

Oakham



Partnership Introduction Pack

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a partner of Oakham Evangelical Church. Please read all the documents in this partnership introduction pack, once you have read all the documents and wish to proceed with becoming a partner of Oakham Evangelical Church please fill in the application form at the rear of this pack. If you have any questions concerning issues of partnership please speak to a member of Oakham Evangelical Church Leadership team.

Please be aware that the partnership covenant is a 12-month agreement and you will be required to update your covenant in 12 months time. The process of becoming a Partner of Oakham Evangelical Church should not take any longer than six weeks.

Introducing Partnership

When anyone enters into relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ they are entering into two covenants.

The first is to journey with God for the rest of their lives and bring him glory. The second is to journey with His people in the context of the local church. Your partnership of a church is recognition of this.

Partnership is:

- To form an authentic church community that reflects the relationship between the Father, Son & Spirit and the nature of biblical fellowship.
- To clarify the on-going blessings and responsibilities of each member.
- To encourage consistency and loving unity within the church family.

This covenant does not imply that we will never fall short of the goals, but that we will sincerely endeavour to live out each of the responsibilities stated to the best of your ability. We trust that this commitment will be a blessing to your own journey in Christ, as well a Blessing to those around you.

Partnership speaks of companionship, being a comrade, a fellow traveller, an associate, people sharing in a work or task. In the New Testament the word speaks of people who were Fellow workers

- “As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.”
2 Corinthians 8:23
- “And here are some more greetings ... Timothy my partner in this work”
Romans 16:2

Partnership provides a genuine opportunity for those seriously concerned for the development of the Church, to become involved and share in its ministry in an influential and responsible manner. Partnership is a commitment to pray, to support, to give and to input into the Church. It is an agreement with the general overriding principles, values, strategy, direction and beliefs of the Church.

So when you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him.

Ecclesiastes 5:4

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Principles of Church Life at Oakham Evangelical Church

Christ the Head

Christ is the head of the Church, its foundation and cornerstone. All things should be undertaken with this in mind. The Church must be careful to find His leading and rely upon His provision. The Church leadership is composed of elders and deacons who operate on a basis of shared leadership.

The Church is a Family

The Church is made up of those believers who are called and gathered together by God to worship at serve here at Oakham. As part of the body of Christ here, we recognise that each has a vital and unique function. As members of God's family, they should feel a sense of love, acceptance and belonging. The Church is a warm loving family, a place of genuine care and fellowship.

Body Ministry

Each Christian within the fellowship has a unique role to play in the body. Each is endowed by the Holy Spirit with ministries and gifts intended to be used for the edification of the Church. Participation is to be fostered, encouraged and developed.

Sincere Worship

Worship is to be in spirit and truth; it should not be purely emotional or intellectual. Rather it should be grounded in truth, express our inner most being and be led by the Holy Spirit. Worship is a dynamic factor in Church life, and should therefore be open and sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We accept there are a variety of ways of expressing worship, these should be both respected and encouraged.

Constancy in Prayer

A vital personal and corporate prayer life is to be encouraged. Christians are encouraged to pray regularly for the area and ministry of the Church. Monthly prayer gatherings and Days of prayer have been established to keep this a priority.

Scripture - the final authority

The Word of God is the final authority on all matters, we are to keep directly in line with what the Word teaches and the principles it lays down. Responsible and disciplined hermeneutic principles are to be adhered to in the interpretation of the Word. Preaching the Word is a key aspect of the Churches ministry, for both the conversion of the unsaved and the spiritual growth of believers.

Effective Evangelism

The churches priority must always be evangelism, a variety of new and well-tried means are to be used in outreach. Personal evangelism is by far the most effective means of reaching our community for Christ.

The Basis of Faith of The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

1. GOD

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator; Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

2. THE BIBLE

God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

3. THE HUMAN RACE

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please him.

4. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

5. SALVATION

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

6. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

7. THE CHURCH

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for pastoral care and discipline, and for

evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

8. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into his Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

9. THE FUTURE

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.

Oakham Evangelical Church Strategy and Purpose

Some time ago the members took some time to discuss the vision and nature of the Church, using documents way back from the Churches deep past. It was incredible to see how the ideas of those age of pioneers fit so well with us today.

The Church was to continue and remain, it was to keep going and stay true to the faith. It was to preach and teach in a plain, understandable and clear way the faith.

The Church was there to be used, occupied and enjoyed, to both instruct and engage with the local community.

Today we may find other phrases for some of these things but the simple fact is that the Church is here to reach out into the community, to present the faith in a way people can understand and to be active.

Underpinning this are essential values that have characterised the Church for many years:

- We believe in empowering and releasing believers into their ministry. Each person as part of the body has been placed here by God and has a unique and important role to fulfil for God's glory.
- We believe in the urgency of the gospel, all that we do has as its focus the proclamation of the gospel.
- We believe God has called us to serve our community and to transform it through teaching, prayer and action
- We believe that God's word is our ultimate authority in all matters.

Why We Are Here

- O** Outreach We are here for mission, to reach out and proclaim the gospel
- A** Adoration We are here to worship and magnify God
- K** Kinship We are here to express membership of God's family
- H** Holiness We are here to mature as Christians and to become what he wants us to be
- A** And
- M** Ministry We are here to serve God and operate in our God given ministry

Oakham Evangelical Personal Covenant

Today I am stepping across the line. I'm tired of waffling and I'm finished with wavering, I've made my choice, the verdict is in, and my decision is irrevocable. I'm going God's way. There's no turning back now!

