

# Partnership @ The Chapel

## Our Philosophy

At The Chapel, we call our members Partners. We believe that church membership is first and foremost a partnership- a group of people working together, hand-in-hand, toward a common goal. Just like in every good partnership, one role is not more important than another and philosophy of equality enables staff, leaders, and church members to all be seen as equally important in accomplishing the goal of helping others come to Christ. Partnership at The Chapel doesn't bring with it any special benefits- it demonstrates a commitment to partner in ministry with our church in carrying out our assignment- providing environments where people encounter God and fall in love with Jesus.

## Our Process

Our Discipleship Process is based around two key ideas: Trust and Become. Before people accept the call to Partnership, they are in the Trust phase of this process where they learn to Trust Christ, Trust Us, and Trust Others. All of our content-based small groups, worship services, children's ministry, outreach events, and most of our ministries are aligned under these three Trust categories. When someone feels the call to go deeper in their spiritual walk and can say they trust Christ, The Chapel, and others, they are invited to join The Chapel as a Partner. At our weekend Partnership Retreat, we introduce them to the Become phase of the process. During the Become phase, people learn the expectations of a Chapel Partner:

Become a Worshiper- participating, tithing, and praying

Become a Community- involved in a Home Church (accountability group)

Become a Missionary- Serving and Speaking

When someone enters the Become stage, they are introduced to the idea that they partner with The Chapel to provide an environment of trust for others.

## Partnership Retreats

Potential Partners are all required to go through our Partners Weekend Retreat. This takes place at the church on a Friday evening from 6-8:15 and Saturday

morning from 9-noon. We offer three of these retreats each year and members officially join the church during the church service of their choice two weekends after they have completed the entire retreat. All partners are required to complete the entire retreat before joining- both the Friday and Saturday sessions.

We hold this retreat in a space we call, "The Backyard," a large open area similar to a fellowship hall. We require Partners to preregister their attendance and assign them to tables with a Table Leader. These Table Leaders are Chapel partners who agree to participate during the whole weekend to build connections with the potential partners and help them in the assimilation process of becoming a partner. We typically have one table leader for every 4-5 participants. We provide boxed sandwich dinners for everyone on Friday night and breakfast and snacks on Saturday morning.

Each participant is given a binder with the following components:

In the front pocket of the binder is the Partner Covenant printed on gold paper.

The first page in the binder is the cover page, followed by the following tabs and materials:

- Tab that says, "Partner Retreat" followed by the Partner Weekend Retreat Notes Booklet
- Tab that says, "Service Team Handbook" followed by our Service Team Volunteer Handbook
- Tab that says, "Partner Meetings" that can be used to hold notes from future partner meetings
- Tab that says, "Annual Self-Assessment" that will be used to hold yearly self-assessments of their own spiritual growth

In the back pocket of the binder is an information sheet they fill out with basic information required for membership and record keeping as well as financial forms for direct withdrawal for tithes and offerings.

## **Youth**

Once a year in the fall we invite youth (6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade) who would like to join the church to attend our Partnership Retreat. This serves as our yearly confirmation classes. All youth will be grouped together and will sit with a table leader who currently serves during our Sunday night youth programming. When filling out the covenant, table leaders of the youth tables will be instructed to help students tailor their goals to their stage in life so they create achievable goals.

Those youth who go through the Partnership retreat are required to have parents who are current Partners with The Chapel or they will be assigned a mentor who is a current Chapel Partner. We want to make sure our youth have adequate support in meeting and achieving their covenant goals.

### **Yearly Renewal**

Partnership at The Chapel is a year-long commitment. Because we desire our partners to be fully invested in our vision, we give people the opportunity to complete a Partner Self-Assessment each year and use that as a tool to determine if they would like to continue their partnership for another year. We have a process for putting their membership on “hold” for up to two years without requiring them to repeat the retreat and will allow them to reactivate their partnership at anytime they desire to begin to live out the expectations of a Chapel Partner.

At the beginning of each year (sometime late January/early February) we have a Covenant Renewal service where Partners come together and “re-up” for the coming year, renewing their partnership and making new goals for their personal spiritual growth and commitment the following year.

### **Partner Meetings**

In addition to the Covenant Renewal meeting, we typically hold a mid-year Partner Meeting to touch base on new initiatives and solicit feedback from Partners. These meetings are done in a Town Hall format and give Partners the opportunity to discuss important issues and engage in the decision making process.

### **Follow-Up and Accountability**

After a Partner Meeting, someone on staff looks through the Covenants and follows up with those who have made new commitments in service, prayer, missions, accountability groups, etc. For example, if a new partner agrees to get involved on the Host Team, their information is sent to the captain of the Host Team who plugs them into the monthly rotational schedule. This follow-through is very important!

Accountability is done primarily through their Home Church (accountability groups). These Home Church leaders receive questions throughout the year that prompt them to ask their group members how things are going and where they stand on their journey of becoming a worshiper, community, and missionary.

At the completion of the annual covenant renewal, a staff member needs to go through the covenants and make sure that everyone is still involved and actively becoming a partner in all three areas.