

IN YOUR CHURCH





How to Start a Home Bible Study Ministry in Your Church

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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How to Start A Home Bible Study Ministry in Your Church

Starting a home Bible study ministry is easy. Anybody can do it. This simple guide will teach you how. Though starting a home Bible study ministry is easy, the hard part will be sustaining your team, training new teachers, tracking results, and following up with students over time. It will take some work, serious effort, and time. Nevertheless, at the end of the day, it will all be worth it.

Following, are eight simple steps that will direct your efforts. After the eight steps are presented, you will find a checklist to help put these steps into practice. Let's start with step one.

1. Connect with Your Pastor.

If you desire to start a home Bible Study Ministry, you must talk with your pastor about it first. Write down any intended goals or vision you may have initially, and present them to your pastor. Ask him for feedback, guidance, and counsel. Listen to what he has to say and write down his responses.

2. Get a Vision.

After bringing your pastor on board and listening to his feedback and direction, spend time in prayer about this ministry. Ask God to give you a clear vision. Pray that he would show you the great needs in your community. Pray over all the teachers you intend to bring on your team. Pray for all the students that you intend to teach in the

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future. Ask God to anoint every part of the process. After gaining a clear vision, write it down.

3. Build a Team.

Select various people that would be able to teach Bible studies to others. These should be church members that have already experienced salvation. You may even consider creating formal invitations to be a part of a new and exciting ministry at your church. All that are willing to teach, reach, and work to keep lost souls are welcome.

4. Establish a Monthly Meeting.


As you work to build a team, you must also decide when would be a good time to hold team meetings. At these meetings, you are able to share vision, present goals, discuss questions, and provide resources and motivation. This should also be a time to pray together as a team.

5. Train your Teachers.

After establishing a solid team of volunteer teachers, you must think about how you will train and empower them.

And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Matthew 10:1.

When Jesus brought people on board the ship of ministry, he called them and then he empowered them. He equipped them to accomplish the tasks that he gave them. This truth illustrates a key point about ministry.



Ministry is about empowering people
for the work of their individual ministry.

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Just as Jesus empowered his disciples to fulfill specific tasks, there must be a training, equipping, and empowering process in place on your ministry team. Three big things will help you accomplish this. First, consider teaching a Bible study and allowing them to observe. Some churches have even taught a Bible study on the platform during a service in place of a regular sermon so that all can view and learn. This allows all church members to see how it's done. Next, consider bringing in an experienced home Bible study teacher from another church to train your team. Talk with your pastor and ask him to think about who would be best to do this. Lastly, consider teaching your team the four lessons in *How to Teach a Bible Study like a Pro* (available at www.therockethouse.net).

6. Track Results.

As the teachers in your church are unleashed upon their friends, family members, and community, it is important that you as the leader put in place a follow-up and tracking system. Create a spreadsheet or chart that tracks the following:

- **Current teachers** (contact info, etc.)
- **Current students** (contact info, interest level, etc.)
- **Bible study graduates** (to be awarded with certificate, etc.)
- **Bible studies used**
- **Salvations**

Keeping written records of teachers, methods, and results is a great practice. It helps you to view the movements of a ministry and allows you to gauge the progress of your goals. If you record results over the course of months or a year, you will be able to look back and view the growth and overall effect of the ministry team.

7. Share Success Stories.

As your team begins to reach people and impact lives, remember to make great victories public. Honor your teachers at an end-of-the-year banquet. Bring Bible study graduates on the platform during a church service and honor them for their accomplishments. If

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possible, keep a file with pictures of all that are involved and make a bulletin board or album of pictures. This may spread the word and peak a greater interest for Bible studies in your church.

8. Training New Teachers Should be a Continual Process.

As time goes on, attempt to have quarterly promotional and training events. The growth potential of a church increases as the number of active Bible study teachers increases. Make it your personal goal as the leader to expand your team. Usually, the best soul winners are new converts. So, as people are saved, recruit them to teach others about what they have experienced.

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The Checklist

- ☐ 1. I have connected with my pastor.
- ☐ 2. I have a vision.
- ☐ 3. I have built a team.
- ☐ 4. I have established a monthly meeting.
- ☐ 5. I am training the teachers on my team.
- ☐ 6. I am tracking results.
- ☐ 7. I am sharing success stories with others.
- ☐ 8. I am recruiting and training new teachers.

My short term goals are:

My long term goals are:



The Follow-Up Sheet

What to do before, during, and after a Bible study lesson

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Before You Begin, There Are 2 Things You Must Know...

THING #1

If you have a home Bible study lesson scheduled in the near future, have no fear. This follow-up sheet will guide you every step of the way!

THING #2

The work of a Bible study teacher begins before a lesson is ever taught and does not end after a lesson is over.

BEFORE THE LESSON

Before a Bible study lesson begins, cover its every aspect in prayer. Pray for yourself and pray for your student(s). Ask for heavenly help and counsel. Intercede on behalf of those you teach. Pray that God would draw them to repentance.

As you prepare yourself spiritually, also seek to build a relationship with your student(s). Get to know them on a personal level. Show interest in their interests.



I have prayed about this Bible study lesson.




I am building a relationship with my student and have shown an interest in their personal life.

DURING THE LESSON

As you walk into a new home, expect anything. Have an open mind. Before you direct everybody's attention to the lesson, take time to break the ice and get to know your audience.



The best way to do this is over a meal, snack, or finger food. If you intend to teach a person that you have never met before, initiate a conversation by asking them questions. Seek to discover something that you both have in common and attempt to relate the lesson's content to their style of life. Tell a story about yourself.



As the lesson begins, I ask my student about his/her day and begin the lesson with a casual conversation.


AFTER THE LESSON

As a lesson ends, ask for feedback. Questions such as "Did you find this helpful?" or "What did you learn?" will help you to determine the effect of the lesson. Do not forget to end with a time of prayer. Ask God to help both of you understand and apply what was covered.



Before walking out of the home of your student(s), pull out a calendar and ask them if they are interested in learning more. If so, schedule the date of the next lesson before walking out of the door.

At every stage of a lesson, a teacher must invest time, energy, and effort. At every stage, a teacher must give ample amounts of prayer and relationship. If a teacher stops investing in people after they are taught, they risk losing what they worked so hard to gain.



I have ended the lesson with a time of prayer.



I have scheduled the next Bible study lesson.



After teaching a Bible study, I continue to support my student and pray over his/her progress.



I have invited my student to serve on a ministry team in my church.



I have introduced my student to the pastor and other ministry leaders.



PREACHING POINTS AND DAUGHTER WORK

Rodney Shaw

Preaching points and daughter works are intended to reach the unchurched in languages or locations other than those of the mother church. Unlike typical church outreaches, these endeavors are not primarily intended to increase the membership of the mother church or carry the gospel to those confined in an institution. These endeavors are aimed at establishing a new location from which ministry can be carried out, and where, possibly, an autonomous church can be established.

Cast the Vision

Long before a church is ready to take such a step, the pastor can lay the groundwork by casting a vision. Vision casting is not complicated, but it is intentional. Casting a vision is merely helping the congregation see the possibilities of starting a new endeavor. A church must be aware of its obligation to fulfill the Great Commission to take the whole gospel to the whole world. And while we support missions abroad, our most accessible opportunity is the one next door. Having a church accept this responsibility is the first step in launching a new work. A general vision can be cast in simple ways.

- Preaching and teaching that focuses on the church's responsibility to reach the lost is the foundation. Beyond inspirational sermons or calls to commitment, there must be practical encouragement and how-to guidance on reaching the lost.
- Sharing testimonies and opportunities as they arise prioritizes soul winning. You will get what you celebrate.

- Watching the annual Christmas for Christ promotional videos and giving to Christmas for Christ can help a church make a commitment to planting churches in North American.
- Hosting a missionary service and supporting a missionary, whether overseas or in North America, can give a local church a sense of ownership.
- Praying for God to open doors in surrounding communities is a great way to expose a congregation to the need. As a congregation owns the responsibility and accepts the burden, doors tend to open naturally.

Identify an Opportunity

The next step is moving beyond a general awareness and burden for the lost to the specific need at hand.

Targeting a specific location or language group allows for focus and planning. Analyzing the opportunities in the vicinity and making these specific matters of prayer can move a church closer to planting a new work.

- Organic opportunities. Sometimes opportunities unfold naturally from a contact or Bible study. Many times these opportunities open unexpectedly. These are opportunities God places in our paths, and we simply need to take advantage of them. For example, there have been many situations where a small group or church approached a UPCI church asking for a pastor or to come under the umbrella of the mother church. And while it was not the plan of the mother church.



Identify an Opportunity (Continued)

- Geographic opportunities. Look on a map and see where the gospel is not being preached between the mother church and the nearest church in all directions. Are there unreached communities? When considering metropolitan areas, don't limit the need to city limits. Think in terms of neighborhoods and subdivisions. Particularly in metropolitan areas, the distance between churches is more appropriately measured in the number of people between churches rather than the number of miles between churches.
- Language and cultural opportunities. What language groups do not have an Apostolic witness in your region? Are there significant numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants in the community? Are there bilingual people in the mother church who have connections to these larger communities? Are there significant immigrant populations, regardless of language, who would find meaning in worshiping in their tradition with their people?

Develop a plan

The success of the preaching point or daughter work will hinge on having an effective plan which includes competent leadership. If the effort is seen primarily as a ministry training opportunity, the bulk of the responsibility will likely fall back on the senior pastor, and the work will likely struggle. This being said, perfection is not required. There is risk involved, you likely will never have all the desired resources, and there never will be a perfect opportunity. If you wait for the perfect scenario, you likely will never plant a church. Have as robust a plan as possible, but be willing to take some risks. Don't wait for perfection.

It also is important to know that every preaching point and daughter work is unique. And while you may glean principles from various sources, ultimately the work must be shaped around the local field, vision, and available resources. Take the liberty to think creatively and to innovate! Explore possibilities beyond whatever templates are presented here or elsewhere. The best plan is not what might work—or even what *has* worked—elsewhere. The best plan is what fits the need, church culture, and available resources on location. After a plan has been developed, it is important to remain flexible. It may be necessary to modify the plan. In some cases, the original plan may be abandoned altogether as the work unfolds. Embrace the challenge, and embrace the change!

- *Identify an audience.* This is the reason for the work. Targeting a geographic area or language group is the first step. Knowing who the audience is will in great part determine the rest of the plan. The team and strategy will need to be suitable for the target audience.
- *Select a team.* The success of the work will be determined by the competency of the team more so than any other factor. A new work cannot be launched without a team—designated people who will be responsible for the day-to-day responsibilities of starting a work. The primary team member, of course, is the pastor of the work. Although the mother church pastor is considered to be the senior pastor over these works, someone needs the primary responsibility of shepherding the new work. In some instances, the pastor of the mother church can function in the role. However, it is generally not sustainable for the mother church pastor to also pastor the...



Develop a Plan (Continued)

- ...preaching point or daughter work. There are various arrangements that can work, but someone needs to bear the primary responsibility of shepherding the work and implementing the vision.
- *Establish a strategy.* A strategy must be adapted to the target audience as well as to the team that will be working in the ministry. A template ministry model will not work. It must take into consideration both the strengths and weaknesses of the team on location, and it must be a strategy that will effectively appeal to the people in the target location. The strategy is the all-encompassing plan that includes a funding, a budget, outreach methods, service schedule, service format, visitor follow-up, discipleship and assimilation systems, and all other facets of operating the work.
- *Allocate resources.* Visions must be resourced or they remain dreams. A budget should be determined in advance that will empower the ministry to function as intended. But human resources are also required. There need to be musicians, singers, children's ministry workers, and others available to assist.
- *Determine a location.* Whether it is renting from another church, setting up each week in a school, or purchasing a facility, a place of worship is essential. The location needs to be suitable for the team and be adequate to reach the intended audience.

Preaching points

A preaching point is a regular service or meeting distinct from the mother church as to location or language and is designed to reach people who are currently unchurched. This does not

include typical outreaches such as services in a jail, prison, nursing home, or on an educational campus.

A preaching point are often a first step towards planting a new church. A preaching point is a great way to test a field to see if it is truly ready for a church. It also is a way to test a mother church to see if it is ready to plant a new church. Preaching points also can provide opportunities for ministry training.

A preaching point can be part of the natural progression of starting a daughter work if an evolving process is used. This process generally consists of the following phases: Bible study => home friendship group => preaching point => daughter work => autonomous church. Although all five phases are not essential, this natural progression allows a work to grow at its own pace, minimizes risk, and enables the mother church to adapt over a period of time. Even with a detailed process like this, some church planting efforts still do not materialize. Having this step-by-step process allows for experimentation and progressive risk by the mother church, at it helps minimize a sense of failure if the church plant eventually is unsustainable. Although we should not look at such efforts as failure, it still minimizes the emotions of the diligent workers when an effort comes to an end.

All preaching points, however, will not become daughter works. Sometimes a preaching point can satisfy the need for evangelism and worship where the need is greater than a Bible study but where an autonomous church cannot be sustained. There are some remote communities which may not be able to sustain a daughter work or autonomous church, but if an opportunity presents itself, a regular service could be held. Similarly, there are some situations where a regular service is needed in a language other than that used by the mother church, but there isn't a large...



