



Service Team Devotions

The following devotions* are intended for your work team as you serve and learn about God's call in your lives. There are a total of eleven devotions with an emphasis on being Christ to those you serve. Learn about what that really means on your work site and how you can live that out when you return home.

Why team devotions? Working in a culture that you're not accustomed to, experiencing new things every day and the physical requirements of the work site can be overwhelming to an individual. Because of this, it is important that the team remain focused on prayer and spiritual disciplines. Before your team leaves, it is advised that you have a plan for daily routines of getting together for devotions. Once you arrive on the field, so many other things can take your focus away – so plan ahead. Taking the time each evening to sit together as a team in discussion, reflection and prayer can be an amazing experience.

It is suggested that your team appoint one person to take on the role of facilitating your evening group devotions. This person can then be prepared ahead of time and use the material as he or she wishes. Feel free to use this only as a guideline and add your own material – or use it as it is written. Either way, we hope and pray that the devotional time with your team is a highlight of your experience in serving your Lord and Saviour.

Blessings to you!

*Devotions were enriched by ideas and questions found in *Walking With the Poor* by Bryant Meyers and *Serving With Eyes Wide Open* by David A. Livermore.



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Day One: The Greatest Volunteer Assignment

Theme: Motivations

Scripture: Hebrews 2



So here you are. You have finally made it –after a flurry of prayer, patience, and maybe even some preparation. You are now probably in a strange place, maybe even part of a group of individuals whom you have yet to get to know. Perhaps this is also your first glimpse of poverty -of people, families, and communities in real need. And even if it is not, it is probably impacting you all over again. Maybe you are wondering how to begin to sort through these emotions. How will you make sense of this experience? For what, exactly, are you here?

It is OK to have many questions, even many doubts or fears that go right alongside excitement and expectation. Even if you do not answer all the questions you have brought with you, your time together will be deeper and more meaningful if you try to work through some of the things that you are feeling and the things that you will experience individually and as a group. Risk being open with each other. Try to search out and question these things together. But how and where do you start?

The perfect place to start is to look to the man who was the perfect volunteer. The man who lived and worked on the margins: God who came down to be with His created people – to suffer, to cry and to experience joy with them. And ultimately, amazingly, to die for them...for this world...for the community around you...for your team...for you.

Can you imagine signing up for that volunteer opportunity?

Indeed, that is why Jesus Christ is at the center of what can transform you and the people around you. He can bring healing, change, and renewal. He can bring hope in every place and situation. He came in love –that was His holy motivation. And that is the only place for you to start too. No matter what happens –what your group does, does not do, and experiences –start with love as your motivation. Prayerfully realize that you cannot bring about real change. Only God can, through the work of the Holy Spirit. He will use you in perhaps surprising ways if you submit, or perhaps surrender yourself to Him. Make that your goal each day. “For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.” (1 Cor. 1:25) Praise God for that!

Activity: Take turns naming adjectives that describe the people in the community. Write them down and talk about what you came up with. Next make a list together of the reasons that people are poor. Talk about potential biases toward the poor you might have and how your lists reflect those biases.

For Further Discussion

1. Talk about your motivations for coming on this trip. Did you come for the adventure? Are you looking for change in your life? Are you here to live out your faith? Any or all of these things? Or something different? Does it matter what brought you here? Will it change your experience? Discuss.
2. What are your first impressions of this country?
3. What have you learned about poverty today?
4. How does poverty fit into God's sovereignty? Why does God allow some people to be “poor” and some to be “rich”?

Praying Together: Pray together with your group and ask God to open your eyes to what you need to learn about the poor, about poverty and how Jesus would want you to respond.

Day Two: Being the Feet of Christ

Theme: Assumptions/Confession

Scriptures: John 13: 1-17; John 12: 1-11



Who wants to be like feet - especially feet like those in your group right now? The working-all-day, sweaty, not-so-well showered kind. Well, Jesus' feet were probably not so different. Jesus spent many of His days walking around, and He lived in a hot and dusty place. In fact, dirty feet were normal in those days, and a servant would often wash the feet of dinner guests before a meal. Both Scripture passages for today are stories of foot washing. Jesus used these stories to illustrate a simple and powerful truth that would shatter assumptions and call for confession.

