

# An Introduction to Ministry Partner Development

If you are not familiar with Ministry Partner Development (MPD) this short devotion will provide the basic outline, biblical support, and expectations of anyone who is employed as an MPD-supported staff member.

Partners are just one of the many blessings God gives us as we follow His lead in ministry. These partners take many forms: some are colleagues and co-workers, others are friends and spiritual supporters, and in the case of Ministry Partner Development, we have all of these as well as the added dimension of financial support.

A worker engaged in MPD is expected to create and maintain a support network that supplies financial resources, spiritual support, and lasting partners committed to his or her work in ministry. Yes, this means asking people for money, but also for prayers and for partnership in God's work. It means confronting fears and traditions and committing our full trust to God for our physical needs knowing he will provide. The concept is bold, but it is not new.

God designed and promoted this model throughout His word.

Jesus and his disciples relied on people "who were contributing to their support out of their private means." (Luke 8:3). Jesus sent out His disciples with this command, "Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support." (Matthew 10:9,10) He instructed them to take what was offered to them, "eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages." (Luke 10:4-7)

The apostle Paul worked part-time in order to assure the Corinthians of his pure motives, but at other times he demonstrated his reliance on gifts from supporters (Philippians 4:10-16; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5) who gave sacrificially to him. Paul did more than just rely on charity, he also asked boldly of believers when he said, "Whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you." (Romans 15:24)

It is common for support raising to make people uneasy, especially in North American culture. But we are called as Christians to set aside our desires and follow God's word. Ministry support is demonstrated as a valid method in God's word and so we must consider it valid.

All that we have and all that has been given to others is provided by God. He has commanded us to provide for His workers and for His work. God himself will provide all that we need financially, spiritually, and emotionally in our ministry efforts. "My God shall supply all your needs." (Philippians 4:19);

Asking people if they would like to know Christ is no easier than asking someone to support your ministry—both require courage and humility. The boldness cultivated in support raising is the same boldness relied upon as a Great Commission worker.

Finally, remember God's promise to meet your needs and to bless those who give. God honors giving and promises to return His blessings a hundred-fold—this does not imply a financial return, but certainly promises the generous giver will be blessed. Paul echoes this when he reminds his supporters of God's love, saying, "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account." (Philippians 4:17) In Malachi 3:10-12 God commands, "Test me now in this... if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows." Your supporters are not merely doing you a favor, they are making investments which will return benefits to them now and throughout eternity.

*For further study and consideration: Numbers 1:47-54; Numbers 18; Deuteronomy 18:1-6; Luke 8:1-3; 1 Corinthians 9; Matthew 16:25; Luke 6:38; Jeremiah 29:11; John 15:16.*