

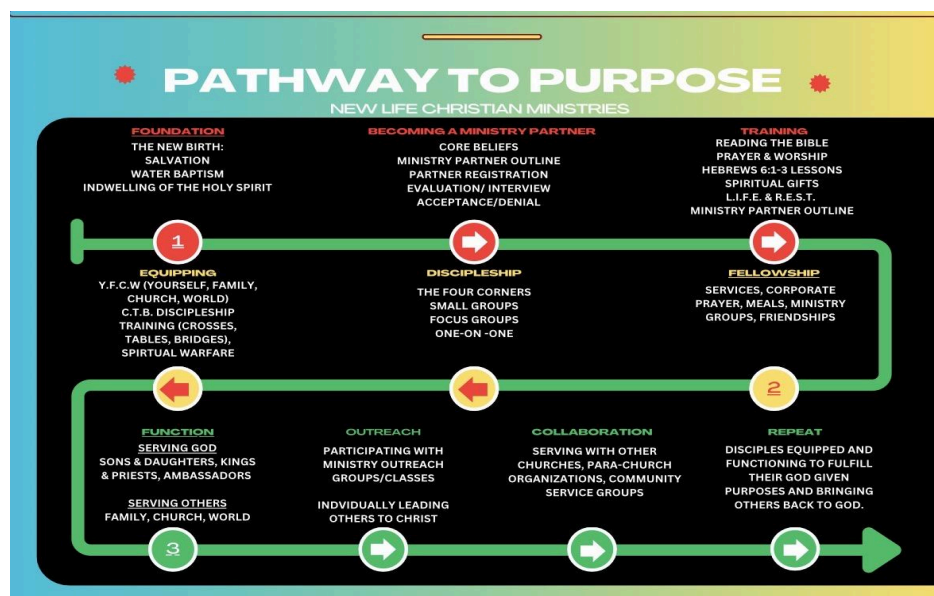
Abundant Life: Eternal Purpose: Ministry Partners Pt. 3

As we become who God intended as a church, we're able to fulfill the eternal purpose He designed.

The Biblical Pattern of Partnership within the Church

It's our faithful expectation that New Life Christian Ministries functions both as God's family and a working community of believers. Partnering together to serve the Kingdom of God, in the world as the body of Christ. Scripture outlines for us what it requires to become part of a church body. Someone must first belong to the Lord's Church, also referred to as the body of Christ. Acts 2:36-41 details how the first Church added believers through a four-step process. We desire to follow God's pattern as we solidify ourselves as His church and function as ministry partners in His Kingdom.

The church has a commission to make disciples and to teach them to obey the Lord's commands. Our "Pathway to Purpose", which you'll be learning more about soon, helps us do just that. There are classes, small groups, discipleship training, including opportunities to serve, that help pave the way to pursue your godly purposes.



Partnership with Christ and His church begins with the new birth, baptism in water, and the gift of the Holy Spirit! All made possible by the sharing of the gospel,

Acts 2:36-41 New Living Translation

36 “So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!” 37 Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” 38 Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away[a]—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” 40 Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!” 41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

The Faithful Response of Believers

After being added to the local church, they then devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching, fellowship, sharing meals and communion, and to prayer. This devotion inspired a community of believers to form. Within this local church, they met regularly at the temple, shared everything, worshiped God, met in homes, and praised the Lord!

Acts 2:42-47 New Living Translation

42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper[b]), and to prayer. 43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity[c]— 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Partnership Principles for the Local Church

1. Partners in Christ

God designed the human body in such a way that each part of the body was dependent upon others. The body of Christ, also referred to as the church, is no different. During the time Jesus ministered on Earth, He partnered with disciples to accomplish His purposes. Each of us is specially equipped by God and positioned to play a necessary part. Our individual purposes are interwoven into God's eternal purpose of man's redemption. That plan was accomplished through Jesus Christ, and He chose to call us together as a family in Him to become His body.

John 15:4-5 New Living Translation

4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. 5 “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

2. Community/Church Family

As believers assemble in Christ at a central location, a community is developed. The love of God abounds, and they begin the practice of faithful fellowship. A family atmosphere develops as they begin caring for the spiritual and physical needs of one another. Their focus is on praising and serving God, and He continues to add to their number.

