

What Is Sponsorship?

Each person who attends The Walk to Emmaus® has a sponsor.

A sponsor is a person who has been through an Emmaus experience and is willing to share that experience with another new Emmaus participant.

The sponsorship of a previous participant frees the current participant from any personal responsibilities that might distract him or her while on the experience.

Sponsorship also undergirds each participant's 72-hour experience with prayer and other expressions of God's love.

According to the dictionary, a sponsor is one who takes responsibility for another.

The suffix "-ship" refers to the skill involved in the activity. So sponsorship is the skill of taking responsibility for another.

The Aim of Sponsorship

The aim of a sponsor should not be "to get all my friends to go," to fill up the weekend, to fix people's problems, or to reproduce one's own religious experience in others.

Rather, the aim of the sponsor is to bring spiritual revitalization to Christians who will, in turn, bring new life and vision to the work of the church in the congregation, home, workplace, and community.

The aim of sponsorship is to build up the body of Christ.

A Sponsor's Responsibilities

Sponsorship is an act of love for God, for the participants in the Walk to Emmaus, for the Emmaus Community, and for the church. It is a demonstration of agape love.

A sponsor will:

Pray for the participant's openness to God's call to discipleship.

Make an appointment with the participant (or participating couple) to discuss his or her participation in Emmaus.

Invite the participant to take part in Emmaus for the sake of a more vital relationship with Jesus Christ. The sponsor shares his or her faith, explains the basic purpose, elements, and follow-up dimensions of the Walk.

Ask the participant to make a commitment by filling out a registration form. If the participant is married, the sponsor will speak with both partners and encourage an equal commitment by both spouses.

Support the participant's Walk through prayers and otherwise. The sponsor will also support the participant's family by house-sitting, baby-sitting, watering plants, picking up mail, feeding pets, or just checking in with a spouse to see if any help or support is needed.

Encourage the participant in his/her continued journey and take the participant to Emmaus "gatherings" after the Walk weekend is over.

Help the participant re-enter his or her church and consider ways to act out new commitment and enthusiasm.

Help the participant sponsor others.

How to Become a Sponsor

In order to sponsor someone on Walk to Emmaus, a person must first have been on The Walk itself.

A sponsor should also be active in [Fourth Day](#).

Having been through the experience and being engaged in ongoing spiritual formation through Fourth Day gives one perspective on how to sponsor.

Your local community may require specific training in order to be a sponsor, so be sure to inquire about such requirements from the Community Lay Director.

Beyond these requirements, the basic attitude of a sponsor is one of prayerful discernment. This results in intentional acts of unconditional love, or what is often termed "the first act of agape."

A resource for further help is the Emmaus Library Series booklet, [Sponsorship](#), by Richard and Janine Gilmore.

The following is an excerpt from [Sponsorship](#):

"Sponsorship can be unwise or wise. Unwise sponsorship results from unbridled enthusiasm that wants everyone to have the same experience. Sponsors with unbridled enthusiasm approach anybody and everybody with the admonition that "you need to go on The Walk," and that open invitation is the primary (sometimes the only) emphasis.

This approach lacks discernment and will result in a burden for the church. Such efforts in sponsorship frequently result in religious fringe groups within the church or possibly a parachurch of "Emmausites."

While the individual being sponsored may benefit, that individual does not go back into the church to foster growth and renewal. The lack of commitment at this point is contrary to the purpose of Emmaus.

Wise sponsorship is careful, intentional, prayerful, and purposeful because it results from God's leading. The pilgrims return to their churches and community renewed in their commitment to be effective disciples."

How to Find a Sponsor

If you know someone who has attended Emmaus, ask your friend to tell you about his or her experience of the Walk to Emmaus. Your friend will help you decide whether you would find this experience helpful. Your friend will also help you find a sponsor for your Emmaus participation.

If you don't know anyone who has been to Emmaus, use the Emmaus [Finder and Community Map](#) to locate an Emmaus community in your area.

Search for an Emmaus community by name or location. Tell the contact person for your local community that you are interested in attending Emmaus and that you would like to find a sponsor.