



newhope
CHURCH

WHAT IS PARTNERSHIP?

FAQ'S | PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

WHAT IS PARTNERSHIP?

With the ratification of the new Constitution and Bylaws in 2015, New Hope Church implemented a new way for people to connect with the church and God. It's our version of church membership, and it's called partnership. Instead of the privileges normally associated with membership, the partnership is about responsibilities. While we invite everyone to take on these responsibilities, partners are asked to make a commitment to fulfilling these responsibilities by completing the steps below. The partnership will be renewed on an annual basis.

According to Scripture, participation and involvement in a local church is expected of a believer. At New Hope Church, we view our members as partners. Partnership implies participation and involvement. New Hope is not a club, rather we are a family on mission. As a result, joining our church family is a decision that should not be taken lightly. When you join a church, a mutual pledge of accountability and spiritual support is made between the church and the new partner. Given the importance of this decision, we require completion of the Discovering Partnership Class prior to becoming a partner.

So why partnership and not membership? We all know people who are members of gyms and never go, but when you are a partner in an enterprise, you are extremely committed and involved. Even the Bible points to the principle of partnership in the local church.



"Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."

(Philippians 1:4-6 NLT)



We Believe Every Follower of Jesus Should Belong to a Local Church and be Committed to the Mission of that Church

New Hope Church
exists to help all people
become fully devoted
followers of Jesus Christ.

THINK ABOUT IT...

MEMBERSHIP	PARTNERSHIP
Membership may emphasize privilege to the neglect of responsibility.	Partnership emphasizes privilege and responsibility.
Membership is a culturally hijacked term, more closely associated with country clubs and platinum cards.	Partnership is a term that carries less baggage and brings new metaphors biblically.
Membership could bring deeply rooted assumptions about church in general, that are no longer valid for your church.	Partnership creates an opportunity to reset expectations.
Membership is static.	Partnership brings a sense of both action and direction.
Membership is a relatively small portal for vision-casting.	Partnership opens possibilities for a dynamic range of future-orientation, life impact and influence, togetherness, adventure and risk-taking.



There are three steps in becoming a partner at New Hope Church:

STEP 01

BAPTISM

Baptism is intended only for those who have made a decision to follow Jesus. If you have not been baptized following salvation, we ask you to take this step before becoming a partner. To help prepare you, we offer a Baptism Info Class. The class covers the biblical significance of baptism, frequently asked questions and gives you an opportunity to share your story. You can email us at baptism@newhope.org for more information.

STEP 02

ATTEND THE PARTNERSHIP CLASS

We offer a quarterly partnership class where you'll learn the vision and values of New Hope. We'll explain the five Core Values, Heart Attitudes and theological distinctives our church lives by. At the end of the class you'll have an opportunity to become a partner of New Hope.

STEP 03

SIGN THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The final step in becoming a partner is to sign the partnership agreement. We will explain the agreement and answer any questions you might have at the partnership class. Once you fulfill the requirements of partnership and sign the agreement, you are considered a partner.

There is a sample of the Partnership Agreement in this document, starting on page 12. You can fill out the agreement online at bit.ly/nhcpartnership.

FAQs

What if you were already a member?

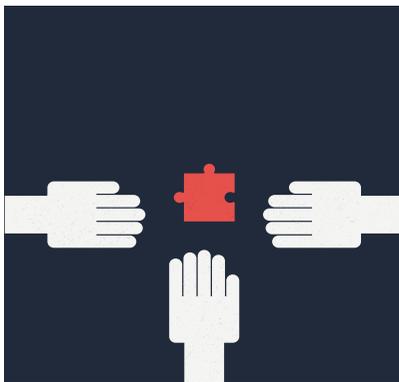
If you were a member under the previous Constitution and Bylaws, you do not need to attend the Discovering Partnership Class. You will simply need to review and sign the Partnership Agreement.

Why does partnership matter?

