

Tool #27: Assess Your Church's Ministry Partnerships

How healthy are your church's ministry partnerships (for example, sharing space with a nonprofit agency, participating in a community development coalition, collaborating with the city on a job training program, or providing tutoring services at a local school)? How could you strengthen your collaborations?

1. *Healthy partnerships share a compatible vision.* While each partner retains its distinct identity, decisions made in the partnership are consistent with the church's ministry vision, and the church is not swayed to do things beyond the scope of its mission.

This characteristic describes our church's partnerships ... (circle a number from 1 to 5)

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

2. *Healthy partnerships set achievable goals.* Successful partnerships focus on the accomplishment of specific objectives. Celebrating small steps builds motivation to continue taking risks together.

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

3. *Healthy partnerships are founded on relationships of mutual trust and respect.* Neither partner feels intimidated or overpowered; neither is always on the "receiving" end.

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

4. *Healthy partnerships have a sense of ownership on both sides.* The congregation feels connected to the aims of the ministry, takes an interest in the outcomes, upholds the importance of the shared mission, and recognizes that the church's participation matters.

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

5. *Healthy partnerships have clear communication and accountability.* The partners have an explicit agreement about goals, roles, and standards, and communicate regularly. Maintaining an effective partnership generally requires the efforts of a dedicated coordinator.

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

6. *Healthy partnerships do not substitute for the gifts and energy of the congregation.* The partnership is an investment that expands the church's capacity for mission, not an excuse for the inactivity of its members. The church continues equipping and mobilizing people for ministry.

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all

7. *Healthy partnerships do not hinder the faith or witness of the church.* The partnership does not lead the church to contradict biblical teachings, compromise its values, or hide its Christian identity. The church and its partner agree on guidelines for appropriate religious expression within the program.

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	...	Somewhat	...	Hardly at all