**Raising Support for Short-Term Mission Trips**

Every member of a mission team needs and is responsible for building a group of friends, family, and church members who will provide prayer support, encouragement, and finances. Through their faithful help and support, these people “go with you” as you go. William Carey is known as the father of modern missions. He asked his friend, Andrew Fuller, to spearhead his support network at home in England. Carey famously said, “I will go down into the pit, if you will hold the ropes.” It is critical to have fellow believers “holding the ropes” as you head overseas.

***Prayer Support***

Finances are always the first thought when raising support but that’s only one aspect. You will need the constant prayers of fellow believers as you go on your trip. Your outreach might also challenge more Christians to get involved in the global mission of God. Regardless of how much you can pay with your own fund, the goal is to raise supporters, not just finances. You are looking for a team of people to invest in what God is doing, not just asking them for money.

The Apostle Paul asked for prayers from fellow believers:

\*for deliverance in perilous travels (2 Corinthians 1:10-11)

\*for boldness to proclaim the Gospel (Ephesians 6:19-20)

\*for God to open doors for him to clearly proclaim the Gospel while he was imprisoned (Colossians 4:2-4)

\*that God’s Word would precede his travels and be honored (1 Thessalonians 3:1-2)

It's never too soon to ask for prayer support and be sure to ask for prayer throughout the process – as you consider whether to join the trip, as you make preparation for the trip, and as you are on the trip. Keep your prayer supporters informed and try to regularly provide them with specific prayer needs – not only for you, but also your team and the people you will be serving.

***Financial Support***

You want to start gathering financial support for your trip as soon as you fill out the application. Many people find mission trip fundraising intimidating, but it doesn’t have to be. In fact, gathering financial support provides a way for others to join and participate in God’s work in the world. If we view fundraising as an opportunity to invite people to become a part of God’s work through the trip, then it becomes much less awkward and intimidating. God is the originator and distributor of all resources so we shouldn’t be intimidated by asking for financial support. If you are faithful to God in going, He will be faithful in seeing your fundraising efforts succeed*.* Hudson Taylor famously said: *“Depend on it. God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply. He is too wise a God to frustrate His purpose for lack of funds.”*

\*Jesus and His disciples were supported by others (Luke 8:1-3)

\*Paul was financially and enthusiastically supported because he was helping his supporters store up treasures in heaven (Philippians 4:17-19)

\*God is glorified when Christians use their material possessions to further the works of Christ (2 Corinthians 9:12)

\*Christians should be willing to give up their material possessions so that others may be made spiritually rich (2 Corinthians 8:9)

*Support Letters*

It’s common to feel nervous about writing fundraising letters: What will I write? Who will I send them to? These are good questions to ask, but the most important thing to remember is that your letter isn’t just about money. It is about inviting people to participate in what God is doing in the world and in you through this trip. The following steps will help guide you through writing your letter:

1. Create a contact list. Include family members, friends, family friends, coworkers, teammates, doctors, neighbors, coaches, church members. Pray over this list.
2. Write your letter. Make your letter personal. Describe how God called you to this trip, when and where (generalize if you can’t specifically name the country), what you will be doing and what people group you will be working with. Request your need for prayer and financial support. Give the cost of the trip and how much you need to raise. For trips through First Woodway, a tax-deductible donation can be given by writing a check that is:
   1. Payable to “First Woodway Baptist Church” and
   2. Includes your name and the trip name on the memo line

Be sure to include a support form for people to fill out and send back with a check. This form should have a space to make a prayer commitment and a space to make a financial commitment as well.

1. Write a thank you note for each donation received.
2. Share your trip experience with your supporters.

*Sharing through social media*

Share and let people know you are going. We just ask that you not share names or specific cities or in some cases even the country name. Ask your team leader about what can be shared online. You could even start a private group for those who want to follow you for updates and prayer requests. Share what God is teaching you, things you see, how much support you raised (if you met your goal), and photos (ask team leader for what photos would be appropriate for this).

***Other methods for raising financial support:***

\*Odd jobs

\*Personal sacrifice - determine where you will make some cuts in your budget

\*Yard sales

\*Make something to sell

\*Host an informational or prayer night. Invite people over for coffee/dessert and share your need and pray.

\*Rent a missionary: Pick a weekend and let people ‘rent you’ for yard work, baby-sitting, etc.

\*”Takeout” dinner: Make to-go dinners and sell them on a Friday night. Schedule pick-up or delivery (for an extra fee).

\*Envelope gifts: Number envelopes 1 to 50. Have people pick one of the envelopes and return it with the corresponding dollar amount inside. This can raise up to $1,347!