

Support Raising: To or not to do

A look at fundraising for short-term missionaries

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For most short-termers, the subject of **support discovery** (aka: fund raising) conjures up quite a range of activities and emotions. Some short-termers assemble massive mailing lists and send out specially designed letters and prayer cards along with self-addressed, already-stamped return envelopes; others put it off until the last minute (or until it's too late); and then there are those who "just write a check" and avoid support discovery all together. So, what IS the right way to deal with this thing we call "support discovery?"

Before I answer that, let's look at a few basics about support discovery and then we'll see if there is a "right way" to do it.

Basic #1: It's about **Faith and Obedience**

If you are called to go on the short-term mission, will you go no matter what? No matter how much support you have to raise? Will you believe God for the resources to accomplish whatever He has called you to? You may say yes, but even among those who say yes, there are a couple of "angles" that some people take:

Some try to *whittle the price down*, skimp wherever possible, to somehow make the support more manageable. But, more manageable for who? If it's for your sake, of course you need all the help you can get. But if it's for God, well, He already owns it all. He doesn't mind if it's a two-hundred, two-thousand or two-million dollar trip. It's not hard for Him. You just need to have the FAITH to trust Him for His often surprising and always wonderful provision.

Some people say, "*I'll go **IF I can raise the support.***" Wait, did you say that God called you to go? Don't create a back door or a way out just in case God doesn't come through. He WILL provide all the resources you need in order to obey His leading in your life. You just need to put feet to your faith.

The fact is, God doesn't usually hand out easy assignments. Going on a short-term mission will take you to new heights of faith and obedience. If He says GO, just GO! Trust him and obey!

FAITH will look different to each of us. It may be that you feel led to:

- send out support letters
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- to represent the need to a church or granting organization
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- to get a second job
-
- to sell some things
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- to give out of your surplus (maybe something you were holding for the future).

In any case, it's not which pathway you chose, it's that you walk on whatever path He calls you with faith and obedience.

“With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by His power He may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.” [2 Thessalonians 1:11](#) (NIV)

Basic #2: It's not all about you.

I've talked to so many people who are self-conscious about asking for support. Here are a couple of anxieties some people have: “I don't like begging.” Or, “I just can't take money from people who make less than I do.”

Let me challenge you about WHO the short-term mission is about. Folks can be separated into three basic categories: GOERS, SENDERS, and RECEIVERS*. The shorter-termer is the GOER - the one called to leave home for a time and serve somewhere else. And most often the GOER (and even people around them) thinks of the short-term mission as though it's about them. There is also the person on the RECEIVING side. But, we forget that there can be people involved as SENDERS - that is, the people who can pray, give resources, give money, support the GOER by filling in at work, or taking care of a pet, a car or a house while the short-termer is away. Don't decide for SENDERS if they would want to give or not – let people know about the need – and then let them decide if God is calling them to give or not. When we open up our short-term mission to include these folks, it's not begging, but it's giving a lot of other people the opportunity to do what God has blessed them and called them to do – to SEND by giving of their time, talent and treasures.

Basic #3: “Well begun is half done.”

Because of the emotion and mindset so many have about support discovery, or because the task just seems daunting, the work is often put off until “later.” I'd like to suggest that you just jump in with both feet, with all your faith, and get started immediately on your pathway to support discovery. Aristotle, and later, Mary Poppins said it well: “Well begun is half done” – just getting started means you suddenly halfway into the process.

So is there a right way? Yes, whatever path God calls you to, with faith and obedience, without a “back door,” by including others as the Lord may lead you, and just getting to it instead of procrastinating. If you do this, you will see the mission get funded, you will be amazed at God's faithfulness, and many around you will have the privilege of being part of a mission using the gifts God has given them.

The Apostle Paul did it, Jesus and the disciples did it – they relied on the gracious provision and partnership of others around them to be a part of the bigger picture. So go for it! Watch and see what the Lord will do!

(*[Maximum Impact Short-Term Mission](#), Edition 1 by Roger Peterson, Gordon Aeschliman, R. Wayne Sneed)