In the following document we will refer to the concept of Ministry Partnership. You may prefer to substitute the words Church Membership instead.

We desire to be the type of community God intended us to be. The Ministry Partner Commitment below highlights some specific commitments we believe characterize the basic Christian life and responsibility to the local church. Each statement flows directly from scripture. It is important that anyone involved in any significant ministry or who has influence in the decision making process, is striving to align themselves with these principles.

TEACHER NOTE: Below is a sample Ministry Partner Commitment. We recommend using your own church’s documents regarding church membership and walk through those INSTEAD of using what we have provided. If you do not have such a document, then discuss the points raised below as a means to call people to a higher level of church commitment. Churches are welcome to adopt all, or portions, of the following commitment if they so desire.

Ministry Partner Commitment

Ministry Partnership implies that we are committed to seeing the kingdom of God grow through (your church name). It means that the church is not something we attend, but something we are, and as such, we assume responsibility for helping it achieve its purpose and vision. We are all at different stages in our spiritual growth and, as a result, need to show each other great amounts of grace as we learn to bear with each other and our failings. This Ministry Partner Commitment represents my desire to continue growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ and see the community of (your church name) mature and fulfill its purpose.

- Jesus Christ is Lord of my life and I have declared this through baptism.
- I am actively attending a discipleship small group.

I accept and affirm the church’s:

- [ ] Statement of Faith
- [ ] Vision for this coming year

Do you agree with these prerequisites for church partnership? Why? Would you add or subtract anything?
I commit to:

Pursuing the Christ-like life wholeheartedly through:

Spending time regularly in God's word and prayer

*Joshua 1:7-8*

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Why is this commitment statement important?

If someone is not in **God’s word**, then they are not growing in knowledge, wisdom, or understanding. God primarily speaks to us through his word and if we are not in it regularly, then we have cut ourselves off from whatever God may want to say to us. To live lives too busy for reading God’s word is to have wandered off in our own spiritual direction, in our own limited wisdom, unaware of God’s purposes for our lives.

If someone is not in regular **conversation with God**, then they are not growing in their relationship with God. They will not grow in maturity and will lack spiritual vibrancy. If there is little prayer, there will also be little guidance and life impact. They will be limited to their own abilities, accomplishing very little for the kingdom of God. Kingdom growth requires much prayer.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?

Surrendering my life daily to the control of the Holy Spirit

*1 John 2:6*

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

*Ephesians 5:18*

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit

*1 Peter 1:15, 16*

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."
Why is this commitment statement important?
The Spirit-filled life is the “normal” Christian life. When the Holy Spirit is not in control, then we become busy building our own little kingdoms and are approaching life in our own strength. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives us proper life perspective and the presence of the fruit of the Spirit. No Holy Spirit – no divine expressions of love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Without the Spirit’s lead in our lives we will inevitably wander into life patterns that rob us of peace and joy.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?

Living in obedience to the word of God

James 1:22
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

2 Timothy 3:16-17
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Why is this commitment statement important?
It is one thing to read the Bible; it is another to live it out. That will always be a challenge. We want to know that ministry partners are committed to the Bible as being authoritative in how they are to live. Our goal is that everything in our lives aligns itself with the perspective of God as laid out in scripture.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?

Worshipping corporately, faithfully, and regularly

Hebrews 10:25
"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing."

Why is this commitment statement important?
Church is community; church is family. We don’t just “go” to church; we “are” the church as we gather together. When we meet, the focus should be on worshipping God and building up others, as opposed to self–gratification. Come to church for the opportunity to serve others and in the process you will be blessed.
Community is only built through consistency. The less consistent someone is, the less they feel a part of things and the less impact they can have on relationships and people’s lives. Authentic community looks for and seizes opportunities to meet.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?

Helping the church fulfill its mission by:

Praying for the church, its ministries, its ministry partners, and its leadership

Ephesians 6:18
And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Why is this commitment statement important?
Ministries will only be as effective as the amount of prayer we put into them. Without prayer, ministries will lack the power and impact of God.

