

House Church Values and Guidelines

Hopewell Network

As a network of churches, we have been called to reproduce churches that have a “Hopewell” imprint. This includes both traditional church plants and house churches. The following values and guidelines are intended to ensure we are planting healthy house churches that integrate well into the life of the Hopewell Network family of churches.

Screening of Leader(s)

1. House church leader processes his/her call and desire to plant a house church with their pastor. Being sent out with a blessing is powerful.
2. Right motives for starting a house church are important for a good foundation. Not reactionary to the organized church but a desire to reach the lost and unchurched.
3. Leadership of the house church needs to be clearly defined with a vision for developing elders. Develop team ministry. Elders provide good potential for multiplication of the house church.
4. A written purpose and plan are presented that has evangelism and discipleship at the core for the house church. Important to have a missional focus and desire to multiply. When the house church grows large enough to form two churches a multiplication takes place so two neighborhoods can be reached.
5. House church leaders embrace the core vision, values, and statement of faith of the Hopewell Network. Teaching and doctrine need to reflect those of the network.
6. The house church leader is committed to Hopewell Network pastoral relationships and attends network meetings when possible. Important to stay connected to the network and larger church.
7. A written plan on how finances will be handled. People should be encouraged to tithe. Tax deductions might not be possible. Bookkeeping and disbursements of funds in case church is dissolved all need to be thought through.

Credentialing of Leaders

8. We recommend the primary leader be credentialed by the local sending church for the first two-year period and then by the network after the two years.
9. Observation of the sacraments of communion and baptism in the life of the church. Leader must be credentialed to perform marriages.

10. When under Hopewell Network oversight the primary house church leader tithes to the network.

Oversight for Healthy House Churches and Relationship to the Hopewell Network

11. It is recommended that the leader and house church be under the oversight and accountable to a local sending church for the first two years and then to the Hopewell Network for oversight after two years. This needs to be discerned for each situation.
12. At the time the house church is adopted into the network, the leader completes the network credentialing application form and meets the Biblical qualifications for leadership.
13. Since most house churches do not have all the five-fold ministry gifts functioning it is wise to have these mature and experienced leaders interact with the house church from time to time.
14. There needs to be a healthy relationship with and respect for other types of churches. Each size and type of church has unique characteristics that are advantages for reaching different kinds of people. We honor each other.
15. Meets weekly or biweekly.

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