



**Dear Prospective Harvest Core Group Member,**

Nothing excites us more than to think about the people God is calling to be a part of the core team of a new Harvest Bible Chapel. They are about to begin one of the greatest adventures of their lives, one filled with hard work, much prayer and great joy and amazement. In order to be part of the core group, you should be interested in hands-on participation.

As you consider being a part of this core group we want you and your family to make a wise decision and to be completely prepared by having accurate expectations. Many will tell you that there is nothing more joyful and nothing harder than planting a church. We want our core group members to be ready and well informed!

In this letter you will find a high-level look at the stages of planting a Harvest Bible Chapel, a broad timeline for launching the church and some clarification on expectations.

The first three stages fall under the leadership of the Harvest Bible Fellowship. The last two stages fall under the leadership of each local plant's elders.

1. **Preparation** During this stage we will build the core group, from which we will recruit a leadership team, share vision, pray, and set up finances. HBF will begin the search for a senior pastor and begin the process of incorporation.

2.

*Primary Needs: Prayer, people, encouragement, preparation, patience, finances.  
Average Timeframe: 2-3 months*

3. **Development** During this stage, the core group will gather and meet together on a weekly basis (Saturday evening or Sunday evening, not Sunday morning) for study of the Word, prayer, worship and planning. A location will be secured, a worship leader found, a worship team formed. Members of the core group will be assigned to areas of service based on gifting and need. Greatest focus will be on the primary ministries of worship, children's, small groups, assimilation, finance, administration, and promotion.

*Primary Needs: Prayer, people, finances, worship leader, participation, sacrifice, networking, promotion, location.*

*Average Timeframe: 4-6 months*

4. **Launch** During this stage, the new church emerges publicly for worship services and extended ministry. The core group will go from a launch team to a church. Harvest Bible Fellowship will serve as the elders of the new plant for the first year. All major ministry components will be planned, prepared and ready to go prior to the launch

date. These ministries include preaching, worship, children's, small groups, assimilation, administration, and logistics.

*Primary Needs: Prayer, sacrifice, finances, participation, set up/break down, follow-up, promotion.*

*Average Timeframe: 7-9 months*

5. **Growth** During this stage the new church begins to grow, bear fruit and multiply. Ministry growth will take place as will the addition of new ministries such as student ministries, mission and compassion, possibly men's and women's ministry. Pruning also takes place in this stage. Trials, challenges, disappointments, discipline will cause some to leave but ultimately it will strengthen and bring maturity to the body.

*Primary Needs: Prayer, sacrifice, finances, endurance, discipleship, evangelism, courage.*

6. **Multiplication** During this stage the church is established, strong and autonomous in its ability to thrive on its own. It is a ministry-giving ministry-multiplying body. It has deep roots and a resilient base evidenced by a deep and growing fruitfulness and the church's ability to endure difficulties. It is a church-planting church.

*Primary Needs: Prayer, plurality of elders, endurance, discipleship, leadership training, evangelism, finances.*

Our experience in church planting has shown us that to go from "preparation" (a beginning core group) to "launch" is a six-to-nine-month process. Six months is a minimum and there are many critical pathways that could push the timeline past nine months if key milestones are not secured. Some key milestones are finding the right senior pastor, the worship leader, a location to meet, and growing a sufficient core group with the gifts and abilities to participate in the various ministry components needed for launch.

### **Expectations:**

Right expectations pave the way for personal commitment and team alignment. We desire to clearly communicate both our expectations of you as a core group member and what you can expect from Harvest Bible Fellowship.

- **You are fully aligned with our mission, vision, values, and distinctives.**  
Harvest is a contemporary church built on these 4 Pillars: proclaiming the authority of God's Word without apology; lifting high the name of Jesus Christ in worship; believing firmly in the power of prayer; and sharing the good news of Jesus with boldness.

*Do our values align with and stir your spirit?*

- **You are willing to submit to the leadership of HBF and the senior pastor.**  
Harvest Bible Fellowship along with the senior pastor will serve as the elders of the new plant for the first year. They will strive to lead the local HBC in a way that is obedient to God's Word. The reality is that you will not always agree with or understand the decisions that will be made.

*Can you follow, support, and speak well of the leadership?*

- **You have healthy motives for joining the Core Team.**  
You are coming primarily because you sense God calling you to be a part of planting a new church committed to Harvest Bible Chapel's mission, values and distinctives.

You are *not* coming:

*To get more control and responsibility in a church.*

*To run away from difficulties in your current church.*

*Expecting to come on staff at HBC down the road.*

- **To the best of your ability, you will make a healthy church transition.**  
Those leaving a current local church to participate with the HBC plant should “leave well.” Tell the leadership of your current local church what you are going to do. Ask for their blessing and prayer support. Within reason, fulfill your previously made commitments and after leaving, speak well of your former church.
- **You are prepared for the constant change of church planting (flexibility).**  
Church planting does not provide the routine, comforts, and predictability of a large established church. All involved will need to be flexible.
- **You realize sacrifice will be the norm—not the exception.**  
There is no doubt that it is a sacrifice for you and your family to be a part of a church plant. We will not immediately have first-rate facilities, a thriving student ministry, or other blessings of an established church. God will honor your sacrifice and abundantly bless you and your family despite the absence of these comforts. It is critical that you know these things will not be available immediately.
- **You are aware of and committed to prepare for spiritual warfare.**  
Spiritual warfare is real and church planting is a direct and strategic assault against Satan and the kingdom of darkness. We must be vigilant to put on the full armor of God and cover everything we do in prayer.
- **You are committed to financially support the vision of the local HBC in proportion to your income.**  
The church is funded by God’s people supporting the work, and giving generously to the work of the church is the New Testament norm. *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (Luke 12:34).

#### **Your expectations of Harvest Bible Fellowship:**

- **HBF is passionately committed to planting life-giving churches that are built on the Word of God.**  
The commitment to the Word is most clearly expressed in the *4 Pillars* of Harvest.
- **HBF is committed to pursuing a quality of discipleship, not a quantity of disciples.**  
We focus on the depth of our ministries and trust God with the breadth.
- **HBF is committed to growth.**  
No, this is not a contradiction to our commitment to a quality of discipleship. Healthy things grow. Growth brings change. In order to facilitate growth we need to make room for new people.

- **HBF will be diligent and proactive in the search, hiring and training of the senior pastor.**  
HBF owns the responsibility of hiring and training the senior pastor. We take this responsibility seriously.
- **HBF will serve, along with the senior pastor, as the elders for the first year in the church plant.**  
We take seriously the Biblical admonition to not lay hands on anyone quickly. Serving as the plant's elders for a year allows for an adequate amount of time to observe potential elders.
- **HBF is committed to purity and unity.**  
Purity and unity within Christ's church is essential. You can expect the leadership of HBF to act immediately in dealing with sin and to resolve conflict among our people.

Our great desire is that Christ would be exalted in and through the lives of His people, as preparing to plant a new Harvest Bible Chapel is prayerfully considered.

We hope this letter has been helpful to you. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact Terri Quaid at [tquaid@harvestbiblechapel.org](mailto:tquaid@harvestbiblechapel.org).

All for Christ,

Kent C. Shaw