

Originally appeared in PartnerNews Autumn 2013

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Daniel Kenny wanted ministry training. Wyoming Church of Christ was keen to take him on as a ministry apprentice. But when their church couldn't stretch the budget to employ and train him, they decided this wouldn't stop them.

"Fundraising was the only possible option for us," says Dan. "Our church was in a fairly dire financial position but still saw the need to begin intentionally training future vocational gospel workers. God is sovereign; despite our church's financial hardship, He made my apprenticeship a reality through the generous partnership of individual people."

Dan worked closely with his potential trainer, the senior pastor, to begin raising funds. "Together we identified some key people to approach; people who were showing signs of growth and who had the potential to give cheerfully," he says. "My trainer helped me think about how I should view these people – as partners rather than donors – and this was instrumental in defining the way I invited them to give."

The idea of fundraising was daunting to Dan at first. "I remember finding it tough to sell raffle tickets as a kid," he says, "so naturally, asking people to part with hundreds of dollars was a real challenge! I was so wary that people might think I was trying to strongarm them into something. Maintaining a biblical picture of gospel partnership was absolutely vital in this regard. I came to realize I was inviting people to be disciple-makers alongside me. Their support would be crucial to effective gospel ministry taking place. With this view in mind, talking about money and partnership was much easier and much more positive."

Dan visited several houses and a growth group on his own to explain his vision for ministry and why he was choosing to do a ministry apprenticeship. "Without understanding MTS, they might think they were just funding another youth pastor or whatever; without understanding my passion and vision, they might doubt whether I'd stick it out for the long haul; and without understanding biblical partnership, they might lack a proper motivation for giving financial support."

Dan was able to enter his MTS Apprenticeship with 75% of the funding he needed, allowing him to work three days a week, but would only last for 18 months. "As I began the work a very generous family from outside our church agreed to fund my apprenticeship for the remaining six months," Dan shares. "I'm glad we stepped out in faith because otherwise this wouldn't have happened!"

Eighteen months on and Dan is still surprised and grateful for all those who have partnered with him on his journey so far. "I knew intellectually that God transformed people's hearts. I knew intellectually that true followers of Jesus would have joy in seeing the gospel spread and giving generously to that effect. But to see that dynamic in action – and at a level that has affected me so personally – impacted me a lot more than I thought it would! It bolsters my faith in God and gives me still greater reasons to praise him!"

## Dan's 5 Fundraising Tips

### **1 - Work with your potential trainer:**

Tap into his or her understanding of the church and who is most likely to want to partner with you (and I'll add, partner cheerfully and with the right motivation). Not to mention that having his or her emotional and prayerful support during this early stage is invaluable.

### **2 - Grow a biblical picture of partnership:**

Explore the New Testament and especially the way that Paul's ministry was supported. How does Paul view his partners? Are they just donors or are they something more? Answering these questions may well address any doubt or guilt around asking for money, and it'll certainly help your partners understand the significance of what they're doing.

### **3 - Work on a clear pitch:**

To some extent I don't like the word "pitch" because we're not selling something; we're inviting people to be part of the greatest mission in the world. Nonetheless, I want to pitch that invitation clearly, passionately and biblically. That took some work on my part. It wasn't just something I came up with on the spot!

### **4 - Explore alternative avenues of support:**

If your denomination has some kind of grant/scholarship system, see if there are appropriate grants you could apply for. Almost 20% of my support came through this channel.

### **5 - Above all, have faith in God!**

I've seen firsthand that He is committed to opening opportunities for gospel workers to be trained. In one sense, it doesn't matter if your church can afford your position or not; God is gracious and His people are generous. If we truly believe that to be true, then we'll persevere in approaching potential partners no matter how bleak the situation appears