the other hand, if you're easily stressed when your things don't go according to plan, this might not be a very good fit.

When church planting, almost nothing goes according to plan. That's why it's so frustrating and why it's so fun! You have to be ready to adapt in almost every single moment. You might plan for 50 people and have only 5, or vice versa. It is vitally important to be able and willing to change and adjust plans when necessary, all while never letting go of the goals you are trying to accomplish.

3. Do you like being with those that don't normally go to church?

The trick is, all the people who go to church in the town you're planting in already have a church. So, your best shot is going to be with people who aren't already churchgoers. If that sounds like a good time to you, planting could go very well.

There aren't a lot of churches for people that don't want to be a part of a church. Church planting isn't about "shuffling the deck" of churches in a city. It should be about introducing people to God, helping those who want to become followers of Christ, and welcoming them into the family of God.

4. Have you been recognized as a leader by those that you know best?

The best indicator of future leadership is past leadership. Leaders don't suddenly learn how to lead because they have a title or vision. The best way to find out if you're a leader is to look behind you. If people are following you, you're a leader. Now take a closer look. Who's behind you? Do the people that trust you know the real you? This is the kind of leadership it takes to launch a healthy church plant.

Also, those who can best exercise authority are those who have learned to operate under authority in a healthy way. Do those who you currently serve under recognize your leadership gifts and abilities? And are you learning how to serve under their leadership in a healthy way?

5. Do you attend and serve in a church?

Church is a lot more complicated than it looks like on the surface. Just having some good ideas isn't enough. You need to have your fingers in deep to the day to day realities of ministering to real people and their needs.

We plant Vineyard churches from existing Vineyard churches. The best way to learn how to pastor is to be a part of a local church that you help to grow and thrive. If you can't serve in a church, why would you want to plant a church?

6. Do you daydream about ways that the church could be relevant to culture?

This question really is at the heart of the endeavor of starting new congregations. We want to walk with our Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other—tuning in to the Holy Spirit and the local news. If this conversation doesn't really interest you in some way, vision for a new church might be hard to find.

Every successful church planter that we've ever known dreams about the kind of church that would connect with those that don't go to church. They can see it, hear it, smell it, and talk about it in a way that others want to be a part of.

7. Are you a risk taker?

Lots of church plants don't make it. And even in the ones that do, launching a congregation involves trying lots and lots of things that don't work. "Throwing spaghetti at the wall to see what sticks" is a reality for people on the front end of this task.

Failure is not a possibility it is a certainty. You have to be willing to fail in order to grow. Church planters take risks that others have only thought about. But these are not meant to be uncalculated risks. A church plant is not just a philosophical idea, real people's lives are at stake. This is risk taking with a perspective towards the glory of God, and aimed at helping other and the life of Christ.

8. Do you have a desire to teach the Bible?

Teaching the bible is one of the essential job requirements of a church planter. You aren't creating a new story, you are joining an ancient one. If you can't tell the story of God, it's hard to show where you and your church fit in.

Preaching and teaching can take on a myriad of forms and styles—and this is all for the good. You will learn over the years how this works best for you. But if you don't find any passion at all in communicating the Bible, it will be hard to gather people to a community in which you find yourself preaching regularly.

9. If you are married, is your spouse supportive of your ministry dreams?

It is impossible for a task of this magnitude not to have an enormous influence on your family—and probably at some point, it will cost each of you something. If they aren't in full agreement and support, this sacrifice will cause enormous problems in your relationships. They have to believe in your call, and their own.

God doesn't call just one person in a marriage to this kind of ministry. Even though you might be the primary leader, your spouse will have to sacrifice for a church to be planted. When God calls a person, we believe that he calls our whole family. You will need to agree together that this is what God is calling you to.

10. Do you manage your finances well?

It's not sexy, but number crunching is a big part of leading a church. If you can't manage your own finances, what makes you think you can manage the finances of a church?

Church planters receive offerings—money that people have given in order to honor and worship God. We must be able to manage it in a way that glorifies God. Step one is learning how to manage and be generous with our own personal finances.