Acts 2:44-47 New Living Translation

44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity[a]— 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Galatians 6:9-10 New Living Translation

9 So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessings if we don't give up. 10 Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

Ephesians 2:19-22 New Living Translation

19 So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. 20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. 21 We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. 22 Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

Amos 3:3 New Living Translation

3 Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?

3. Ministry

Ministry is the responsibility of the entire body of Christ, not just a few designated leaders. God designed ministry so that everyone has a role to play, and joins us together to collectively serve His purposes. Jesus gave gifts to the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, with their duty being to equip the saints for the work of ministry together.

Ephesians 4:16 New Living Translation

16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Ephesians 4:11-12 New Living Translation

11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

4. Worship

The Father seeks those who will worship Him in Spirit and truth. We partner together as the body of Christ as those called to glorify Him and obey His desires. We join together in reverence of Him in song, service, and the devotion of our lives. Loving Him with all of our heart, mind, and strength.

Acts 2:46-47 New Living Translation

46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity[a]— 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added

to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Romans 15:5-7 New Living Translation

5 May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. 6 Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

5. Serving

Everyone who is a part of the church has a God given part to play. These parts benefit the church as a whole, as gifts are used to serve each other well. This service is not at all limited to a Sunday gathering, but rather to the health and well-being of all partners at all times. God has equipped us to empower others as they serve Him, their families, and the community as we fulfill the Great Commission. With such a big responsibility, everyone is needed for the church to function as God intends.

Romans 12:4-18 New Living Translation

4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. 6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. 7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. 9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10 Love each other with genuine affection,[a] and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.[b] 12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. 13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! 17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 New Living Translation

4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. 7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice[a]; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge.[b] 9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages,[c] while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

1 Corinthians 12:28 New Living Translation

28 Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages.

1 Peter 4:10-11 New Living Translation

10 God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 11 Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

Philippians 1:3-6 New Living Translation

3 Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. 4 Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, 5 for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. 6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

6. Prayer

The Lord encourages us to pray together with great faith and expectation. We're promised that if we ask in agreement, He'll do it, as well as be present in our gatherings. This is absolutely encouraging and shows that we can't afford to neglect partnering in prayer. Those things we've prayed about alone without success may be answered when we are obedient to partner in prayer. He named

His house, “The House of Prayer.”

Acts 2:42 New Living Translation

42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper[a]), and to prayer.

Matthew 18:19-20 New Living Translation

19 “I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. 20 For where two or three gather together as my followers,[a] I am there among them.”

James 5:13-16 New Living Translation

13 Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. 14 Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. 16 Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Acts 12:1-5 New Living Translation

12 About that time King Herod Agrippa[a] began to persecute some believers in the church. 2 He had the apostle James (John’s brother) killed with a sword. 3 When Herod saw how much this pleased the Jewish people, he also arrested Peter. (This took place during the Passover celebration.[b]) 4 Then he imprisoned him, placing him under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover. 5 But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.

7. Giving

Without a doubt, it takes finances to operate anything, and that includes a ministry. Feeding and clothing the poor, and ministering to prisoners are a few of the things that come with a cost. There are also operating expenses associated with maintaining a building and staff. The wonderful thing about being partners in giving is that we’re blessed to share the burden. God is faithful to bless us first and expects that we’ll cheerfully give back to the work of ministry. There are blessings for obeying the principles of giving that will not fail. While finances are a critical need, they’re not the only thing that can be given. The church needs the liberal giving of gifts, talents, compassion, and sacrifices of time as well.

Acts 2:44-45 New Living Translation

44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.

Luke 6:32-38 New Living Translation

32 “If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! 33 And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! 34 And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. 35 “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. 36 You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate. 37 “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.[a]”

2 Corinthians 9:6-13 New Living Translation

6 Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. 7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”[a] 8 And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. 9 As the Scriptures say, “They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.”[b] 10 For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity[c] in you. 11 Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. 12 So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem[d] will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. 13 As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 New Living Translation

17 Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well,[a] especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, “You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain.” And in another place, “Those who work deserve their pay!”[b]

Matthew 28:19-20 New Living Translation

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,[a] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **20** Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”