In John 12, Jesus allows Mary to show her love by using expensive perfume to wash His feet. Judas, the keeper of the money, immediately points out the expense. He assumes Jesus will agree with him that the money used for the perfume should have been used for the poor. But Jesus says, "You will always have the poor among you." Jesus puts service to God, and love for God, ahead of even caring for the poor. When we seek Him first, then we are ready to use our feet and walk alongside of others. Jesus' perfumed feet took him to the margins, to the most forsaken of society. He calls us to follow wherever He leads.

Can you even imagine what it would be like for the Son of God to kneel before you and wash your smelly and dirty feet? This was the work of the lowest servant. You can understand the disciples' indignation! They presumed that someone like Jesus should never have to wash feet. Notice what Jesus says here, though. He says that without receiving this act of service, His dear and loved friends have no part with Him. How could Jesus put so much stock in washing feet? Yes, it was an important lesson in humble service for the disciples. But it is also evident that Jesus was connecting physical washing with spiritual cleansing, pointing toward Calvary where He would show them the "full extent of His love."

Foot washing needed to be done often in Jesus' day because feet became dirty and dusty again right after they were washed. Similarly, we are washed by Jesus' blood, but we still become dirty. Have you gone through the cleansing of confession today? Maybe you did not seek God first as you related to the people around you. Maybe you made mistakes. In new and different environments, it is not always easy. This is a different culture, and there are different ways of understanding and different ways of doing.

Jesus allowed His feet to be washed in love, but He also knelt down to wash His disciples' feet. He, too, washed your feet in love, at Calvary. So, seek God first. Walk with washed feet. And then eagerly and humbly follow in Jesus' footsteps.

Activity: Plan a foot washing with your group members after a day's work and at the start of your devotions.

For Further Discussion

1. What are your first impressions of this community?
2. "Western people come to a country with a lot of money and the know-how to make things better." Do you agree with this statement? Is there danger in this attitude? If so, what?
3. Do you find yourself making generalizations about the people you meet (like everyone is friendly, happy, hardworking, unpunctual etc.) How might this be unfair or even dangerous?
4. Talk about some of the innovative things that the community does. What do you envy about their lives? Why might the community's way make sense here? Would you do things differently?
5. What does it mean to you to wash another's feet?
6. How can your group be "foot washers" in the community in which you are serving?

Praying Together: Praise God for His loving example of serving others, but also spend time in confession, specifically around assumptions about the people whom you are serving.

Day Three: “Hands On” Kind of Work

Theme: Forming Community

Scriptures: Matthew 19: 13-15; Mark 1:40-45



Are your muscles starting to ache yet? Is your head pounding right along side of the hammers? Do you have blisters on your hands?

What kind of “mission” work is this? How does this kind of “hands on” work relate to the volunteer assignment of Jesus on earth? Yes, He was a carpenter’s son, and probably grew up using His hands. But there is more. Jesus’ hands, during His ministry, were incredible communicators of what He was really about. Think about the parents in Matthew 19 who risked the disciples’ wrath just for an opportunity to have Jesus’ hands on their children. What importance they must have placed on that gesture! Jesus’ hands communicated blessing: He had the authority and power to bless, but also the love to initiate blessing. And what a blessing! He tells them that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to these children!

Or what about the leper? Do you think for one moment that Jesus needed to use His hands to heal this man? Of course He did not. Many times throughout the Gospels Jesus heals by the authority of His Word alone. Yet here Jesus knew what this man needed. Jesus knew what His touch could do. Here was a leper, a man considered dangerous to touch. He was an outcast and the lack of physical communion set him apart as unlovable and unwanted. Yet Jesus touched Him! By touching him, Jesus brought both outer *and* inner healing. He restored this man’s health but also his relationship with others.

