

Dear friends and ministry partners,

For a long time I have been burdened with the conviction that too many of our stateside church planting families are isolated and lonely, under resourced, and in need of encouragement. They are facing unprecedented stress and ministry challenges in today's cultural climate.

Many are in need of more opportunities for connection and relationships with other church planting families, and more churches and individuals advocating for them.



I'm excited to share with you the new ministry God is calling us to. We are partnering with our sending church, First Baptist Church of Inwood WV to establish a Church Planting Advocacy Ministry. There will be three primary focus areas of our ministry:

#1 Church Planting Residencies

Our plan is to spend short seasons (4-8 weeks) with church planting families in their communities and spend time with their churches. We want to care for these families and encourage them in the work they are doing, consistently asking the question: "how can we help?".

Belinda and I sold our home in January, bought a travel trailer, and plan to be mobile most of the year, spending time with church planting families. We have been overwhelmed with the response from church planters around the country inviting us to come and help. We've already received invitations from church planters in Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Texas, Arkansas, West Virginia, Indiana, and Pennsylvania.

#2 Coaching

Church planting takes wisdom, strategy and support to navigate the complex challenges of establishing a new church. A coach is the planter's "son of encouragement" to walk beside him during the wins and challenges of church planting.

Effective coaches help church planters turn truth into action. Mentors, teachers, pastors, family and friends have influential voices in the church planting process, and the church planter hears them all. A coach helps a church planter pursue his God-given assignment, providing an "asking" voice in the sea of "telling" voices.

Proverbs 20:5 "Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, But a man of understanding will draw it out."

Most coaching will happen virtually, as well as on the field during a residency.

#3 Connection Events

It's vital for healthy environments to be created where church planters and pastors can connect with one another on a deeper level to build lasting friendships and encourage one another along the journey.

Eleven Years Ago, we launched LeadSummit, a gathering of church planters and ministry leaders with the goal of caring for and encouraging one another, and building lasting friendships. Last month, 52 pastors and planters met for the 11th year in Washington State. My goal is to create more environments like LeadSummit to not only minister to church planters, but also to their wives and family.

I am currently raising support for my salary and travel fund so Belinda and I can spend the last half of 2022 with church planters. Would you pray for us?

Pray for God to put the support team of churches and individuals together so this ministry will have financial stability and be able to support these church planting families?

On February 26th, First Baptist Church of Inwood WV voted to be our sending church for the Church Planting Advocacy Ministry. I grew up in this church and these dear people have been faithful ministry partners for many years. Belinda and I are so excited to link arms with them as we advocate for church planting families around the country.

Here is a message from Zack Stringer, Lead Pastor of FBC Inwood...

"First Baptist Church of Inwood is excited and overjoyed to not only be partnering with, but also sending out Russell as he embarks on this new ministry that the Lord has called him to. First Baptist has supported Russell and his family for the past twenty years through the different church plants that he has been involved in, and we have full confidence in him and the calling the Lord has given to him. We have faith that the Lord has placed a burden on his heart to advocate for stateside church planters in a way that has not previously been done in our work. With so many missionaries and even pastors walking away from the ministry in our day, we firmly believe that one of the contributing factors has been the isolation that many men of God experience,

which also births depression. Our hope is that, with the help of our Lord, and through the support of this ministry, we will be able to be involved in not just one or two church plants, but have the opportunity to impact many across the nation. We are excited to see church planters encouraged, strengthened, and lifted up spiritually, emotionally and physically, so that they may "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and so that they may run and finish their race well! "


If God is leading you to partner with us, all donations and support can be send to:

First Baptist Church
PO Box 74
Inwood WV 25428

Memo: Russell Knight

Thank you for your faithful partnership over the years and your prayers for Belinda and I as we move forward with this new ministry focus. Please contact me with any questions or for further information about the Church Planting Advocacy Ministry.

Thankful for you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell Knight". The script is cursive and fluid.

Russell Knight