

Southside Baptist Network Church Planting Guidelines

The goal of these Church Planting Guidelines is to prepare a Prospective Church Planter (Church Planter) to qualify with the Southside Baptist Network (SBN), the Georgia Baptist Mission Board (GBMB), and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) as a Church Planter, who is prepared to launch a new church.

Nationwide statistics suggest that 80% of new church starts fail within 3 years. Those statistics suggest that many Church Planters begin a new church without the proper preparation and support. SBN, working together with NAMB and the GBMB, wants to prepare the Church Planter to be successful in fulfilling his call. The following guidelines serve as a guide for the Church Planter to work with SBN to be successful in launching a new church.

1. The Church Planter schedules a meeting with Dr. Ray Gentry, Associational Mission Strategist (AMS). He submits a resume with references, a copy of his testimony, and a detailed plan regarding the church plant. Ray may be reached at 770-957-3032 (office).

*SBN does a background check on all Church Planters who want to work with us to launch new churches.

*All Church Planters complete the SBN Confidential Church Planter Questionnaire. The questionnaire is found on the SBN website.

2. The Church Planter must subscribe to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the SBN doctrinal statement.

3. The Church Planter is to have a Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Sending Church to complete the process and to enable his church to be received into membership. This also enables him to qualify for various types of assistance from SBN, the GBMB, and NAMB. A Sending Church is defined as “a church which commissions and is responsible for a new church plant until the plant is self-sustaining, self-governing and self-propagating.” Throughout this process the Church Planter is accountable to the Sending Church.

4. Although it is a requirement by SBN and NAMB that the Church Planter have a Sending Church, he is also encouraged to have at least one Supporting/Sponsor Church. A Sponsor Church is defined as a church that “partners with a church plant through praying, participating in and/or providing for the needs of the church plant. Often there could be multiple supporting churches partnering with a particular plant and helping to meet different needs.

5. The following process will help the Church Planter become familiar with how a local church functions in partnering with SBN, GBMB, and SBC missions and ministries:

- a. A Church Planter who does not have a Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) background and/or is not a member of a Southern Baptist church needs to join a local Southern Baptist Church, which would become his Sending Church.
 - b. A Church Planter who is already a member of a Southern Baptist church and has a Sending Church, but does not live in the local area, is encouraged to join a local Southern Baptist Church when he moves to the area. He should share his vision with the new church and seek their support as a Supporting/Sponsoring Church.
 - c. A Church Planter who is a member of a local Southern Baptist church is encouraged to seek the support of his church to be the Sending Church and to seek other churches to come alongside as Supporting/Sponsoring Churches.
6. A potential Church Planter is encouraged to complete the NAMB Assessment process before being considered to plant a church with SBN. The Church Planter needs to register at the North American Mission Board (namb.net) website and begin the assessment process to qualify as a church planter with SBN and NAMB. SBN will assist the Church Planter with the NAMB Assessment Process as needed.
- *If the Church Planter requests it, NAMB will reimburse the cost of the Online Assessment and background check, if he passes.
7. If opting to take the NAMB assessment and if approved by NAMB, the Church Planter becomes a NAMB Church Planter and is assigned a coach to walk him through the next steps during the launching of the new church plant.
8. The Church Planter is encouraged to contact the Church Planting Ministry of the GBMB for Pastoral financial support.
9. The AMS presents the Church Planter's Assessment (if opted to complete) and recommendation to the SBN Church Planting/Missions Team. The SBN Church Planting/Missions Team will meet the Church Planter to hear him share his vision for the church plant.
10. If the Church Planter is approved for Pastoral Support by the GBMB, the SBN Church Planting/Missions Team may recommend to the AMS approval of SBN pastoral support funding for the Church Planter (contingent on funding availability). Each case will be reviewed on the basis of merit, need and assessment report. Continued pastoral support beyond the first year for the Church Planter will be evaluated annually based on the number of gospel presentations, salvations, baptisms, and church growth. The maximum time of pastoral support granted by SBN is 3 years.
11. SBN churches will be notified of the new Church Planter and his ministry so they will be able to support the work with their prayers and encouragement.

12. If the Church Planter fills out Quarterly Reports with GBMB, they are to be forwarded to the AMS for awareness of progress, needs, and prayer.

13. Giving 3% of undesignated receipts to Associational Missions (SBN) is expected of new church plants.

Southside Baptist Network Church Planting Guidelines Checklist:

- Schedule meeting with Ray Gentry.
- Submit resume with references.
- Submit copy of testimony.
- Submit detailed plan regarding the church plant.
- Have background check done by SBN.
- Complete SBN confidential Church Planter Questionnaire (see SBN website).
- Subscribe to Baptist Faith & Message.
- Enlist Sending Church.
- Seek out a Sponsor Church.
- Be or become member of a Southern Baptist church.
- Complete the NAMB assessment (namb.net).
- Apply for funding with the GBMB.
- Have church planting coach secured through NAMB or SBN.
- Meet with the SBN Church Planting/Missions Team. Share vision for the church plant.
- Forward quarterly reports to the AMS (contingent upon sending reports to GBMB).
- Give 3% of undesignated receipts to Associational Missions (SBN).

Updated 7.20.20