



SHORT-TERM MISSIONS DEVOTIONAL & JOURNAL // LEADER'S GUIDE

Welcome to Short-Term Missions! We are excited to be a part of this call to service you've received from the Lord. We pray that this Devotional/Journal will assist you in this spiritual journey to which God has called you.

"I am sending you off to open the eyes of the outsider so they can see the difference between light and darkness, and choose light, see the difference between Satan and God, and choose God. I am sending you off to present my offer of sins forgiven, and a place in the family, inviting them into the company of those who begin real living by believing in Me." - Jesus in Acts 26:17-18

INTRODUCTION

So, you're finally here! We hope your travel was uneventful and your luggage arrived when and where you did! You probably did much to prepare to be here, including get vaccinations, acquire supplies, and make room in your schedule. Perhaps you packed your insect repellent, sunscreen, and Pepto-Bismol. You are physically ready, but why? For what? Adventure? To serve God? To help people? All of the above?

"...and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."
- Isaiah 58:10-11

Whether you have taken a crash course in language and read every book on short-term missions you can or whether you haven't had a minute to think about it until you arrived, we encourage you to take time now to focus on the spiritual foundations of this trip and your experiences here. Our hope and prayer for you is that you will be a light to those who don't yet know Jesus, to those who have not yet received forgiveness of their sins. We also hope and pray that you come away from this experienced changed, that you will sense the Lord guiding you in your pursuit of Him and as you serve for His glory. The Lord is smiling on you as you take this step of faith.

This guide is designed to go with the on-field devotional, as a guide for leading group devotional time during the short-term mission trip. While individual devotion time is of first importance, group devotion time can enrich and further establish what is learned during individual devotions, as well as bind your team together more strongly as a part of the body of Christ. This is an important time for your team members to get into the Word, hear from God, and possibly be called into missions.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVOTION TIME

- Allow sufficient time in the schedule for it, so that your team is not too exhausted to pay attention and to share, and so that you do not feel rushed during the discussion. Ideally, allow 30 minutes in the morning for personal quiet time, and then 90 minutes for group discussion time in the evening. The 90 min group time could be divided in the following manner:
 - 15-30 min. debriefing on the day: What went well? What could be done better tomorrow? Have one or more group members share their testimonies
 - 30-45 min. discussion based on the devotional
 - 5 min. on what we will do tomorrow
 - 15-30 min. prayer time
- Encourage team members to use the space provided in the devotional to journal their thoughts. Three reasons for journaling:
 - Personal reflection/meditation
 - Listen and hear from God
 - To recall what you sensed/learned to share with friends/supporters when you return
 - Application points
- Try to find an environment for a quiet discussion time, and that allows everyone to comfortably sit facing each other
- The point is not to give a lecture, but to facilitate a discussion. Make sure you're not the only one talking. Pause after every main point to ask a question to which people can respond. In general you want to ask open-ended questions, which necessitate more than a yes or no response.
- When asking questions, be aware that people will need time to think about and come up with an answer. Remember to allow silence for 15-30 seconds if necessary to allow people to do this.
- Sometimes you may need to rephrase a question to provide clarification.
- Don't be afraid to diverge from the given topic if the divergence is something which is beneficial to the group, but try to discourage rabbit trails.
- Keep in mind that sometimes to help people open up, you may have to make yourself vulnerable and share something a little deeper. This will put people more at ease with sharing at a deeper level about their own lives.
- Start and end with prayer: the time is God's and He is our source of understanding.
- When ending with prayer, it's a good idea to do a group prayer so that you can pray for one another concerning the topics just discussed:

- "Popcorn" prayer: one person starts and another closes, and people can pray in between as they feel led
- Pray for the person next to you: Go around and have each person share a prayer request or new insight learned from the devotional. Then have each person pray specifically for the person to their right or left, concerning specifically what that person just shared.
- Use the time to debrief the team and pray for any specific needs or concerns they encountered regarding what they are thinking and feeling about things they have seen, felt, or heard during the day.