Does it really matter if we are a partner or not? Why do we have to take a class to become a partner? Why do we have to sign anything? People often ask these questions about our partnership process, skeptical as to why there seems to be so many ‘hoops’ to jump through. Signing the Partnership Agreement shows who can be counted on.

It’s true. We take partnership seriously and it definitely matters.

Committing ourselves to others and the church is weighty. But it’s also wonderful. When people become partners, they commit to a spiritual family that provides encouragement and support. We are called to a biblical degree of responsibility, service and sacrifice to our fellow partners. Our staff and leaders also pledge to assist you with care, counsel, prayer and teaching.



So why become a partner with New Hope Church?

Well, the bigger question is really, “Why should I join a church?” Simply put, we

are called to commit our life to Jesus and to others in community. Sharing the love of Christ with the world is really what it means to be a Church. When we formally enter into a partnership agreement, we declare that our love for Christ, our love for His church and our heart for His purpose in the world are a serious reality in our life.

Why do I need to sign a partnership agreement?

This is by far the most frequently asked question. Being a partner of a church has to do with living out your identity as a follower of Jesus and member of the family of God. One of the ways we express this type of relationship in our culture is by affixing our signature to an agreement. It’s our way of saying, “I am declaring myself to be formally committed to this individual, group or organization.” We do

this when we start a new job, when we get married, when we have a new child, when we purchase or rent a home, etc. The difference is that church partnership is an agreement, not a contract, before God. In the context of marriage, in particular, it is the supreme demonstration of love because it says “I am committing myself to you and no one else.” Given the nature of our identity in Christ, how much more should we formally commit ourselves to other brothers and sisters in Christ as part of a local church?

Does the partnership process create new barriers for people to join New Hope?

New Hope is known to be welcoming to all people! It is readily apparent that people from all walks of life have found a home at New Hope. We are always working to remove any unnecessary barriers for

people to partner with New Hope.



Why do we renew our partnership each year?

Every year our partners will go through a Partnership Agreement Renewal. This process gives us the opportunity to update our personal information, share needs and give feedback, review our church’s agreement and renew the Partnership Agreement.

The annual renewal doesn’t change or diminish the faithfulness of our longstanding partners who are asked to sign. Instead, it honors that commitment,

as it draws upon their example of faithfulness. It also reminds us that we are all on the same page

Why do you have to attend the Discovering Partnership Class?

The Discovering Partnership Class introduces prospective partners to New Hope Church. The class is lead by the senior pastor. You’ll learn the vision and values of New Hope. We’ll explain the five core values, heart attitudes, and theological distinctive our church lives by. At the end of the class, you’ll have an opportunity to become a partner of New Hope. While unlikely, it is possible that someone might complete the class and decide against partnership. In either case, that person is making an informed decision.

Do you have to be baptized in order to be a partner of New Hope?

Yes. The Bible teaches that baptism is a sign of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that a person is saved by grace through faith in Christ alone and baptism is a sign of their decision. Therefore, it is an act of obedience for all of Christ's followers, and therefore the mark of all true partners of the church.

That said, we acknowledge that different churches practice baptism in different ways. At New Hope, baptism is done by immersion (going completely under water), and is offered to the individual upon confession of their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from their sins. If you have a question about a previous baptism, a church staff member or pastor can determine

if any prior baptisms are aligned with New Hope's understanding and tradition of baptism. You can email us at baptism@newhope.org if you have any questions.

Do you have to be a partner to participate in the Lord's Supper (Communion)?

No. All believers who confess that Jesus is their Savior are welcome to celebrate the Lord's Supper (Communion) at New Hope Church.



If you are not a partner can you still volunteer at New Hope?

We have opportunities for everyone to serve. We do have certain positions and leadership roles that require you to be a partner.

If you are not a partner can you still participate at New Hope?

While partnership is a meaningful agreement that we encourage, we welcome everyone (partner or not) that desires to participate with us with a variety of different opportunities (small groups, Bible studies, service opportunities, student, and children ministry, etc.). We would love to grow alongside you!

