

Raising Your Financial Support for Summer Missions

Congratulations for being selected to serve this summer with our team! Did you know that you are an answer to someone's prayers? In fact, you are an answer to the prayer that was in Jesus' heart when he declared to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matt. 9:37- 38) For you, this may be one short experience. For someone God will touch through you, it may be the difference in eternity. The first step is to help get you there!

Start Here: Attitude Check! This is an incredible opportunity for you to trust God! For some of you this may be the biggest step of faith you have taken since the day you decided to trust Christ. Believe it or not, raising support will be a blessing in your life because your faith will be strengthened as you see how God provides. Take time to thank God that you get the privilege of raising your personal support.

Then: Ask yourself a question... How do I feel about asking other people for monetary support? (And be honest...) Do you feel like you are asking for a handout? Maybe you don't feel worthy of receiving others' generosity? The need to raise support will often uncover pride in a person's heart. In others, it will raise issues of insecurity or fear. Don't ignore those feelings. Whatever God shows you about yourself, face it and talk to God about it.

After that: Go to God's Word... Take some time to study and reflect in the following verses: Luke 8:1-3, Luke 16:10-12, II Corinthians 8:1-5, Philippians 4:10-20, I Thessalonians 5:24, III John 5-8, Exodus 25:1-2, I Kings 17:1-16. What do they say to you about raising support? What do they say about God's faithfulness? About your attitude?

Now: You're ready to begin!

1. **Create a list of names** Of people who might be interested in what you are doing. Think of those who have had significant roles in your life. Your list could include:
 - Parents
 - Friends from high school
 - Sunday school teachers
 - Family friends
 - People you have ministered to in some way
 - Relatives
 - Friends from college
 - Neighbors
 - Former or current professors
 - Employers
 - People in your home church
 - Anyone who has invested in your life like coaches, youth ministers, mentors, etc.
2. **Don't censor your list!!** You will be able to think of a very good reason why you shouldn't ask any of these individuals to consider contributing to your summer: "He doesn't have much money"... "I haven't talked to them in a long time"... "They already give a lot to the church"...etc. Just write the names down. It is tempting to want to make decisions for others. Even someone who doesn't have much might truly enjoy having a small part in what you are doing.
3. Begin to **pray for the people on your list.** What do you know about their lives and needs? Would God put it on their hearts to give? (If some of the individuals on your list are friends of your parents, you might want to ask your parents permission before approaching them. This is especially true if your parents are not Christians.) What if someone is not a

Christian? That is okay! (See Acts 10:1,2) Even though they would not be that interested in the spiritual purpose of your trip, they care about you and might want to show their support. Who knows? Maybe hearing what you are doing with your life will create an interest in their own relationship with God. Pray for them and pray for an opportunity to share your testimony with them.

4. If at all possible, **make an appointment** to see the pastor of your home church so you can visit with him personally and explain what you are doing. Ask him if the church would consider including you in their missions giving.
5. **Write your letter.** Explain what you are doing (this may be sensitive information particularly for those of you going to China or central Asia so get counsel from your campus minister about what to say), why you want to do it, and what you are asking them to do. Be specific: "Would you please consider making a contribution in order to help cover my expenses for this trip? I need to raise \$2,000." Be sure to include information such as where to send checks, who to make them out to, and when you need them by. Talk with your campus minister about the possibility of the checks coming through the ministry account. That way, contributors can receive receipts for tax purposes. Mail the letter approximately 2 months prior to your departure date. Suggest a deadline so people know when you need the money. Set the deadline no later than 3 weeks prior to your departure date. This gives them ample time to reply and you don't have to be wondering up to the last minute if you are going to have enough funds. (See sample letter enclosed.)
6. There might be two or three people to whom you would want to write a personal letter (like grandma!), but a form letter is sufficient for most.
7. Include in your letter **specific things** you would like to ask them to pray for while you are gone. Some may not be able to give but would love to pray.
8. **Enclose a self-addressed envelope** for their convenience. It is not necessary to put a stamp on it. If someone wants to contribute, they will not mind providing their own postage. To stamp it for them may be a bit presumptuous.
9. **Keep a record** of who gives and promptly send a thank you note to each one.
10. At the end of the summer, write each person you wrote to originally and **thank them** for praying. Share something about your summer, what you learned, how you saw God at work, etc. It is perfectly okay for this to be a form letter. Choose one of your favorite photographs from the summer to copy in the letter. You might want to jot a personal note at the end of those going to individuals who contributed financially.

See, that wasn't so bad! Just remember – Ultimately, you are depending on God, not on people. Someone you were counting on to give, may not. On the other hand, you may get a gift from someone you never dreamed would give. It has been said regarding ministry fundraising, "Keep your eye on the well, not on the bucket." So, have fun raising support! May God bless you and use your life in his eternal plan to see all nations worship him. (Revelation 7:9,10)