Jesus’ hands communicate blessing, healing and reconciliation. They create community. At the end of His life, Jesus committed His spirit into the hands of God. In so doing, He effected the most powerful reconciliation of all: the healing of people’s relationship with their Maker. He enfolded us into His family. That is a lot to live up to. Yet, as you take that hammer in your hands and pound in a nail, or as you fit a piece of rebar into place, you are using your hands to form community. Your touch communicates the love of Christ to those around you.

How “hands on” was your work today?

For Further Discussion

1. Talk about how a touch can communicate between two people.
2. How have you seen community or the body of Christ here? In each other?
3. What are the similarities and differences from the body of Christ in North America?
4. How have you experienced the physical, spiritual or emotional healing of Jesus? How can you extend this kind of healing or blessing around you?
5. In what ways do you think your group will be able to be a part of this community?
6. How would you respond to those who believe that the money you spent to come here should instead go directly to the community to increase impact and employ more local people?

Activity

Hold each others’ hands as you pray for and with one another.

Praying Together: Pray together that God will use your group to create community and to form relationships, despite the barriers and mistakes.

Day Four: The Heart of It All

Theme: Love

Scripture: Mark 10: 17-30



The rich young man did not get it. He could fall on his knees before Jesus and he could call him “good,” but he just didn’t get it. Doubtlessly, the young man thought that his life was fine –had he not been faithful in keeping the commandments? So why would the Master ask more of him? Why, on top of everything else, would Jesus ask him to give up his money? Well, he would not do it. He just could not give it up. Jesus knew where his heart was, and the young man’s “good” life, of course, was just not enough. Yet Jesus is not angry; He does not act disappointed. Verse 21 is so telling. “Jesus looked at him and loved him.” Can you imagine that kind of response? Here is a guy clearly off the mark and Jesus has nothing but love for him. Yes, Jesus requires sacrifice, but first He wants the heart to make the sacrifice for the right reasons. Amazingly, He still loves us when we fall short.

There are so many examples of Jesus’ love. He is a friend of sinners; He is moved by agony and need. Love overflowed from Jesus at the death of His dear friend Lazarus. Love turned the weary Jesus to yet another crowd who so desperately reached for His healing touch. Love made Jesus, although in agonizing and excruciating pain, look down from the cross to ensure that His mother was cared for. Love put Jesus on that cross in the first place. Voluntarily.

This is the cornerstone of all change that happens: in hearts, in communities, in relationships. Not only are you called to bring that love to all people, you are called to be that love to them. That is a tall order, but it is right there in the summary of the law: loving your neighbour as yourself is second only to loving God with everything that you have and are.

Activity: Take time to think of one thing that you could do this week to show Jesus’ love more clearly. Write it down, and, if you are comfortable, exchange it with someone so that he or she can hold you accountable in a week’s time. If you are not comfortable doing it (and that is OK too), commit it in prayer to God and let Him hold you accountable.

For Further Discussion

1. How can you love God more? What can you do to grow in that love?
2. How have you seen the heart of Jesus around you in this community?
3. Is it harder or easier to reach out in love in a foreign place and to people with traditions, customs, beliefs and ideas that may be so different from your own? Why?
4. How are you showing love? Is it simply about being here? Is it about working hard? Is it enough to show God’s love in this community simply through your actions? Is it also about getting involved in their lives?

Praying Together: Spend time thanking God for His love, expressed in Jesus, and experienced through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask Him together to help you to be expressions of His love in this community.

Day Five: A Voice in the Matter

Theme: Communication

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12



Can you imagine actually hearing the voice of Jesus? What would that sound like?

Well, it would be something out-of-the-ordinary, that is for sure. Think about it. What if some man walked up to you and told you to follow him? Just like that. Out of the blue. What kind of voice could command that kind of abandon and obedience?

Yet that is about all the disciples had to go on. A voice. He basically said stop what you are doing. Drop your livelihood. Leave your family. Come, follow me. I will give you something new and completely foreign to do. Would you be so easily convinced to leave your life behind for a stranger? What was it about Jesus' voice that compelled those fishermen? Was it deep and compelling? Full of authority? Whether conscious or not, the disciples must have known on some level that it was the voice of God, don't you think?

