

The Church-Planting Internship

Job Description

Sovereign Grace Ministries

Goal: To prepare the intern to plant a church. The intern will spend twelve months observing and working with the pastors and ministries of the hosting church. Church-planting internships are awarded to candidates who display a desire and capacity for church planting, and are carried out at a church where a member of the leadership team or regional leadership team resides and is available to train the intern.

Strategy: The internship is designed for evaluation of these four areas in the intern's life:

- 1) Character
- 2) Public gifting
- 3) Leadership gift
- 4) Pastoral gift

An effective church planter displays excellence in all four areas. Internship overseers will evaluate the intern through meaningful relationships, training in church ministry, preparation for the church-planting experience, and planning for the first year of the church plant.

I. Primary Relationships and Commitments

1. **Mentoring Pastor:** The intern's senior pastor will either be his mentor during this internship or assign him a mentoring pastor. The mentoring pastor will meet with the intern on a weekly or biweekly basis to review progress on assignments, answer questions, and provide pastoral care. (If the intern is engaged or married, the mentoring pastor's wife may be involved in the mentoring process, particularly in monthly or quarterly couples' meetings as needed.)
2. **Pastors and Wives' Small Group:** The intern (and his wife, if he is married) will participate in a pastors and wives' small group throughout the internship. This will promote personal growth, biblical fellowship, and accountability as well as provide a model of community and team care.
3. **Elders' Meetings (or Executive Team Meetings):** The intern will participate in all elders' (or executive team) meetings in order to learn how pastors apply wisdom and make decisions as they lead a local church. The intern's senior pastor may also assign him to lead some discussions in elders' meetings in order to develop and assess his leadership skills.

II. Training

The intern will observe and actively participate in each major department of the church, including (but not limited to) public ministry, counseling and oversight, and administration of large-scale projects, all for the purpose of equipping.

1. **Major Ministries/Departments:** The intern will observe and participate in each major ministry/department. His first priorities will be those most important in the first years of a church plant (e.g. evangelism, general church administration, Sunday morning administration, and worship). His second priorities will be those important in later years (e.g. children's ministry, youth, family life, singles, and mercy ministries). The intern will...
 - be actively involved in each department for four to eight weeks each
 - interview each overseeing pastor or lay leader (using questions reviewed by the mentoring pastor and submitted to the interviewee beforehand)
 - participate in administrative meetings in order to understand strategic administration
 - attend at least one corporate meeting of each major ministry (e.g. youth, college, singles)
 - present a summary of his interviews and observations to the mentoring pastor for discussion
2. **Public Ministry:** The intern will participate in public ministry in the following ways as tools for equipping and evaluation:
 - Some form of public ministry at least once a month. In each case, at least one designated person will offer a formal evaluation of the intern's strengths, weaknesses, and growth in public ministry.
 - The crafting of a few worship sets, not necessarily for use on Sunday mornings, but in order to understand the process behind Sunday-morning worship.
3. **Counseling:** The intern will join a pastor in one or more counseling situations and discuss the situation(s) with the pastor afterward.
4. **Projects Sufficient to Evaluate Leadership and Administration:** The intern will be invited to assume oversight of at least one major project requiring leadership, initiative, wisdom, and care to ensure its success. Pastors will then evaluate his suitability for church planting in light of his ability to rise to the challenge of this project, his gift of leadership, and his overall performance.

III. Preparation for Church Planting

1. **Interviews**
 - The intern will interview other Sovereign Grace church planters about their experiences, conducting one or two interviews per category:

- 1) One year into a church plant
 - 2) Two years into a church plant
 - 3) Five years into a church plant
- Questions should include (but are not limited to) the following:
- 1) How did you care for your family during the first year?
 - 2) What were your greatest challenges?
 - 3) How did you build and care for your team?
 - 4) What outreaches were effective?
 - 5) What would you do differently?
 - 6) What did you learn?
 - 7) What most encouraged your faith?
 - 8) When did you start small groups, and who led them?
- The intern will write a summary report of his observations.
2. **Strategic Planning:** The intern will...
- Develop a strategic plan for the first year, including these ten elements:
- 1) A thorough review and discussion of Sovereign Grace Ministries' *Administrative Manual for Church Planters*
 - 2) A strategy for developing a church-planting team, agendas for team meetings, and a prayer focus
 - 3) Quarterly goals
 - 4) An outreach strategy
 - 5) Creation of a leadership advisory board (for advice and accountability)
 - 6) Church incorporation and tax-exempt status
 - 7) Development of public materials (logo, letterhead, website, welcome cards, etc.)
 - 8) Teaching strategy: what series will you do? When and how will you lay foundations?
 - 9) Location for corporate meetings (this can take time and should be done early)
 - 10) A budget and financial procedures for the first year (see Sovereign Grace Ministries for further resources)
- Identify and train the church-planting team
- Identify key lay leaders and develop job descriptions for each role (worship, children's ministry, Sunday administrator, treasurer, book table)
- Develop a ten-week series from Ephesians under the guidance of the host church's pastoral team
- Get a demographic study of his church-planting area
- Identify any key Christian leaders in the area with whom he should meet