I will live the rest of my life serving God's purposes with God's people on God's planet for God's glory. I will use my life to celebrate his presence, cultivate his character, participate in his family, demonstrate his love, and communicate his word.

Since my past has been forgiven, and I have a purpose for living, and a home awaiting in heaven, I refuse to waste any more time or energy on shallow living, petty thinking, trivial talking, thoughtless doing, useless regretting, hurtful resenting, or faithless worrying. Instead I will magnify God, grow to maturity, serve in ministry, and fulfil my mission in the membership of his family.

Because this life is preparation for the next, I will value worship over wealth, "we" over "me", character over comfort, service over status, and people over possessions, position, and pleasures. I know what matters most and I'll give it all I've got. I'll do the best I can with what I have for Jesus Christ today.

I won't be captivated by culture, manipulated by critics, motivated by praise, frustrated by problems, debilitated by temptation, or intimidated by the devil. I'll keep running my race with my eyes on the goal, not the sidelines or those running by me. When times get tough, and I get tired, I won't back up, back off, back down, back out or backslide. I'll just keep moving forward by God's grace. I'm Spirit-led, purpose-driven and mission-focused so I cannot be bought, I will not be compromised, and I shall not quit until I finish the race. I'm a trophy of God's amazing grace so I will be gracious to everyone, grateful for everyday, and generous with everything that God entrusts to me.

To my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I say: **However, Whenever, Wherever, and whatever** you ask me to do, my answer in advance is yes! Wherever you lead and whatever the cost, I'm ready. Anytime. Anywhere. Anyway. **Whatever it takes Lord; whatever it takes!** I want to be used by you in such a way, that on that final day I'll hear you say, "Well done, thou good and faithful one. Come on in, and let the eternal party begin!"

Oakham Evangelical Partnership Covenant

Having received Christ as my Lord and Saviour and being in agreement with Oakham's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the church family as a partner. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to other partners to do the following:

- **I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH**
 - ...By acting in love toward other members
 - ...By refusing to gossip
 - ...By following the leaders

"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together." Romans 14:19

"Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts." 1 Peter 1:22

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." Ephesians 4:29

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you." Hebrews 13:17

- **I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH**

- ...By praying for its growth

- ...By inviting the unchurched to attend

- ...By warmly welcoming those who visit

"To the church ... we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly."
1 Thessalonians 1:2

"The Master said to the servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes, and urge the people there to come so my house will be full.'" Luke 14:23

"So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified." Romans 15:7

- **I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH**

- ...By discovering my gifts and talents

- ...By being equipped to serve by my pastors

- ...By developing a servant's heart

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you..." 1 Peter 4:10

"God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." Ephesians 4:11-12

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant..." Philippians 2:3-4,7

- **I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH**

- ...By attending faithfully

- ...By living a godly life

- ...By giving regularly

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another."
Hebrews 10:25

"But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ." Philippians 1:27

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering." 1 Corinthians 16:2

"A tenth of all your produce is the Lord's, and it is holy." Leviticus 27:30

Your Partnership Actions

Partnership is not just about nice words and kind thoughts; partnership is about committing yourself and getting involved to God's work in this Church.

As a result partners not only sign up to a set of agreements they also agree to certain actions.

- **Annual Partners Conference**. This is a quality, high profile event especially for partners. It is intended to use it as a way of:

Showing the Churches appreciation for their support
Recognizing the key role you have in the kingdom
Encouraging, informing and inspiring partners

- **Focus Groups** Throughout the year various focus groups will run to review areas of the Churches work focus groups will give partners an opportunity to discuss these areas, for the Church to receive feed back and for partners to have an input into the Churches ministry Over the next year or so Focus groups will be looking at:

Worship, Youth, Children's work, Outreach and Discipleship

- **Partner's Receptions** From time to time special receptions will be held to inform partners about the work of the Church and issues that are arising. Each reception will contain time for:

Reports, Prayer, Worship, Discussion and Refreshments

- **Prayer** Prayer is a key ingredient for the success of any Church; partners commit themselves to be involved in at least one of the prayer initiatives developed by the Church.

- **Practical Support**

1. Faithfully attending the Churches gatherings for worship, study, and prayer
2. Participate in the work of the Church through your God given ministry
3. Regular and strategic giving

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Evangelical Church

Partnership

Oakham Evangelical Church Partnership Application Form

Name..... Postcode.....
 Address..... Phone Number.....
 Mobile Number.....
 Email.....

Please tick each box to say you have read and understood the Covenant/Statement.

Principles of Church Life at Oakham Evangelical Church.....
 The Basis of Faith of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches.....
 Oakham Evangelical Church Strategy and Purpose.....
 Oakham Evangelical Personal Covenant.....
 Oakham Evangelical Partnership Covenant.....
 Your Partnership Actions.....

Please sign this document to say you agree with and will abide by all the Oakham Evangelical Partnership Covenants and Statements.

Signed:

Date:

Please note this information may be stored on a computer database but will only be accessible by the Leadership of Oakham Evangelical church

To Be Completed by Church Leadership	
Application Received Date.....	Application Accepted Date.....

Oakham Evangelical Church Partnership