



Urban Ministry

With the population of unchurched people on the rise, along with the growing population of families going through financial hardships due to years of a weak economy, there has never been a better time and opportunity for our church families to move beyond the sheetrock walls of our church buildings and begin to develop urban ministries that are connecting with people to meet their spiritual and physical needs. Here are some basic steps to creating an urban ministry right where God has you.

Identify

The church in any given community needs to **identify** the heartbeat or natural rhythm of that community. Get out and discover the answers to these questions: Who lives here? (ages, socioeconomic levels, education levels), What services are here? (schools, community sports, Goodwill, Salvation Army, food bank, financial assistance, nursery/daycare), What services are needed? (housing assistance, food bank, after school programs, educational programs). You have to **identify** what need is greatest in the community as well as the natural rhythm or heartbeat of the community to create an effective urban ministry.

Invest

After identifying these groups the next step would be to **invest**. Invest some of your time in the community. Take time praying over the areas, and groups of people. One should **invest** a great deal of their prayer time in the geographic area that you are in and discover where God is already working, you cannot discover these things “inside the sheetrock”. This will also allow you an opportunity to talk to the people of the community and ask those questions and discover a person of peace that can help open doors and connect with more people in the community that you cannot meet on your own. They will also help you to better understand the needs and natural rhythm of the area.

Implement

Once you have identified a service that the community is in need of then you can begin to pray for people to share the vision with and come alongside of you and the ministry and begin to walk it out in faith.

- Create a budget for the ministry
 - A ballpark budget in the beginning is fine because you will not know specifics until the ministry is established and running
- Pray and look for leaders within your own congregation to help do the work of the ministry and share the vision with them

- This is where you will get most of your help in the beginning. Give your congregation a chance to step up and help get it off the ground and running.
- Start praying and meeting with potential financial partners such as your state convention, people in your congregation and in the community like local business owners and community organizations.
- Pray, pray, pray and pray some more!
 - Prayer is vital to any ministry and is especially vital when beginning a ministry. Pray for the people that you are trying to reach, pray for potential partners, pray for the people investing their time and talent to make the ministry happen. Bathe the ministry in prayer and watch the Lord work!
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Only after you have done the groundwork will you be able to create an urban ministry that accurately, adequately and effectively meets the needs of the people in the community. People are accustomed to businesses coming in and providing a service and then for whatever reason leaving. What we, the body of Christ, need to remember is that we are to be the staple and example in the community for others to follow. We are to be the constant and consistent point of reference, out in the streets talking and meeting people in the community everyday. In a world filled with broken promises and people quickly losing hope, the unconditional and unending love, grace and mercy of the Father and the promise of eternal life offered to all through His son Jesus is what makes us different! We as the church need to be enthusiastic about continuing Jesus' ministry in our urban areas by **identifying** the natural rhythm and needs of the people, **investing** in the community and **implementing** steps to help meet the need in any way possible.