LESSONS

- What follows is a modified reproduction of the lessons in the devotional. Normal text is taken verbatim from the devotional. Italicized text is supplemental material and suggested discussion questions for group devotion time.
- You may not get through all the questions listed, or you may come up with your own discussion questions. The lessons and questions listed are just a blue print, to which you can add your own ideas.

Day 1

Facing your Fears

Prayer:

Lord, help my heart and mind be attuned to your Holy Spirit's guidance. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

A CPTA missionary to Bolivia shares this story: Before moving here, we worked in the States and came on two missions trips to Bolivia. When we were praying about the decision to serve the Lord as a family in a developing country, I had many fears. I spoke to an older missionary friend who had related her time in Africa. She said to me, "Bless the safest place you can be in the will of God."

Read or have someone read Philippians 4:6-8

Discuss the six ways to these questions as a group:

What has made you the most anxious about this trip? How has He relieved some of those fears?

What does God tell us to do with our fears, and what will be the result?

How do we practically do this?

Instead of focusing on your fears, what are some things that are "woble and right" that you can focus on during your trip?

Read or have someone read 1 Peter 5:7:

Discuss the six ways to these questions as a group: How do we cast our anxieties on Him?

What should we cast our anxieties on Him?

Pray and give all your worries to Him! Have the members of the group pray for one another concerning the anxiety mentioned. One way to do this may be to go around and have each person pray for the person next to them.

Journal

Day 4

A. SERVANT'S HEART

Prayer:

Father God, be sure to use us I open Your Word. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

It has been said that every man wants to have a servant heart, but no one wants to be treated like a servant or do another's work.

Read or have someone read Matthew 20:26-28

According to these verses, what was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? What do you think about that? What is our purpose in coming on this trip?

Discuss the two ways to the following questions as a group:

Aside from the main project you are doing, what are some other ways you can serve those near you? (neighbors, in restaurants, or others?)

In what ways do you prefer to be served rather than to serve?

How can you break this pattern?

One of the best ways you can serve others is with the humble attitude of a leaver. Are you showing interest in those around you by your questions and willingness to enter in, even if you'll look foolish? If not, ask God for the grace to do this more.

Read or have someone read John 13:12-15:

Discuss the two ways to these questions as a group:

How do we bring our hearts to the point of wanting to "wash the feet" of those we are serving?

Day 5

TEAM WORK/UNITY

Prayer:

Lord, help us to listen and clearly hear You speak today. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson.

Our reason and motives here in the field is because of interpersonal conflict with other administrators. Sounded? Don't let one of Satan's main goals is to break the unity of the body of Christ. At the least, he would love to render your team ineffective by having you concentrate your emotional and spiritual energy on just getting along.

Read or have someone read Psalm 133:

Are there things that bog you about some of the people on your team? Talk to the Lord about it in prayer, asking us to humbly acknowledge your own shortcomings that way we're as others as well.

-Can you think of a time on this trip or other times when the importance of unity was emphasized on you? or Have you seen/frustrated the importance of unity or its unimportance of clarity?

-What do you think are some reasons why unity is so important on a trip like this?

Read or have someone read Romans 15:1-7

What will the Lord give you if you ask Him?

What are we to do toward others?

-According to this passage, how can we encourage unity within our team?

-What are some specific, practical ways we can build one another up (1) while we are together?

A good group exercise here might be to go around and have people share good things they've noticed in other teammates so far on the trip.

Read or have someone read John 17:20-26

As a group, discuss the answers to the questions.

Why does He care about unity?

Pray for your in restaurants, asking God to do awesome things in their lives!

How do we keep this attitude when we are traveling, have diabetes, and have to eat beans and rice daily?

Ask God to form in you a desire to serve, and an attitude like that of Jesus Christ. Pray for us to see and hearts to act on opportunities to serve during the rest of the trip.

