

Banking for the Greater Good: Effective Partnerships Between Ministries and Financial Institutions

Successful ministries need to build and maintain several important partnerships. For example, a church needs to partner with its congregants to grow spiritually, with its staff to realize its vision, and with its community to make sure the community's needs are met.

But what about the prudent stewardship that makes all of these partnerships possible?

Churches and ministries should build partnerships with their financial institutions to help achieve their financial and kingdom goals.

Too often, churches and financial institutions have a consumer and commodity-provider relationship, with the church and the financial institution having opposite goals. This type of relationship can stifle the creative energy that could come from the partnership between the financial institution and the church.

A financial institution can be much more than simply a provider of services. The right financial institution can be a valued and insightful financial consultant.

At Christian Community Credit Union, all of our ministry development officers have years of experience working with churches and ministries. This means they can offer thoughtful, knowledgeable assistance. For example, if a church usually has a cash flow shortage in the summer months, the officer may have helped other churches through similar difficulties. This

means the officer can represent the church's situation to the financial institution's management with empathy and effectiveness.

Once a solid partnership is in place, the ministry can tap into the institution's financial and strategic network. For example, one of our churches once faced a big problem: how to reinvent itself from a traditional Sunday walk-up service model to a home church-based model.

The church had a 50,000-square-foot building with a large loan attached to it. Our officer connected the church with real estate professionals who helped the church work out a lease and purchase strategy to pay off their loan. Thanks to the church's strong partnership with the Credit Union, this was a win for both sides.

The construction loan process is another area where shared goals can benefit both institutions. Construction costs can easily spiral out of control, which can quickly use up any loan funds. Because of this, the ministry's and lender's goals are the same—to keep the project on time and on budget.

To reduce risk, the lender may put some conditions into the loan agreement, like requirements for cash contingency or payment or performance bonds. These conditions often inspire the ministry to examine the project and make it more cost-efficient—and more likely to be done on time.

Partnerships between ministries and financial institutions can also lead to new opportunities. In one case, a large ministry needed ways to expand its income, while the Credit Union sought charitable organizations to partner with.

Out of those two needs, an affinity credit card featuring the missionary organization's logo was created. Whenever members use the affinity credit card for purchases, the Credit Union donates a portion of its transaction fees to the organization. This benefited both the organization and the Credit Union.

It's important to regularly examine your ministry's business relationships. This includes your relationship with your financial institution. Keep these five questions in mind as you examine these relationships:

- Do they understand the issues you face, and do they have expertise that will help?
- Do they understand your vision for the future?
- Can you leverage their network to add value to the relationship?
- Do you have any shared goals?
- Are there opportunities to work and grow together?

Improving your ministry's partnership with your financial institution can enhance the success of both organizations. Most importantly, partnering with your financial institution can help you expand sustainably and further your kingdom goals—well into the future.

Contact us today and let us know how we can help your ministry further its kingdom goals!

Christian Community Credit Union has \$725 million in assets under management and over 30,000 members nationwide. For 60 years, the Credit Union has served as a financial partner of Christian ministries, churches, and their members. For more information about ministry loans, visit or call , ext. 6216.

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