



HORIZON

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“A Guide to Understanding Partnership”

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At **Horizon Christian Church** we believe that people like you are what make the body of Christ effective in its work. While years of tradition have taught us to worry about membership of the local church, we strive to take a more Biblical approach. Scripture tells us that every believer who shares in the baptism of the spirit is a member of The Church (the body), which today is a global movement striving to do the work of Christ as outlined in the New Testament. The Biblical basis for this mindset comes from Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth. In speaking to this local church Paul says,

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jew or Greek, slave or free - and we are all given the one Spirit to drink." (1 Corinthians 12: 12-13)

It is for this reason that instead of stressing membership in the local church, like a club that requires a secret handshake and excludes non-members, we stress a **partnership** between the local church and the believers who are a part of it. This more clearly identifies the responsibility of each person as a part of the local church body and the work we must all share (1 Corinthians 12: 14-31).

This guide is meant to help you understand the specific role that partners play at **Horizon Christian Church** in helping us to fulfill the church's mission; to REACH the lost, TEACH believers, and EQUIP all for service.

Horizon holds to five areas of commitment that we believe will help us to accomplish our mission. Partners are asked to share in these commitments. It is our firm belief that if all partners make these five areas a priority in their involvement then we, as a church, will be able to take advantage of the full power of God's potential within us. These core values consist of a commitment to community, a commitment to discipleship, a commitment to worship, a commitment to generosity, and a commitment to service. In this guide we will take a more detailed look into these commitments and how they are embodied at **Horizon**.

A Commitment to Community

God built us as relational beings, and therefore expects that we will develop relationships. After the creation of a singular human life He remarked,

"It is not good for the man to be alone." (Genesis 2: 18)

So, He created a helper for the purpose of relational community. Community is one of the great foundations of Christ's Church, and thus played a vital role in its early development. This is evident in several places in Scripture as we read about the early days of the church.

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place." (Acts 2: 1)

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." (Acts 2: 42)

"All the believers were together and had everything in common." (Acts 2: 44)

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had." (Acts 4: 32)

Over and over again we can see the growth of the early church coming alongside the development of community. At **Horizon** we have put into place a simple and strong system to ensure that we are a church built on community, and it's no coincidence that we refer to these gatherings as Community Groups.

Community Groups are small groups comprised of approximately 7-15 people and usually meet in the homes of their members, though they can meet anywhere. These groups are not just meant to build and strengthen relationships, but they are also intended to function as an avenue for discussion and life application of our weekly topics.

This is where real life change can happen and where the "fellowship" that is described in Acts chapter two can be experienced in its purest form. **Partners are expected to be an active part of a Community Group** as it is our primary means of building community at **Horizon**.

A Commitment to Discipleship

One of the most fundamental commands that Jesus ever gives his disciples is when he commissions them to,

"Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19)

At **Horizon**, it is our view that this charge should be one of our greatest motivations as we strive to reach people with the message of The Gospel in the most effective way possible. We also strongly believe that Christ did not call His church to produce casually committed followers. Rather, we are to imitate his personal disciples by wholly committing our lives to fulfilling God's purposes. In doing this we will become true disciples and be more equipped to share with others the hope that God's grace brings.

Partners are expected to maintain a personal devotion to reaching the lost, studying scripture, and interacting with God through prayer. By doing this we will not only create a lifestyle of devotion to The Gospel of Jesus Christ, but we will be able to personally fulfill the process of discipleship by mentoring others in their efforts to place God's plan as their top priority in life.

This process is embodied in many aspects of what we do at **Horizon**, such as community groups and weekly corporate teaching times. However, we feel that the most effective process for true discipleship allows the spiritually mature to personally develop small groups of people, teaching and instructing them on the basis of scripture.