Journal

Lord, help me to do to myself. Keep me from making the petty things that bog me and bog the team to be of our best and mind!

This would be a good time to have teammates pray for one another, either pray for the person's assignment to them, or to divide into prayer partners. Perhaps part of the prayer time should also be a time of praying for each other specifically for each person on the team.

Journal

Day 6

CONSECRATION AND AMAZING THINGS!

Prayer:

Keep me from mental distractions and help me, Lord, to focus on you alone. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during this discussion.

Have someone read this introduction

You are reading this page far from your home. Five years ago you probably didn't think you would be here doing what you are doing, but the Lord has moved you and is now using your life for His glorious purposes. Pretty amazing, huh? As we walk in the light, love from behind the, God uses our lives in awesome ways. He moves us...

"I can't go with you and stay where I am, so you move me. You give me courage I didn't know I had. You move me out of myself and into the fire." Susan Johnson once watched

"You Move Me."

- What do you think about these lyrics? What does it mean? "I can't go with you and stay where I am"? What does it mean that He moves us?

Read or have someone read: John 15-16

What are some areas of your life you have not surrendered to God?

Ask for His forgiveness in humble prayer:

- What is our role as we follow God?
- Would anyone be willing to share about a time when God called them to surrender to Him, and what the results of that were?

Read or have someone read: Job 35 and Malachi 1:5

God can and will use your life in a mighty way as you trust in Him for great things as well as small. When you expect God to do amazing things, do you tend to overlook the "small things" while looking for big things? Do you have an example from your own life where you have seen God work in the "small things"? Share about it in the "lightings".

Discuss the answers to these questions as a group.

What are some things God has done in your life already on this trip? Thank Him!

What are you looking with a expectancy for God to do or show you on this trip?

Day 7

TIME TO RECHARGE!!

Prayer:

Please speak to me today, Lord, and work in me through me. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

You have been faithfully planning every on this trip for a week now and may be a bit worn out. You may even be sick, grumpy, and down right fed up with the whole experience and yearn for a hot bath, familiar food, and your own bed. Let's take time to recharge our weary-but-not-yet-fully-rested bodies!

Read or have someone read: 1 Timothy 6:16-18

This scripture exhorts us to always be joyful, and to continually be thankful, no matter our circumstances!

Joyful - full of or accompanied without begrudging

All ways - at all times; for all those

Contentedly - peacefully without lamentation

Thankful - to express gratitude

In what way are you finding this substitution challenging at this moment?

Ask Jesus for help!

What about these verses struck you? How can we be joyful always? Pray continually? Give thanks in all circumstances? Why are we told to do these things?

Have someone read: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Galatians 6:9-10

What makes you weary? Discuss the answers to this question as a group. How can you get additional rest and refreshment in the midst of this trip?

In what ways can we become weary of doing good?

Consider additional verses and questions to discuss

What is the difference between "expectations" and "expectancy"?

Prayer: Pray as a group surrendering your hearts as well as your expectations to God. Pray to faith believing God to do amazing things!

Journal

-Read Matthew 22:28-30. How does Jesus give us rest?

Pray and ask the Lord for the rest and refreshment you need.

Journal

Day 8

MAN CANNOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE

Prayer:

Lord, help my heart and mind be attuned to your Holy Spirit's guidance. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

Have someone read Deuteronomy 8:3

"...man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."

How do we live on the Word of God?

Have someone read the lesson introduction

It's no way to stay focus on daily time with God – especially when we are in a different environment. Our routines change and our quiet times with God is frequently put on the back burner. It's important to keep in mind that our strength comes from God, above, not our own actions. He is our strength in times of trial, temptation, frustration, loss, and victory. If we are to seek our strength from Him, it is crucial that we spend time fervently seeking Him and meditating on His Word.

Take a few minutes now to be still and meditate (focus your thoughts) on God's Word, and His incredible love for you.

What is He telling you?

Is He still the center of your focus?

If not, where has your attention been focused?

