

The Practice and Process of Partnership



As you have read, Presbyterians engage in mission work through the model of partnership (page 6). The discipline of partnership assumes that mission can best be done by joining hands with those who share a common vision. Partnership in mission involves two or more organizations that agree to submit themselves to a common task or goal, mutually giving and receiving and surrounded by prayer so that God's work can be more faithfully accomplished. Theologically and biblically, partnership is based on the fundamental belief that God's love for the world is greater than any one church can possibly comprehend or realize.

So What Does Partnership Look Like in Practice?

In partnership, two or more communities join in relationship through a mutual understanding or formal covenant, committing to pray for, work with, listen to and walk alongside one another. Sometimes partnerships involve projects, but not always.

Communities enter into a partnership through a discernment process. Much like dating, potential partners get to know one another in order to make sure that they are a good match. This takes discernment on the part of your church or community as well as mission partners.

To begin the process of forming a partnership, it is helpful to discern some key pieces in your own community:

- What are you looking for in partnership?
- What needs do you have?
- What do you have to offer to a partner community?
- What connections might you have around the world?

Once you have begun the process of discernment, it is time to make connections with your potential partner. Presbyterian mission co-workers and area office staff in World Mission are great resources for learning about potential partner communities. They can help you begin the process of forming relationship and can walk with you as you have conversations, plan visits and consider forming a covenant relationship. To connect with a mission co-worker, visit pcusa.org/start-mission-partnership.

The practice of partnership is how we live into our mission values—how we practice what we believe about God's mission in the world. Consider exploring what a partnership might look like for your community. Once you have a partnership in place, consider participating in a mission network, which is a collection of communities serving in partnership in particular sites around the world.