To maintain true effectiveness and personal relationships, Discipleship Groups are designed to never exceed a group of five people, and can be led by anyone who demonstrates qualities of a spiritually mature follower of Christ. Discipleship groups are also established separately for both men and women (i.e. men training other men and women training other women) to follow the scriptural precedent of both Jesus and John who discipled groups of men, and Paul's words to Titus when he says,

"Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God." (Titus 2: 3-5)

Discipleship Groups exist because of Godly men and women and their willingness to lead in such a scenario. As such, they are managed on an individual basis and offered to those who want more guidance as they grow in their discipleship.

A Commitment to Worship

One of the most important parts of being the body of Christ is to bring praise, honor, and worship to the God who has given us everything. Our commitment to worship cannot be isolated to weekly corporate meetings where we sing praises to God and worship Him through the teaching of His word, but must spread to everything we do in life as outlined by this passage of Scripture.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3: 15-17)

Worship is not merely an action, but it is also a reaction to God's sovereign power and love for each one of us.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship." (Romans 12: 1)

Partners are expected to be a part of weekly worship celebrations and to live a lifestyle of worship dedicated to thanking God for the grace He has given, through their daily actions.

A Commitment to Generosity

One of the marks of the early church is that it was a culture of generosity. The book of Acts makes special note of this more than once and helps us envision the generous spirit that was the lifeblood of the church.

"Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need." (Acts 2: 45)

"...For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need." (Acts 4: 34-35)

As we try to better imitate the makeup of this group at **Horizon**, our local partners need to be committed to living the generous lives that Scripture calls us to live.

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9: 6-7)

In many ways, Jesus' teachings call us to re-evaluate our view of generosity and the necessity of living lifestyles that reflect the grace God has already shown to us.

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6: 32-36)

In light of Scripture's emphasis on this matter, **partners at Horizon are expected to give generously of their time, money, and resources.**

Though it is hard to measure what generosity looks like for the intangible aspects of life, scripture gives us examples of what God has expected from His followers in the past when it comes to tangible resources.

“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.” (Leviticus 27: 30)

Malachi chapter three describes Israel’s failure to bring a tithe as “robbing God”. Even though we are not bound to Old Testament law in our modern society we believe that the principle of a tithe is a reasonable Biblical baseline for partners of the local church to begin in their pursuit of giving generously. We also believe that Jesus’ teachings call us to a higher standard of generosity than just giving a percentage of our tangible resources. God expects whole-hearted generosity from all his followers and at **Horizon** we take that expectation very seriously.

A Commitment to Service

At **Horizon** we are committed to promoting a lifestyle of service as a direct imitation of Jesus. In the book of Matthew he affirms that,

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20: 28)

We also see Jesus take on the role of a servant in John chapter thirteen when he humbles himself and washes his disciples’ feet. Scripture’s teaching on the matter is best described in these three verses as they show the progression of servitude to action.

“If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” (Mark 9: 35)

“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” (1 John 3: 18)

“Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” (James 2: 17)

If our faith is not accompanied by action and the attitude of a servant, then we have not fulfilled the calling of Scripture that has been placed on us. Because of this, **partners are expected to be active in service both inside and outside the church**. So, at **Horizon** we actively seek ways to help you use your passions and abilities to serve the mission of Christ’s Church, and strive to find avenues for us, as a body, to serve those outside our group.

When you become a local partner we will make a conscious effort to learn about your passions, abilities, and gifts and arrange a place of service within our existing structure that will be a great fit for you or, when appropriate, create a

new opportunity for you to use your gifts. Most areas of service within the church require weekly effort and involvements. Service opportunities outside the church are more irregular and are often created to meet a special need within our community.

We hope that this guide has helped you to better understand the importance of your partnership with our local church. Without commitment to these Scriptural commands for all believers and an accountability to these Scriptures within our church body, we will never be able to achieve the full measure of God's favor as we seek to accomplish His mission. We hope that you will seriously consider partnering with **Horizon Christian Church** in our efforts. The only prerequisite for partnership is that you be a baptized believer who has accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.