

## SPONSORSHIP GUIDELINES

Emmaus is for active Christians and members of churches whose own renewal will mean new energy, commitment, and vision in the church and everyday environments, for Christ's sake. That could include:

- Church leaders (pastors and laypersons) who will bring new vision, commitment and understanding back to their congregations; and who need the renewal and grace Emmaus channels;
- Dependable church members who are the quiet backbone of the church;
- Less active members who need their awareness of grace rekindled and their commitments renewed;
- Christians who are hungry for "something more" and who want to grow spiritually;
- Members and leaders who represent a cross section of the church and who will help Emmaus remain sound theologically, centered on the essentials of our common faith, and open to different perspectives.
- Respected laypersons and clergy persons whose participation, support, and leadership will encourage others to take the Walk and will build a sound, balanced leadership base for the movement in the community.

Emmaus is right for many people, but not for everyone! In some cases, Emmaus can be wrong for a person because of his or her religious background or emotional condition. In other cases, a person can be wrong for Emmaus because of the negative effect he or she will have on an Emmaus Weekend or because of the divisive influence they will bring to the church. Sponsors should be sensitive to these factors. Some examples of questionable sponsorship are:

- Non-Christians and persons with no relationship to the Church of Jesus Christ. Applications with no church affiliation will be returned to the sponsor. Remember Emmaus is for active Christians and members of churches
- Persons undergoing an emotional crisis (family break-up or severe grief) or who are psychologically unstable;
- Persons who decide not to make a Walk after being presented the opportunity. A potential sponsor should not feel like a failure if a prospect says no. Perhaps the timing is not right. Perhaps God will renew them in some other way. Remember, the Walk to Emmaus is not the way to renewal for every Christian;
- Christians whose theology and/or practice is notable different or incompatible with the traditional theology and practice represented by the Walk to Emmaus. For example, Adventists who will want to be faithful to Saturday Sabbath and strict dietary stipulations; members of independent groups who will feel a need to defend the uniqueness of their beliefs throughout the Walk; persons who do not accept other kinds of Christians; or persons who do not share belief in traditional doctrines of the faith basic to the major Denominations of the Church and to Emmaus;
- "Church hoppers", members who continually have an ax to grind against the church; persons who will use Emmaus as a tool to divide the Body, to further their own theological agendas, or who will create an "Emmaus church".
- Persons who are always looking for another spiritual high or another experience to help them "arrive."

The following are guidelines to help you in your sponsorship efforts and your responsibility in sharing God's grace as a sponsor.

1. A sponsor's first responsibility is to spend concentrated time in prayer in an effort to discern whom God wants you to sponsor.
2. After discerning the time is right, make an appointment to meet with your potential pilgrim or pilgrims in the case of a married couple. Both the husband and wife need to make the decision together. Their applications should be turned in together. Applications received without the spouse's corresponding application will be returned to the sponsor due to the requirements of the Equal Commitment rule. There are exceptions made however, exceptions to the Equal Commitment rule are granted after a review of circumstances by the Board of Directors.

3. Give your prospective pilgrim or pilgrims an application. Request the person or persons to prayerfully consider your offer of the opportunity to attend an Emmaus event. Pray while you await their response. God's timing and ways are perfect and he will direct the person's response to your offer.
4. **REMEMBER THE WALK TO EMMAUS IS NOT FOR EVERYONE. THIS IS NOT A BAGGAGE DUMPING GROUND.** These three days cannot rectify every problem marriage, enthuse every disenchanted church member, cure disturbed persons or make saints of sinners. The Walk to Emmaus is designed to change environments through Christian leaders. Pilgrims should at least know where the path is if they are not already walking on it. We do not need just any candidate. Applications that do not indicate a church affiliation will be returned to the sponsor.
5. Feel free to share with a potential applicant what Emmaus meant to you.
6. Once you have received the application, check and make sure the information on the application is correct and accurate. Remember this information is used by the weekend Lay Director to place pilgrims at the individual tables and develop the final walk roster. Special diet information should be detailed and complete, as kitchen staff uses this information in order to plan for meals for your applicant.
7. Do not assume the person you are sponsoring will experience the same things you did. Each of us is at a different place on our spiritual journey. For some it will be a mountaintop experience, for others it will be a strengthening for the journey they are already on. We must not prejudge our candidates or set them up with unhelpful expectations.
8. Begin preparations to collect personal agape letters. This may take some detective effort on your part to obtain names and addresses of people to contact for letters. Remember, we are looking for 8 to 12 letters, the goal is quality not quantity. The goal is not to see how many letters can be dragged in off the street. Letters should be turned in early during the walk. Waiting until late at Candlelight is not appropriate since it places undue pressure upon the Agape workers to complete the Agape bags late Saturday night. Remember 4d' Day letters are a blessing also.
9. A few days before the Walk event contact your pilgrim as a reminder. Offer guidance as to what to pack for the weekend. It is often necessary to dress in layers during different portions of the Walk due to varying climate control in some of the churches. Provide positive encouragement and reassurance. It is never appropriate to tease the candidate concerning activities for their upcoming walk, such as "fasting" during the Walk. Teasing serves no purpose for the pilgrim's three-day experience. Help your pilgrim prepare for a 72-hour encounter with Jesus Christ.
10. Make plans to take them to the Emmaus Walk site, stay with them during Send-off, introduce them to others, attend Sponsor's Hour, make their bed, attend Candlelight and be there for Closing to take them home.
11. You have responsibilities to the pilgrim. Prayer for him/her during the weekend. During the weekend, you and your family become a substitute for the pilgrim. Leave your phone number with their spouse. Do something special for the spouse during the weekend like sharing a meal or babysitting with the children. Let the pilgrim's spouse know that you love and care for them.
12. After the Walk, your sponsorship activities continue. Stay in contact and support the pilgrim you sponsor during their Fourth Day. Be responsible for getting them to the Fourth Day meeting after their Walk. Take them to their first gatherings and candlelight. Help them become involved in a Reunion Group as soon as possible. Work with them behind the scenes during the next set of Walks.
13. Teach them how to be a good sponsor. Possibly help them co-sponsor the first time.
14. Green Country Walk to Emmaus strongly recommends that quality sponsorship would be for either one single candidate or one married couple per set of Walks. Sponsoring additional candidates dilutes the quality of sponsorship that your candidate and the Emmaus Community deserve.
15. **REMEMBER - SPONSORSHIP IS FOR A LIFETIME!**