

Sending Churches: Help in Sending

Q: What does Pioneers offer to assist sending churches with their worker? What do we offer to churches?

A: Probably the biggest thing is we want to offer [is] relationship. We want the church to be very aware that we're a phone call or email away, pretty much at all times.

For the church and for Pioneers, it's better that that relationship starts very early in a person's inquiry. We get a lot of people who apply who haven't thought to even talk to their church about the fact that they want to be missionaries! So we tell them, "Go talk to your church and then come back and talk to us." We want to encourage that dialogue happening all along the way.

Past that, when you get someone in the process of wanting to be a missionary from your church, we're going to be asking for feedback and input about that person, and we're hopeful that the church will engage with that. And we offer the church real transparency about what that looks like from our side. We want this engagement with helping for a very good selection and deployment process for the person.

We have a couple of things that we offer to churches that are programmatic. For example, we have a Church Partner Forum. It's offered on our campus a couple times a year. It's for anybody in your church who is in missions leadership, from the senior pastor to people that may be on your missions team, or maybe an encouragement team for missionaries.

They can come and basically we spend a day and a half doing two things: [First] we listen to what the needs and issues are of churches. It's helpful for us as an organization to get the pulse of churches in the Church Partner Forum. And then we also share about what's happening in our organization that we think impacts how they deploy their missionary through Pioneers to the field.

An organization like Pioneers has a lot of people in some dangerous or risky countries. We have a Member Development team that works through crises, and they can be a real help to the church in that process. Before the crisis even occurs, we're in communication with that missionary through field leadership and through prayer letters. We also know that the church is dealing with that person. Because of the way communications works in this modern era, sometimes a church will find out about

something happening in a missionary's life even before we will, and so here's again where this issue of relationship comes into play. We want to make that Member Development team who are assigned on a regional basis to look after folks on the field [available to you]. We want to offer them as a resource for your church to use in relating to and helping to manage the experience of that missionary [and] for good outcomes on the field.

And I might mention as well that the Church Partner Forums are no cost to churches. We say to them very directly, "Hey, if you're taking your time to come down, start with a Tuesday night all day Wednesday, and leave on a Thursday after lunch, we'll pick you up at the airport; we'll take care of all of the rest." We house, we feed, we take care of that, and it's a great experience, especially Orlando in November or February, a nice time to come.

I would also mention that we do have some church partnership staff that are placed around the country, and they are available to you as a resource as a church leader, so tap into them as well.