

## **51 Ways You Can Be “Better Together” in 2025-2026**

In January 2024, the State Executive Committee decided to adopt “Better Together” as the theme of our 2025 State Association meeting. Moreover, they have been working with our Planning Commission to make this theme the overarching ministry theme for *all* of our state ministry from the 2025 State Meeting until the 2026 State Meeting. We appreciate the positive feedback and input we have received.

We hope to provide Free Will Baptists across Missouri with helpful ideas to consider as we try to put this theme into practice. We want first to mention some biblical themes/emphases that we think connect to the idea of being “better together.” Second, we will provide 51 practical examples of how to be better together.

### **Themes Related to “Better Together”:**

- Unity
- Relationships
- Ministry Partnership
- Church Membership
- Accountability
- Friendship
- Overcoming Loneliness
- Collaboration
- Healthy denominationalism/associationalism
- Avoiding and resolving conflict
- Trusting others
- The MANY “one anothers” in Scripture

### **Practical Examples (in no particular order):**

1. Pray regularly for other churches, pastors, and state ministry boards/leaders.
2. Participate in your local association and/or encourage others who aren’t to do so.
3. Encourage greater cooperation among ministries in your church where it doesn’t currently exist.
4. If you’re a pastor, start meeting regularly with another pastor whom you can encourage, pray with, or participate in a book discussion with.
5. If your church is in a strong financial position, consider helping another church to send a pastor to the minister’s retreat, or pastor’s wife to the ministers’ wives’ retreat. (Be sure you already provide this blessing to your own pastor and his wife first!)
6. As your church is blessed financially, increase your contribution not only to COOP, but Show Me Missions.
7. Choose not to gossip about other church members, church leaders, or churches in your community.

8. Partner with another local church to host a July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration, New Year's Eve celebration, or some other civic/cultural event.
9. Partner with another local church to host a missions conference, youth rally, men's or women's rally, or some other strategic ministry event.
10. Offer excess ministry supplies for free to other churches, such as communion supplies, VBS materials, curriculum, etc.
11. Partner with another church to plan a missions trip together. Two smaller youth groups would benefit, but a smaller group would also benefit from a larger group helping with the overhead.
12. Church leaders can encourage volunteers from an area of abundance to go and temporarily help out another church needing musical help, pulpit supply, etc.
13. Be willing to adjust a meeting/service time to accommodate another church's needs.
14. Multiple churches/pastors from one association can actively encourage and help resource a newly licensed or ordained man as he prepares and begins in ministry.
15. Churches can teach newcomers from other sister churches to pursue reconciliation with the other church before considering moving their membership.
16. Pastors can invite another pastor to attend a conference/seminar with him and help share the expenses.
17. Teach prospective church members in new member classes about the importance of fellowship with other believers and emphasize our obligations to them.
18. Churches that are within close proximity can consider combining resources and commitment by merging to form a stronger congregation.
19. Associations which are within the same region can consider merging to form a larger, potentially stronger association.
20. Associations within the same region can plan an occasional joint meetings to encourage each other and learn from each other.
21. Organize a pastors' book discussion group in your area.
22. Plan a parenting/grandparenting seminar with another church in your area.
23. Provide a ministry internship to someone in your church, another area church, or a Christian college student.
24. Participate in a disaster relief project for affected churches.
25. If your church doesn't have any campers, sponsor a camper from another church.
26. If you've never attended a district association or state association, go and take someone with you.
27. Volunteer to take a turn serving as an officer, board, or committee member in your district association.

28. Volunteer to be a sponsor or helper at Camp Niangua.
29. Provide a scholarship for someone or a couple to attend the Retiree Retreat.
30. Visit a church planter to learn more about their ministry and needs.
31. Intentionally attend a FWB church while on vacation and encourage them.
32. Include your church, missionaries, and/or the State Association in your final estate distribution plan.
33. Challenge your church and other churches to include the Missouri Mission Board or State Association in your Church By-law dissolution clause, keeping Free Will Baptist assets at work doing Free Will Baptist ministry.
34. Tithe regularly to your local church and allow your children and/or grandchildren to physically put it in the offering plate or box.
35. Meet bi-weekly with another pastor, leader, or friend of the same gender to pray for local ministries, churches, schools, and community leaders.
36. Send an encouraging card or email to pastors in your area.
37. Communicate in a timely way with your district's moderator and clerk to alert them of substantial changes in your church, or to submit your annual report.
38. Organize an event with other churches to honor and pray for teachers, police officers, emergency workers and other community leaders.
38. Listen to the "Better Together Podcast" sponsored by the Free Will Baptist Executive Office and tell others about it.
39. Buy an extra copy of the most helpful and biblically based book you have read recently and give it to a new and/or growing believer.
40. If you are over 60 years of age, approach someone under 30 and offer to pray for them. If you are under 30, do the opposite.
41. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you when you are being overly negative and critical in your attitude or comments toward other believers.
42. Accept correction, reproof, and rebuke as you want and think others should.
43. Be intentional to point out a positive trait in someone and encourage someone every time you attend worship or a meeting.
44. Tell the leaders of your church, association, and other ministries how much you appreciate their commitment and service.
45. Give an appreciation gift card to your Sunday School teacher, pastor's wife, pastor's children, or another person who has ministered to you.
46. After your pastor has served seven years in your local church, propose to the leadership that a sabbatical be given to him and his family.

47. Encourage your pastor to take his vacation time and be sure to utilize other preachers in the church as needed.
48. Sponsor an annual appreciation dinner for your association leaders with the association paying the bill and gratuity.
49. Memorize Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and Romans 12:4-8, and read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 daily for 30 days.
50. Confess any sinful spirit of independence and criticism and determine to be a productive, positive servant of God for the benefit and edification of Christ's body.
51. Always pray over your attitude, comments, and opinions prior to sharing them publicly.