Ministry is hard. People are not always encouraging and Satan strategizes ways of trying to render us ineffective. We need prayer! It is essential that the leadership be bathed in prayer, for if they go astray, the whole local church is in trouble.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?

Developing and using my abilities, talents, spiritual gifts and resources within the church or its extension ministries

1 Corinthians 12:7 (J. B. Phillips)
"Each man is given his gift by the Spirit that he may use it for the common good,"

Ephesians 4:12-13
to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.


Deuteronomy 16:17
Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.

Why is this commitment statement important?
God has given every believer special effectiveness in some area of strengthening the body of Christ. God expects us to use what he has given us for his purposes. This statement acknowledges that we are to be actively serving in the church in the areas of our strengths.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?
If anyone holds back their area of unique contribution, the entire church becomes hindered and less effective. The church was designed in such a way that we “need” each other in order to mature and become like Christ.

Sharing with others about God’s purpose for their lives

Matthew 28:19-20
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you

Why is this commitment statement important?
The mission of the church is to connect people to God. This isn’t something the “institution” of the church does; this is something every believer does. God called people to make disciples, not programs. When everyone in the church understands that God has placed them in unique environments where they can connect with others, then the church will truly begin to grow.

The goal here is that people will understand who God is and that God wants a relationship with them. Once they discover God, they can then begin to see the wonderful purposes he has laid out for them. This is where true life change and freedom begins.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?
Encouraging those outside God’s family to come to church and discover God’s love for them

2 Corinthians 5:20
We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Why is this commitment statement important?
The easiest, most basic form of introducing people to God is to invite them to church. This does not discount your own personal conversations with people, but it introduces them to the “family” of God. Disciple-making is ultimately a team task; layers of relationships all contributing to the growth of an individual.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?

Protecting the unity of the church by:

Refusing to gossip and disrupt the unity of the church

2 Corinthians 12:20
For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.

Why is this commitment statement important?
Gossip destroys relationship and unity. We need to make a commitment to try and guard this area of our lives.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?

Resolving tensions quickly by lovingly applying Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1

Matthew 18:15-17
"If your brother sins against you go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that `every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."
Galatians 6:1
Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Why is this commitment statement important?
Tensions will always occur when you bring a bunch of diverse people together. The concern isn't the tensions; the concern is how we resolve the tensions when they arise. Jesus calls us to be proactive in bringing about reconciliation. He went to the cross to solve all of the tension that we created. How far will you go?

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?

Being patient with and encouraging others within the body

Ephesians 4:2-3
Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Colossians 3:12-14
Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Why is this commitment statement important?
The KEY to church unity is GRACE. Grace can be defined as “undeserved favour”, but it essentially means you show love even when it has not been earned. In fact, God’s love can never be earned. This is why we are called to love even our enemies.

Even with this Ministry Partner Commitment, there will be times when everyone fails certain parts at different times. We need to show great amounts of grace with one another when we fail. As long as there is repentance and a desire to work things out, there is always the possibility of restoration.

What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?
Submitting to the church leadership with regard to:
- Spiritual and moral matters
- Church vision and direction
- Church discipline

*Hebrews 13:17*

*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

**Why is this commitment statement important?**

Church leadership is not an easy task. There are so many people with so many different perspectives, preferences and degrees of spiritual maturity. Sometimes leadership is called on to do the hard things, make difficult decisions and bring in church discipline whenever it is required.

Church leaders need to rely heavily on the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit and this is why prayer for them is so critical. They are responsible to God for how they teach and lead, and they will one day stand before him accountable for all they have done.

God calls the rest of the church to listen to the spiritual direction they give and to place themselves under that authority. This does not imply church leaders are always right, nor should members submit in areas that are in clear disagreement with the word of God.

Ultimately, Jesus is the head of the church. Church leadership is responsible to carry out Jesus’ will for the church.

**What might be the implications for the church if someone in ministry leadership/influence did not embrace this goal?**

Are there any areas of this Ministry Partner Commitment that create tension for you?

A team of people committed to seeing the local church accomplish its mission is an incredibly exciting thing. Nothing on earth can hold it back.

*We encourage you to take seriously the purpose of the church in this world and to realize YOU ARE THE CHURCH!*