Preaching points (Continued)

...enough demand to sustain a daughter work. In these instances, a preaching point is an ideal solution. Rather than having an either/or approach—have a church or don't have a church—a preaching point can be an alternative solution to preaching the gospel when a self-governing church cannot be sustained.

Daughter works

A daughter work is a congregation that has met at least three months, holds at least one service per week apart from the mother church, and is under the general oversight of the pastor of the mother church. A daughter work is the result of the concerted efforts of an established mother church to plant a new congregation and does not include a church having a service in a prison, nursing home, jail, on a college campus or in any other institutional setting.

A daughter work can be the result of the aforementioned process, beginning with a Bible study and evolving step by step, or it can be launched from the beginning as a fully functioning church. Both approaches are valid depending on the resources and circumstances.

If a daughter work is launched as a fully functioning church, it requires a dedicated pastor, supporting team, adequate resources, and a detailed plan. Although the investment is substantial, this approach is a viable option, and can be effective in metropolitan areas. In these instances, it is highly recommended that the pastor of the daughter work, and perhaps the pastor of the mother church, attend the LAUNCH training provided by North American Missions.

There are varying degrees of investment a mother church can have. Depending on the circumstances surrounding the plant and available resources, a mother church's investment may vary drastically.

Partnership. Some daughter works are partnerships between a mother

church and a minister who has determined to plant a church. In such cases, a minister who feels a call to a particular location partners with a mother church in the vicinity. In other situations, the mother church may recruit a minister and provide oversight, support, fellowship, staffing, etc. In these instances, the bulk of the responsibility falls on the minister in charge of the daughter work. Although the mother church provides a covering, the actual investment is limited, and the primary responsibility rests on the minister. The work is very entrepreneurial. The role of the mother church is still invaluable, and this is a way a mother church can help birth a church even with limited resources.

Sponsorship. In some instances the mother church makes a specified commitment over a period of time to help plant a daughter church. This regular financial commitment ensures a consistent budget for the daughter work for the specified term. So in addition to the support provided in partnership, the sponsorship model extends a specified financial commitment. It may also include a staffing commitment.

Ownership: In this model the mother church owns the planting endeavor and feels like it is actually planting another church. Not only are resources allocated to the church plant, the mother church is intimately connected to the church plant. The mother church does not merely provide resources to a minister and trust he will succeed; rather, the mother church plays a vital role in the weekly operation of the daughter church. The mother church is connected daily to the new church and is there every step of the way providing whatever is needed to make the work a success.

Any of these approaches as well as others can work depending on the circumstances. As a general rule, the more a mother church invests in a daughter work, the more accountability there will be to the mother church. Likewise, the less a mother church...



Daughter works (Continued)

...invests, the more autonomy should be granted to the pastor of the daughter work. If he is taking the majority of the risk, he should be granted significant latitude.

When does a work become an autonomous church?

The purpose for establishing new works ultimately is to establish autonomous works. Accordingly, a work should become autonomous as soon as possible, but not prematurely. Premature autonomy can lead to ultimate failure, while prolonging autonomy can lead to stagnation. Accordingly, there should be some reasonable criteria established to help determine when a work should be autonomous. Minimum requirements for autonomy include:

- The pastor of the daughter work must be capable of leading the church.
- Income from the work must be sufficient to support the operation of the church.
- Both the senior pastor and the daughter work pastor should feel good about it.

All concerns and risks will never be mitigated. Continually postponing autonomy until the perfect circumstances emerge will certainly prevent the work from becoming autonomous. However, some safeguards can be established to give the new work the best possible chance at thriving. It should be part of a daughter work agreement from the beginning that the daughter work will become affiliated with the United Pentecostal Church at autonomy. If a mother church has invested heavily in property or a building, arrangements can be made to guarantee the mother church's investment is not squandered if the church ever were to change its doctrine or leave the UPCI. (There are various ways to accomplish this.)

Closing thoughts

Preaching points and daughter works are a lot of work, and they require significant investment. Not all of them succeed. However, many of them do succeed! No matter how challenging, we do not have an alternative to planting churches. We must plant churches, and preaching points and daughter works are one of the ways we can do so. A mother church and pastor must be willing to take risks and be willing to fail. And although planning and strategy are critical, flexibility is more important. Have the courage to experiment, alter plans, and change approaches. You will learn as you go.



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