

Start with Prayer



Go Impact

You can do cross-cultural training that would impress people at the United Nations. You can fundraise so well there's leftover money for future groups. You can sail through customs like a summer breeze, have every piece of luggage arrive without a stitch out of place. You can spend ten days overseas without a single instance of nausea, sleep deprivation, or homesickness, so unscathed you never open a First Aid kit. But without prayer, it will be just a good field trip. To build a mission team with any chance of advancing the kingdom, the absolute foundation must be prayer. You must prepare and assemble your team with the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit.

Develop a prayer strategy

A prayer strategy is simply a way of being intentional about prayer. It gives you a plan and some accountability. Here are some ideas of what this can look like:

- 1.** First, gather a small team and together develop a long list of prayer requests in regards to the mission trip. Include your group needs for preparation and support, but keep the priority on the mission. Review this list at every meeting and review it regularly. Ask yourself, "Have we prayed about this item yet?" Keep a running tab of answered prayers and reflect on these at each group meeting. (Include requests and answers from field personnel!)
- 2.** Begin and end every group meeting with prayer. Incorporate individual, pair, and small group prayer times into each group meeting.
- 3.** Model for your group prayers that are patterned after Jesus' prayers – His priorities should be your own. Read and meditate on John 17 and Matthew 6:9-13.
- 4.** Ask every student and adult trip participant to enlist two reliable prayer partners who will pray for them before, during, and after the trip.
- 5.** Ask your church family to pray corporately for you before and during your trip. Ask them to continue to pray for you upon your return. You cannot possibly have too much prayer support.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is who bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:5 ESV

- 6.** Engage in prayerwalking at least once before your team departs on the project. (See the information below.)
- 7.** Lead your group to engage in a fast. Pick a suitable day for either a partial or full fast. (Make sure students have parental permission and are physically/medically suitable for a food fast. Offer alternative fasts for those who should not go without eating.) Provide a simple prayer guide for participants to use during the day as they fast. (A sample is below; customize for your group.)
- 8.** Help your team members develop their own personal prayer strategy, usually including these components:
 - Daily devotions with prayer for the people you will serve.
 - Weekly (or more often) check-ins with their prayer partners.
 - An updated list of prayer requests shared at the group meeting, for personal use.

Additional resources:

“Mission Trip Prayer Preparation Guide”
“Eight prayers you can pray for your mission teams”

Engage in prayerwalking

Prayer can become a rather abstract activity, and sometimes seeing rather than just imagining is a better prompt for our prayers. Prayerwalking is taking prayer out of the meeting room and into the places where life happens. It is founded on the conviction that prayer is commanded by God and intended to be catalyst that allows the Holy Spirit to prepare the hearts of people. Prayerwalking is acknowledging that God must prepare the way for real spiritual breakthroughs to happen. It is intentional, intercessory, praying on-site with insight, low profile with high presence, and low risk with high potential.

Many missionaries want volunteer teams to start their ministry by prayerwalking an area. Others, facing such spiritual opposition and darkness in their setting, even beg groups to spend most of their mission project in prayerwalking. Prayerwalking is a strategy that can take place almost anytime and anywhere. It can happen even while you are in transit to or from your project.

Pray for missionaries

Missionaries need prayer more than anything else. Effective prayer for them and their work must address the core issues of spiritual battle and the struggles of daily life and ministry. The following requests can be used as a prayer prompter for those times when you want to pray specifically but are unaware of the missionary's particular needs.

- An ever-increasing understanding of the character of God and an ever-deepening love for Him.
- Self-discipline to spend quality time in daily Bible reading and prayer and experience of the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit for their life and ministry.
- The keeping of short accounts with the Lord, their family, their co-workers and others,

that there would be no unresolved conflicts, harbored bitterness or other unconfessed sin.

- For unwavering moral purity, despite submersion in immoral societies, extended travel alone, and Satan's efforts to compromise their integrity.
- Good health and wise stewardship of their physical body, including discipline in the areas of diet, exercise, and sleep.
- For couples – healthy, growing marriages characterized by intentional communication and mutual love and submission. For singles – companionship and good integration with other single and married co-workers.
- For parents – time and skills to be good parents, and the ability to communicate and model love and truth to each child.
- For missionary children – physical and moral protection, spiritual regeneration, ability to make right choices based on biblical principles, and enthusiastic ownership of their parents' calling and ministry.
- Good stewardship and management of the time and money God has entrusted to them.
- Holy boldness and effectiveness in sharing the gospel in a wide variety of contexts. For those in support roles – insight into opportunities to share their faith, even if their primary responsibility is not evangelism.
- Dedication to life-long improvement of their fluency in the language(s) of the people to whom they minister and diligence in continuing to work at understanding and adapting to the culture in which they work.
- Effective discipleship of new believers, both in formal study and informal mentoring situations.
- The conversion or discovery of key believers who can be catalysts and leaders around whom an effective ministry can be built.
- Favor in the eyes of the government under which they live and work and wisdom to know how to relate to civil officials.
- A spirit of cooperation and humility with national Christian leaders and other evangelical missionaries and church groups.