Read or have someone read 1 John 1:9-10 Discuss the answers to these questions as a group. What is the preacher's attitude towards God's Word? How can we stay focused on God's Word and foster a love for it? At home or while we are here on this trip?

Ordered additional verses and questions to discuss:

Read John 8:12-21 and Psalm 139:14-16 How is God's Word described in these verses? Carry out a list of situations in your life where a certain passage of Scripture has been vital for you? Share

It can be very encouraging here to have each person share a passage of Scripture that is precious to them and why.

Read John 8:12-21. What do these verses teach us about why we need to stay in God's Word?

Read this time in prayer. Ask God to direct your focus on Him in these coming days and to help you to fully rely on Him and His strength to carry you through. An idea for prayer would be to pray through Psalm 139:14-16 or a section of Psalm 139, asking God that He would help us see His Word as precious and that He would help us ground ourselves in it.

Journal

Day 9

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Prayer:

Jesus let our spirits see your grace and presence as I seek to let Your Word begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

Read or have someone read Galatians 5:22-26

What struck you about these verses?

Write out each of the fruits of the Spirit in verses 22 and 23.

Speak to the Lord and tell Him which of them the biggest challenge is for you right now.

Tell Him what your heart's desire is regarding this challenge.

- Why do you think these characteristics are described as "fruit"?
- Which of these fruits is the biggest challenge for you right now? Why?
- How do we grow in producing these fruits?
- Think about the people you have interacted with on this trip so far. Do you think that some of these people have not received these fruits from others and this may have contributed to their status in life?
- Which of these fruits might they need to receive from you?

Read or have someone read 1 Corinthians 12:13-18

How does this verse to this question as a group?

How do you feel that God is working in you for His good purpose?

Read this time in prayer, surrounding again to His ongoing work in your life. Pray for each other, that each of you would never let harvest fruit and surrender to God's work in our

Day 10

THE GREAT COMMISSION — Making Disciples

Prayer:

Father God, be sure to use us 1 year Your Word. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

Have someone read the intro to the lesson.

Do you realize that if for no other generation, no one shared the love and knowledge of Christ with the next generation, Christ-unity could become extinct in our generation? Think about it.

Read or have someone read **Matthew 28:19-20**

Discuss the answers to the following questions as a group:

Who has influenced you the most to live for Christ in your life? Share how/why they were such a big influence.

Who are you most intentionally influencing or learning to for Christ?

-Share this group share about parts of the trip where they had the chance to influence people for Christ thereby living out the Great Commission.

-Share how God has convicted or inspired you to invest in a particular person.

Read or have someone read **Thursday 23**

Discuss the answers to the following questions as a group:

What does it mean to "invest in a man who will be qualified to teach others?"

How do we invest for the next generation?

Day 11

ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

Prayer:

Lord, help us to listen and clearly hear Your word today. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

Have someone read the following:

You have heard it said, "Life is short, play hard" or, "Life is short, pray hard!"

The daily grind often makes us forget the brevity of life, but let us remember the timeless illustration. On a turbulent sea are two boats, the date you were born and the date you die. All that separates your life is a dash. What are you going to do with that dash?

The Bible, unobscured by history, is recorded in 1908, and:

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot lay up to gain what he cannot lose."

What are the things we cannot keep? The things we cannot lose?

Read or have someone read **Matthew 24:21**

How have you seen the truth of vs 21 in your life or in someone else's life?

Where is your heart? Are you investing more in temporal things or things that will last forever? Make a list (Share people share what they wrote on their lists)

Temporal

Eternal

Read or have someone read **Matthew 6:31-33** Discuss the answer to this question as a group. What perspective should we have about temporal things? (Optional additional verses: 1 Cor. 7:31)

Discuss the answers to these questions as a group:

What are some things on this list that have helped you realize what is really important in your life?

What things can you change in your life to help you live more for what will last forever?