What do you do if you need to move?

Just let us know. Our hope will be that you continue to be part of New Hope through our online campus or that you will become a member of another Jesus-loving, Bible-teaching church in your new city.

How long will you be considered a partner?

We will ask all partners to renew their agreement annually.

What are the 'benefits' of becoming a partner?

Church partnership is more about what you are bringing to the church, than what the church is bringing to you (the church is the people, right?). At the same time, there are certain privileges granted to partners. Every partner shall have the privilege to vote on the following matters: Annual budget of New Hope and any material change to the structure of the budget during the year; acquisition of real property and related indebtedness; disposition of all or substantially all of New Hope's assets; merger or dissolution of New Hope; removal of the Senior Pastor; amendments to the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, or Bylaws of New Hope; and any other major event or decision as designated by the Leadership Team or

Board. Additionally, most leadership positions at New Hope require that you are a partner.



What if you choose not to become a partner?

We will not, and cannot, force anyone to become a partner. That would be weird! All we can do is present the biblical case for partnership and call every follower of Jesus to gladly embrace becoming a partner of New Hope Church. It's a vital component of your personal discipleship.

What is expected out of partners?

We will expect every partner to give of his or her time (participation in community, weekend

gatherings, small group, etc.), treasure (regularly, sacrificial, joyful giving) and talents (serving in some way). The exact conditions and expectations will be spelled out in the partnership agreement itself. You are making an agreement with other partners of the church, the leadership, and God. Similarly, the leadership will make a covenant with you before God. It's a beautiful thing.

Is church partnership for super Christians?

Absolutely not. Church partnership is for all people who profess Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Can you become a partner at any time?

We will have set times during the year when we will hold a Discovering Partnership Class and open the opportunity to anyone who has just joined us or recently became a Christian.

If you want to become a partner, but your spouse doesn't, what do you do?

Ideally, both husband and wife join together. However, we do understand and appreciate situations where one spouse wants to become a partner while the other does not. Please discuss this as a couple and know that couples are not required to both become partners.

What if you were asked to leave your former church but want to become a partner with New Hope Church?

We will handle these situations on a case-by-case basis. You can email us at info@newhope.org and let us know. As much as possible, we want to uphold Romans 12:18, "So far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" particularly as it relates to other Christians and/or churches.

If you are still exploring a relationship with Jesus, can you become a partner?

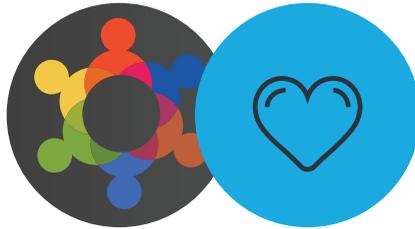
We're excited you're with us! Church partnership is specifically for those who have accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord. So, for now, we'll wait. Take your time to ask questions, get connected in our community and continue to explore the claims of Jesus Christ. If and when you decide to follow him, we'll revisit the partnership topic.



What if your questions were not asked here?

No worries, simply email us at info@newhope.org and we will get back to you.





Partnership Agreement

The following pages represent the actual Partnership Agreement that perspective partners will sign. For the purposes of this booklet, we have included the bible verses that are referenced in each item. The New Living Translation has been chosen for the source of each bible verse.

As stated earlier in this booklet, once you fulfill the requirements of partnership and sign the agreement, you are considered a partner. You can fill out the agreement online at bit.ly/nhccpartnership.



