

The Phases of Church Planting

1. Visionary phase -- seeing the need of a new church & core group development (up to one year)
 - Unchurched community
 - Underchurched community
 - Unhealthy church community
 - Unreached community
2. Launching phase -- just beginning, everything is new and challenging, energy is high. people are very engaged and excited, new people are checking you out, God is answering prayer (lasts from 6 months to 2 years)
3. Reality Check phase - Growth is slower than expected (true in 99% of church plants), finances are a struggle, core group becomes restless, some, (including original leaders), may leave.
4. Discouragement phase - Question the wisdom of the project (lasts from a few weeks to a few months. If it goes on for a year, the church will probably die).
5. Recommitment phase - Examine foundations, progress or lack thereof, present state of things, and make a commitment to and set goals for long term church planting ministry.
 - Every member a ministry participant
 - Every member an careful steward
 - Every member prayerful
 - Every member a wise visionary
 - Every member doing the work of an evangelist
6. Growth and Development phase -- this is where the real work of most church planting takes place. Depending upon the community it can go on for many years. With some exceptions, a church plant that has not achieved stability and significant progress in 8 years will probably remain a small, struggling church throughout the next decade.
 - Pray - Jesus said He would build His church -- therefore pray. Every new believer is the result of the miraculous, life giving work of the Holy Spirit. Every growing church has seen the miraculous intervention of the Lord of the church at some time in its development.
 - Plod - Don't become weary in well doing.
 - Preach the Word
 - Pastor the flock
 - Prepare for (facilitate) ministry
7. Maturity phase - this looks different for each church. Some churches maintain effective, solo pastor ministry for years. Some become multiple staff churches with a wide influence. Some become mega-churches. There is no one "right" model for this.