Have someone read

Satan wants us to have a do-it-and-our-generations-out-of-us-mentality. God wants us to invest others (1st generation) who will in turn teach others (2nd generation) who will instruct (3rd generation) to teach to others (4th generation), etc. Ask God to give you the right attitude to impact this generational mentality to others, here on the field as well as when you return home.

Pray for our mother to take opportunities to make disciples/convert generationally now and in the future. Pray that we would all have a Paul and Thimothee in our lives.

Journal

Pray, asking God to help you focus your life on the things that matter most.

Journal

Day 12

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Prayer:

Be with us, Lord, as I open your Word; may Your will be done. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

Read or have someone/individual provide read **Romans 12:4-8**, **1 Corinthians 12:12-31** and **Ephesians 4:11-13**

How would you summarize these passages? (What are the main points?)

Have someone read:

As a member of the Body of Christ, you are called to serve by using the gifts that God has given you. It is important to keep in mind that no one gift is more important than another. Just like a body is essential if it is missing an arm or a nose, so the body of Christ is in trouble if any one of its parts decides that it is insignificant or tries to take on a different role.

In the past, what have been identified as your primary gifts?

What are your perceived gifts in this group?

How can you use these gifts to serve the members of your group and lift up those that you are serving?

What gifts have you seen in the different team members this week? Share an example of how different gifts have helped the group accomplish its purpose.

Diversity in the Church is important! The churches in different countries can have different strengths from which we can learn. Share the group share what they have learned from Christians they've met or churches in which they have worshipped during the trip.

Ask God to use you for His purpose and to help you utilize the gifts He has given you, not just on this trip but in your life at home.

Journal

Day 13

CHRIST-LIKE ATTITUDE

Prayer:

Keep us from mental distractions and help us, Lord, to focus on You alone. Begin with prayer asking for God's guidance and presence during the discussion time.

Read or have someone read **Genesis 1:27** and **Psalm 139:14**
What do these verses say about how/why God has created us?

Have someone read:

Know that you are fearfully and wonderfully made and are the prime possession of our God in Heaven. Remember that you were created in the image of His Son and, as such, should take on His attitude. Yes, things get difficult and people can become frustrating from time to time, but the overall mood of the group will be significantly impacted with a positive attitude and the attitude of a Christ-like person.

What are some aspects of yourself that you don't believe are wonderfully made?

Ask the Lord to show you truth in these areas

Read or have someone read **Philippians 2:1-15**

As a group, discuss the verses to the following questions:
How can you show a Christ-like attitude? Where? and at home?

What helps you put things into perspective when you are frustrated?

Prayer: Ask God to make your attitude like that of Christ.

Journal

RETURNING HOME

You have just finished a big adventure in your life and are probably experiencing a wide variety of emotions. There are entire books devoted to the subject of re-entry. The areas you should watch include:

- **Fatigue:** physical, emotional, spiritual, and social fatigue. You may be very tired. Take some time for yourself. Rest and be refreshed, you have just finished a life changing experience!
- **Spiritual High:** If you are on a spiritual high from this trip, ride it and praise the Lord, but be aware that often times after highs can come lows – Satan wants to steal your joy and excitement, and you may be under attack. Put on the full armor of God listed in Ephesians 6. Stay in prayer and the Word daily!
- **Spiritual Pride:** Don't let Satan tempt you to feel superior to those with less compassion or vision who have never gone on a mission trip. Stay humble!
- **Frustration:** You may be frustrated at some of the things that happened or didn't happen on your trip. Pray and give those things to the Lord. You may be frustrated at the injustices and poverty you saw, or any number of other things that are different from where you live. Give those feelings to the Lord and ask Him how He wants to continue to use you to help fight injustice and poverty. Make a list and do it! You may become frustrated and impatient at the lack of interest and compassion of those around you now that you are home. They may not want to hear all of your stories. Ask them about what has happened in their lives over the last two weeks and they will likely be more interested in listening to you. Be patient and continue to share. God has given you this experience and you are now His spokesperson to impart vision in others.



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