New Hope Church Partnership Agreement

Having accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with New Hope's statements (Beliefs, Core Values, Heart Attitudes), strategy (mission, discipline and restoration), and structure (affiliation, leadership), I want to enter into the Partnership Agreement with the New Hope Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other partners to fulfilling New Hope Church's mission of helping all people become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ:

1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

...By praying for its unity and direction

"Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we ask you to pray for us. Pray that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honored wherever it goes, just as when it came to you." (2 Thessalonians 3:1 NLT)

...By acting in love toward others

"You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart." (1 Peter 1:22 NLT)

"Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith." (Galatians 6:10 NLT)

...By encouraging others with my words

"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them." (Ephesians 4:29 NLT)

...By supporting the church's leadership and direction

"Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit." (Hebrews 13:17 NLT)

2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

...By viewing the unchurched around me through Jesus' compassionate perspective

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."(Matthew 9:36 NLT)

... By intentionally building meaningful relationships with one or more unchurched people, seeking opportunities to invite them to come to know and believe in Jesus.

"Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone." (Colossians 4:5-6 NLT)

...By warmly welcoming our guests

"Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!"(Hebrews 13-2 NLT)

3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

...By intentionally balancing my life so that I have the necessary time and energy to discover and use my spiritual gifts, abilities and talents in ministry

"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another." (1 Peter 4:10 NLT)

...By seeking to meet in a small group setting with other believers in order to engage in authentic community, fellowship, worship and accountability

“As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.”(Proverbs 27:17 NLT)

...By serving where I am needed

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45 NLT)

4. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

...By thoughtfully and consistently attending and participating in worship

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT)

... By having a lifestyle that honors God, my family and community of faith

“So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.” (Colossians 1:9-10 NLT)

...By generously supporting the church financially, giving regularly and joyfully a percentage from my income and making available to God other resources He has entrusted to me for His use

“On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don’t wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.” (1 Corinthians 16:2 NLT)

The Staff and Leadership Team is entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping, and caring for the church body and the individual partner. We commit to the following responsibilities:

...To act as guardians of New Hope's Vision, Mission, Values, and Beliefs

...To prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward New Hope Church's resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit's guidance

"So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his own blood."(Acts 20:28 NLT)

"And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor." (1 Peter 5:1-4 NLT)

...To care for the church and seek its growth in grace, truth, and love

"Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 NLT)

"Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love." (Ephesians 4:15-16 NLT)

“So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfecting their relationship to Christ.” (Colossians 1:28 NLT)

...To provide biblically consistent preaching, teaching, and counsel

“For I didn’t shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know. So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.”(Acts 20:27-28 NLT)

“Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.”(1 Timothy 4:16 NLT)

“As for you, Titus, promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching.” (Titus 2:1 NLT)

...To equip the partners of the church for the work of ministry

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (Ephesians 4:11-16 NLT)

...To be on guard against false teachers and teachings

“Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves.” (Matthew 7:15 NLT)

“So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders. I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. Watch out! Remember the three years I was with you—my constant watch and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you.” (Acts 20:28-31 NLT)

When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there in Ephesus and stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth. Don’t let them waste their time in endless discussion of myths and spiritual pedigrees. These things only lead to meaningless speculations, which don’t help people live a life of faith in God. The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don’t know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently. (1 Timothy 1:3-7 NLT)

“Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.” (1 John 4:1 NLT)

...To lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined and the health of the church as a whole

“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the

church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector. "I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven." "I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."(Matthew 18:15-20 NLT)

"Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself." (Galatians 6:1 NLT)

"My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins." (James 5:19-20 NLT)

...To set an example and join partners in fulfilling the obligations of church partnership stated in the Partnership Agreement

"Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example."(Philippians 3:17 NLT)

Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. (1 Timothy 4:12 NLT)

"And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us." (Titus 2:7-8 NLT)

"Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example." (1 Peter 5:3 NLT)

My commitment to the mission of New Hope Church...

New Hope Church exists to help all people become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

I have read the New Hope Church's Mission Statement and commit to engage in and promote this mission as a diligent, faithful disciple of Jesus, in whom my identity, worship, and fellowship exists, and for whose glory I model my interaction with our culture.

I understand that this agreement obligates me to the partners of New Hope Church and is an acknowledgment of my submission to the leadership of the church. I accept the responsibility to notify New Hope Church leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this agreement, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding New Hope Church.





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