

## Parenting Churches

### Scripture Reading — Acts 11:22-30

*He was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord ... Acts 11:23 —*

New churches do a lot of things that may seem odd to veteran churchgoers. Sometimes the music seems strange. If you're used to organs and robed choirs, a band with bass guitars might seem unfitting. Sometimes the organizational structure seems too loose. Other times the worship service seems unbecoming--clothing styles, children's behavior, coffee cups in the sanctuary, and many other things may seem unsuitable.

In the face of differences a mother church might be powerfully tempted to clamp down on her daughter. She might send a delegation to get "those new church people" to act more like their mother.

Miles from the base congregation in Jerusalem, a new congregation was thriving. But some of their ideas, such as reaching out to people of another race, seemed unorthodox. It may have been tempting for the elders to rein in on new ideas or to become legalistic gatekeepers, but this parent church sent a man who clearly lacked suspicion and a critical spirit. They found an encourager named Barnabas and sent him.

Our congregation's "mother church" is 85 miles away. Our music, structure, style, and system of giving are all different from theirs. But they have been like Barnabas to us, encouraging and supporting us. They see God's grace in our work, and we're glad together.

### Prayer

*Father, we thank you for parent churches and the many blessings we can share in Jesus. Help us all to be "full of the Holy Spirit and faith" for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Life](#), [Christian Life](#), [Missions](#)

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