

SEVEN WAYS TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR SHORT TERM MISSIONS

1. Go with a mindset of understanding and learning.

It's amazing how much conflict can be avoided and how much wisdom can be gained by simply making "understanding" your goal. "Understanding" simply means to learn more about things like the culture, language, spiritual needs, and real physical needs of the indigenous people (and things like the vision, strategic plan, and needs of the long term missionaries already there). It means maintaining personal openness rather than personal opinion.

2. Go with a heart of surrender and servanthood.

This helps prepare you and position you for maximum usefulness by the Lord. It means saying to yourself "not my will, but Your will be done". It means laying aside personal expectations, agendas, and goals for the sake of following His will. Romans 12:1-2 as something to say about this point.

3. Go with an awareness and preparedness for spiritual warfare.

The mission field can be viewed as the "front lines" of an intense battle. Satan fights against any spread of the Gospel and any attempts to help believers grow into mature disciples of Jesus. Ephesians 6:10-18 explains how to be a prepared soldier.

4. Go with a willingness to be flexible.

Your plans may be to accomplish certain activities according to a schedule. God's plan may be something entirely different. Flexibility means you are willing to "change gears" at a moment's notice according to the Spirit's leading and the Word's guidance. Flexibility can open up new and even better opportunities to serve Christ. It also reduces a lot of stress and tension. "If you're not flexible, you'll break" (Taylor, p.4)*

5. Go with the courage and humility to possibly have your weaknesses and/or wounds exposed.

It is not unusual to have your weaknesses and/or wounds exposed during a mission trip. Personal problems and pains can surface in a mission field environment. The Enemy has no reservations with using these against us. But, this can actually be an opportunity for greater dependence on the Holy Spirit and healing of old wounds (2 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Peter 5: 6-10).

6. Go with a strong commitment to unity and prayer.

The saying “united we stand,divided we fall” applies to the mission field. Missions workers need to stay together and pray together. Division is a diversion from the work God has called us to. Instead of fighting each other, we should diligently labor to maintain unity (Ephesians 4:3). Added to that should be a daily walk of prayer (Ephesians 6:18-19, 1 Thessalonians 5:17)

7. Go with a desire to encourage and help the missions workers already on the field.

If you are joining other missionaries on the mission field, with an already established missions ministry, its a good idea to encourage and help them in line with the vision God has given them.

The mission field can be an exciting place to visit, but a exhausting place to live. Your encouragement and help are precious to long term missionaries. Encouragement can take the form of : words and works that strengthen (eg. a favorite sermon cd, a Scripture, a card, a note, a book, handwritten prayer, Christian T shirt, video taped greeting from home church, a “love gift” of any amount, remembering birthdays & anniveraries, email, and “care packages”, etc.)

While visiting with the missionaries, just simply ask them on a daily basis, “How can I help you?”

*Taylor, Larry : Things I Learned from my Pastor, Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa