

# Fostering Churches Back To Health

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A Manual for  
Church Fostering

**Replant**  
|>> NAMB



# Fostering Church Agreement Sample

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*(This is an internal church congregation document for leadership to present and gain approval from the membership of the fostering church before engagement with a to-be-fostered church.)*

We, the fostering church, as God has graciously and abundantly blessed us over the past years, commit ourselves to use our collective heritage, wisdom and resources to come alongside the to-be-fostered church in a partnership for a period of up to 18 months, with the goal of restoring the health, vitality and full autonomy of the to-be-fostered church, if agreed-upon benchmarks are met.

We do not desire or seek to take over or incorporate the to-be-fostered church within our own church. Rather, we seek to help her once again be vibrant, gospel-centered, mission-focused and kingdom-relevant in our region for the glory of God. Our sole intent in this process is to assist the to-be-fostered church through modeling, mentoring, equipping and relationship to regain strength, health and stability to once again be a Spirit-powered force in ministry and impact for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

***To that end, we pledge ourselves as brothers and sisters in Christ to serve them humbly as Christ has served us, lead them wisely as God has shown us, and bless them graciously as God has blessed us.***

We are willing to offer the following for assistance during the time in question:

- › Pastoral leadership and/or direction and assistance
- › Modeling of healthy systems and processes
- › Evaluation and analysis of current systems and processes
- › Temporary volunteer mobilization
- › Financial assistance and material resources, as stated in the financial agreements for this relationship
- › An ongoing collegial relationship of prayer, support and love
- › Equipping of your own people/others to take the reins as we transition out

What we ask of the to-be-fostered church during the time in question:

- › Adoption and acceptance of oversight by our church for the duration of the fostering agreement, to be agreed upon by both churches
- › Willingness to appropriately budget for the process during the partnership, so that healthier systems and processes, along with its subsequent ministries, can take place, to be agreed upon by both churches
- › Eagerness to observe, equip and implement emerging leaders for the fostered church's future, to be agreed upon by both churches
- › An ongoing collegial relationship of prayer, support and love

## Fostered Church Agreement Sample

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*(This is an internal church congregation document to be presented by leadership to gain approval of the to-be-fostered church before commitment to partner with a fostering church.)*

We, the to-be-fostered church, as God has graciously and abundantly blessed us in the past, recognize that we are currently challenged and struggling in areas of church life and ministry. We corporately desire God to reverse this trend and commit ourselves to use our collective heritage, wisdom and resources in partnering with a fostering church, for a partnership of up to 18 months to meet agreed-upon benchmarks for health and vitality as a church. (These are found later in this document.) We believe the best is yet to come.

To that end, we understand and believe that a fostering church has no desire to take over or incorporate us, the to-be-fostered church, within their own church. Rather, they seek to help us stand on our own once again, to be vibrant, gospel-centered, mission-focused and kingdom-relevant in our region for the glory of God. Their stated sole intent in this process is to assist us, the to-be-fostered church, through modeling, mentoring, equipping and relationship to regain strength, health and stability to once again be a Spirit-powered force in ministry and impact for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

***To this end, we pledge ourselves as brothers and sisters in Christ to submit to them humbly as Christ has commanded us, learn from them wisely as God has invited us, and welcome them graciously as God has accepted us.***

We are humbly and thankfully willing to receive the following assistance from a fostering church during the time in question:

- › Pastoral leadership and/or direction and assistance
- › Modeling of healthy systems and processes
- › Evaluation and analysis of current systems and processes
- › Temporary volunteer mobilization

- › Financial assistance and material resources
- › An ongoing collegial relationship of prayer, support and love
- › Equipping of our own people/others to take the reins as they transition out

What we give to the fostering church during the time in question:

- › Adoption and acceptance of oversight of the fostering church for the duration of the fostering agreement, to be agreed upon by both churches
- › Willingness to appropriately budget for the process during the partnership, so that healthier systems and processes, along with its subsequent ministries, can take place, to be agreed upon by both churches
- › Eagerness to observe, equip and implement emerging leaders for our, the fostered church's, future, to be agreed upon by both churches
- › An ongoing collegial relationship of prayer, support and love

# Fostering Church Covenant

## Between Fostering Church and Fostered Church Any Town, USA

Month, 20xx – Month, 20xx

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*(cooperative document signed between the two church congregations after agreement has been reached through dialogue, recommendation and official approval of both parties for the duration of the partnership)*

We the leadership of the fostering church and the fostered church in Any Town, USA, do enter into covenant to glorify God, edify the Church and further God's kingdom through this "foster care" covenant of relationship. In this covenant we commit to pray for each other, support each other, speak highly of each other and empower each other to do the tasks necessary to enable both churches to grow healthier and thrive in ministry for years to come.

**To that end, *the leaders representing and affirming the desire of the fostering church, do agree to assist and support the fostered church in the following ways:***

1. We will provide pastoral leadership for the fostering period in question (as needed). If the fostered church is currently without a pastor, it agrees not to begin (or it will suspend) efforts to discover and call the next pastor for the church until this fostering relationship with the fostering church is complete. If the fostered church currently has a pastor, his role during this partnership will be mutually agreeable to both congregations. He will serve in collaboration with the leadership of the fostering church and will function as a member of their pastoral staff during the partnership agreement.

