

Sending Churches: Communication

Q: How frequent is the communication between Pioneers and the sending church? And what should we be regularly communicating to Pioneers?

A: I would give this question a little background by saying that we contextualize to the church. We are not going to be in the church's face on the phone every other day bugging them for partnership. I've been a mission pastor and a worship pastor and a church planter, so I know what the pace of church is like, even in a small church where staffing is limited. There's only so much that people are able to do. Our goal, with that, is really to try to find the way that best serves the church in that process. We'll often ask the question, "What's the best way for us to communicate with you?" There's email that we'll use from time to time. We'll usually try to call every church each year and say, "Thank you so much for your partnership with the Smiths, with Pioneers, how can we pray for you today? How can we encourage you?"

Another way that we communicate with the church is every week we're praying for the churches. We feel that's significant communication. We have a "church partner of the week," and basically what we're doing is asking a church to give us specific ways we can pray for the church. This goes out to our entire staff; we are praying for that particular church that week.

[We] mentioned the Church Partner Forums before. And those are free events for churches – a way that we can pour into the local church and say thank you. It's a way that we can connect with them, and allow them to have some relationship and really come and kick our tires and get to know us.

And we have church partnership facilitators, particular people in places where they are connected more regionally, and they're seeking to make contacts in many of the ways that I just defined.

I would say that we are open to whatever level of communication and engagement that churches want. From time to time we do consulting with churches around mission-related topics and issues, and we want them to be informed and feel like they can get their questions really answered.

In fact, our team tells people, "Look, if you don't know who to contact in Pioneers about your worker, or about something specific and you're stumped, give us a call, we'll be your quick connect, we'll help you

find the way to make the connection to the person who can give you the information that you're looking for." That's really our heart and our goal.