

Showing Hospitality to Missionaries

Every successful missionary endeavor has two components: Those who go...and those who send.

If God has not called you to GO would you willing to SERVE AS A SENDER? If so, consider how God could use the unique set of gifts and talents He's given to you to bless the Body of Christ, not only here at home, but also, around the world.

"Moral Support"--*"Moral support is the very foundation of the support system. Everyone in the church can be involved in this part of the ministry since in its most basic concept, moral support is simply saying 'God bless you! We are excited with you in your missionary venture!' Moral support is as much an attitude that your cross-cultural worker will sense as it is an action you can do."*

- Identify individuals in your congregation who demonstrate a bent toward full-time Christian service.
- Verbally affirm those in your Body called to be missionaries, and nonverbally affirm by providing a listening and discerning ear.
- Assist potential missionary candidates in the process of defining the call God has placed on their lives.
- Actively cultivate deep and abiding relationships with cross-cultural workers.
- Plan a commissioning service for all individuals planning to minister cross-culturally.
- Send them to conferences.

"Logistical Support"--*"Logistical support deals with handling the nuts and bolts of your cross-cultural worker's continuing home country responsibilities." The gifts of organization and administration are necessary to assist in this area of support.*

- Assist in managing missionary's business affairs: establish a monthly budget; maintain state-side bank accounts; file taxes; preparation of will.
- Assist in managing personal details: make monthly payments on all home-country financial commitments; obtain absentee ballots for elections; renew licenses; make sure health care needs are met; be available to run errands, make phone calls, etc.
- Send missionary's monthly/quarterly missionary newsletters.
- Store furlough possessions while missionary is on the field.
- Arrange housing and vehicle for missionary who is coming home for their year of home assignment and furnish home if necessary.
- Be familiar with field ministry needs and send supplies as needed.
- Assist in securing and maintaining computer and other technical equipment.

"Prayer Support"--*"In His sovereignty, God has voluntarily linked Himself to human cooperation. He has inextricably bound Himself to the prayer of faith of His children. He merges His working with man's praying. In the words of Augustine, 'Without God, we cannot; but without us, God will not.'"*

- Obtain prayer letters/e-news from district missionaries. Let them know you're praying for them--be specific.
- Incorporate prayer time for missionary families into all the ministries of the church.
- Practice the discipline of fasting.

"Financial Support"--*"Financial support is the most controversial, thus the most talked-about of the six areas of support. When you mention missionary support, most people think of nothing else but money." Financial Fact: 8 out of every 10 dollars held by Christians in the world are in the hands of American Christians!*

- Commit to giving regularly to the Great Commission Fund.
- Consider investing yourself in a short-term missions trip in order to enlarge your vision to encompass the world and its desperate needs.
- Assist in discussing/resolving school debt responsibilities for individuals called to full-time Christian service
- Creatively raise money for a missionary's *Approved Specials* fund.
- Consider assisting financially in the transition of a missionary from field to home or vice versa.

"Communication Support"--*"It is hard to imagine the importance of communication from home until you have 'been there.' When a person or family arrives on the field to establish their new routine, real loneliness can set in--a feeling of isolation, of being 'out of it.'"*

- Regularly write to the missionary. Don't always expect a response.
- Splurge and make an occasional phone call or send a fax.
- Send photos of church family and friends.
- Videotape events (NCAA Final Four, Super bowl); send Christian videos to adults/kids.
- Send care packages.
- Send Christian music tapes/CD's, newspapers or news magazines, subscriptions to magazines.

"Re-entry Support"--*"Re-entry is often the hardest part of an overseas experience and it should not be ignored. There is an initial shock in returning home, then stress...it takes time to absorb, accept ALL the changes, and adjust."*

- Watch for reverse culture stress!
- Assist in immediate integration: offer to pick family up at the airport; help missionary family move into home; provide local maps and school information; provide church/local phone directories; provide church information packet detailing ministries for kids, adults, and youth; provide addresses/phone numbers of neighborhood necessities (library, hospital, grocery store, mall, utilities, trash removal services, etc.); provide names/addresses for service-related personnel (physicians, dentists, hair stylists, dry cleaners); provide list of Christian radio stations; host an Open House to reintroduce family to church members; fill refrigerator and pantry.
- Assist in long-term integration: look for opportunities for missionary to share their cross cultural experiences; encourage missionary to 'get-involved' in church activities in their area of giftedness; invite to small group fellowship/Bible study; provide for professional counseling if needed to process cross-cultural experience; provide opportunities for MK's to connect with kids in the church. Consider sending an MK on a youth retreat or to summer camp.