2. We will work with the fostered church to implement healthy systems and processes in all areas of church life, through the following methods:
  - a. Evaluation and analysis of current systems and processes, establishing improved practices for positive health and development, modeling these healthy systems and processes and equipping member leaders within the fostered church to take charge of their ongoing function for the future
  - b. Providing temporary volunteers to lead or assist in the implementation of these systems and strategies
  - c. Providing a monthly financial supplement to the fostered church to assist with the ongoing ministry support needed during this time, knowing that the fostered church has granted us the authority and is in agreement to budget and expend funds necessary to implement the systems, processes and strategies necessary
  - d. Having the fostered church accept a temporary decision-making process for the period of the foster care partnership agreement, that is, suspending their own bylaws for the period of the covenant and agreeing to the process to be used
3. We will maintain an intentional and determined ministry of prayer, support and love for the fostered church, which will be shown in tangible ways during this time.
4. We will have consistent, ongoing weekly foster care council meetings for coordinating efforts, building trust, addressing areas of growth and implementing strategies for positive alignment needed during this time; simultaneously, the pastoral leadership of the fostered church will join our own staff meetings to learn, coordinate and share progress or concerns that need to be addressed; membership of the Council will be made up of three leaders from each church, plus the pastor of the foster church.
5. We will hold special “progress evaluations” with the recognized church leadership at the fostered church each six months to evaluate our joint efforts and address the concerns that have been raised.
6. We will communicate with the fostered church in person quarterly during this process in “town hall/church family” gatherings and more often in written and oral form, in order to pray together and celebrate what God is doing, to keep them apprised of the progress being made and to hear and address their questions or concerns.

***We at the fostered church agree to this, and in doing so, affirm the following:***

1. We will grant moderated direction to the fostering church in the agreed-upon parameters of leadership, finances and decision-making for the duration of this covenant agreement, believing that the fostering church has our fostered church's best interests and God's glory at heart in what they determine God is leading them to do.
2. We will not undermine or sabotage the efforts of the fostering church to implement healthy, life-giving systems and processes within our church, nor will we allow any of our members to do this. (If individuals are discovered doing this, we will confront them biblically, even to the extent of church discipline, if necessary.)
3. We as leaders will embrace the modeling, coaching and equipping of the fostering church for our current church leadership roles during the time in question and allow the fostering church to help us improve our abilities for the future, as they work beside us and then support us in resuming the roles we hold in a healthier manner.
4. We will coordinate with the fostering church on the availability of our budget, as it will be needed for the process of provision and investment in this process only (including outreach, facility maintenance, etc.) during this partnership agreement, but not for ministry after the covenant is completed nor for any funds diverted to their own site or activities.
5. We agree to be trained, encouraged and equipped by the fostering church for the future effectiveness and ministry of the fostered church.
6. We also will have an ongoing relationship of prayer, support and love for the fostering church during this time and for these efforts.

***Together we at the fostering church and at the fostered church agree to the following:***

1. We will jointly agree to benchmarks of a healthy church that we will, under the Lord's direction, seek to see achieved during the time of this covenant. These will include (check the ones that apply)
  - a. Community assessment
  - b. Priority of prayer and our spiritual condition
  - c. Development of a disciple-making pathway
  - d. History/heritage review
  - e. Worship attendance



- f. Membership requirements
  - g. Small group/Sunday school involvement
  - h. Missional community engagement
  - i. Review and update of bylaws
  - j. Giving mechanisms
  - k. Outreach opportunities
  - l. Facility upgrade
2. We at the fostering church and at the fostered church agree to find and implement a joint way of celebrating this covenant relationship at both the beginning and the end of the agreement, as a means of expressing glory to God, partnership in the gospel and gratitude for all He has, and will do.
  3. We both agree not to end the process prematurely unless the following happens:
    - a. The benchmarks set at the beginning of the process have been met
    - b. The time of this covenant has been completed
    - c. The fostered church insists the fostering church withdraw its assistance. If this choice is made, it must be done by a written ballot vote in which two-thirds of active members vote in the affirmative. (“Active members” will be defined as those who have attended at least 50% of the Sundays during the time in question, attend a small group or Sunday School class, have participated in some outreach or fellowship activity promoted by the church during this time, and are monthly contributors to the fostered church.)

**We affirm** the fostering church’s desire is to provide support and assistance for this defined period of time and that it does not desire to pursue a formal, permanent relationship with the fostered church. The objective is to help her find the ability to stand on her own again in a vibrant, healthy way, so the gospel may go forth from the fostered church as it did in the past, in boldness and the power of the Holy Spirit. To that end, the goal is to love her, strengthen her, equip her and empower her for God’s glory and their own good.

**However,** if at some point during this covenant relationship, the fostered church feels it may be God’s will and in the best interest of its own church to pursue a change in relationship from “fostering” to “adoption,” (that is, becoming a part of the fostering church family), the fostered church alone may initiate that conversation and dialogue may ensue. No commitment of this will be predetermined on the part of either

church before this time. Rationale would have to be based on the belief that (1) God is leading this direction, (2) it would be a kingdom “gain” and (3) it would be best for the people of both churches.

**We have added additional concerns and items of mutual interest here and agreed that this is how we will handle them.**

*(Of course, feel free to add, delete or modify anything written previously to meet your own fostering relationship, as desired. These are only recommendations based on experience and our learning.)*

We, the undersigned, do affirm this covenant of expectations and responsibilities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Names

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

A photograph of a church steeple with a cross on top, set against a blue sky with light clouds. The steeple is made of light-colored stone or concrete and has a brick base. The roof of the church is visible in the foreground, showing red brick and white siding.

# Replant

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