Well, of course we do not yet know what His voice sounds like. Yet we *do* know His words and the way in which He used them. The first recorded words of Jesus in Matthew command John to baptize him and to "let it be so now." That authority is also clear in His teaching. The Pharisees acknowledged it, even though they would not submit to it.

Jesus also speaks straight from Scripture. He frequently quotes the Old Testament, continually pointing to how He fulfills it. He also uses Scripture to undermine the Pharisees and teachers of the law. These "experts," who devoted their lives to the study of the Old Testament, are no match for Jesus. He has the exact words needed to defeat the most cunning attempts to silence Him.

Yet perhaps the most incredible thing about the words of Jesus is that they are always what the listeners need to hear. His beautiful voice of comfort says, "come to me, all you who are weary and burdened." He also calls the Pharisees "hypocrites" and scolds His closest friends for having "little faith." Jesus' silences, incredibly, are powerful too. Think of how he does not immediately answer those who would stone the prostitute. Or, after telling Pilate that He is the King of the Jews, Jesus refuses to answer to anymore of the charges against Him. Yet Pilate is convinced that He is innocent.

Sometimes we are called to fill the silences with words of comfort. Sometimes we need words that silence those who would damage our testimony. And yet at other times, too, our voice is most powerful in its silence. We need to listen to those around us. So, perhaps in a certain way, we *have* heard the voice of Jesus. What is more, we are called to be the voice of Jesus to those who desperately need to hear it. Looking to Jesus as a perfect example, we can prayerfully learn to discern what kind of voice we actually do have in the matter.

For Further Discussion

1. Sometimes the poor are said to be "without voice." Are they really without voice? How do you respond to this?
2. What does it mean to "have a voice"? Do you have a voice in this community? Should you have a voice? For example, should you be part of deciding what the needs are? Should you be able to give whatever you want away while you are here? What implications might your decisions have?
3. Discuss your efforts to communicate with the people in the community around you. How has that gone? What joys and frustrations have you experienced?
4. In what situations have you had the opportunity to be the voice of Jesus? Talk about how you were given the words to speak.

Praying Together: Ask God to help you communicate with those around you. Pray for this community, and continued humility as you relate to those around you.

Day Six: Bringing in the Kingdom

Theme: Transformation

Scriptures: Luke 15: 11-32; Isaiah 65: 17-25



Jesus' message while on earth had quite a bit to do with the Kingdom of Heaven. He explained it in parables; He began it on earth. He carefully wove a vision that must have seemed even more beautiful to those who were oppressed under Roman rule. But Jesus' vision was misunderstood.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the opposite of any earthly kingdom. It is a kingdom peopled by the powerless: it is for the children, the meek, the poor in spirit and the persecuted (see Matthew 5). Not exactly the type of nation, as the people of Israel hoped, to overthrow the Romans! The Kingdom of Heaven, however, was the ultimate vision of a future transformed. The prophets had written about it. Jesus provided a glimpse of that vision in His ministry on earth. And Jesus will complete that vision at the end of time when He returns.

But for now, each of us is called to further the Kingdom here on earth. The parable of the Loving Father (more often called the Parable of the Prodigal or Lost Son) provides an incredible pattern for how that Kingdom continues to grow. It is a parable essentially about relationships. The youngest son abuses his relationship with his father and goes off to squander his inheritance. In the process, he loses both identity and calling: he falls from the privilege of a son to the poverty of a slave. When he returns in humility and shame to his father, his father restores him fully. Can you imagine? That is the last thing he deserved. Yet, the relationship is made right, the son's identity is returned and he is given back his dignity. This is true transformation.

Powerful transformation like this only comes through the Father: God Himself sent His only Son to die on the cross. By restoring our identity as image-bearers and helping us to recover our true vocation, Christ has accomplished the only kind of lasting transformation that is possible.

Now we must take that transformation out into the world. It is no different in the community in which you are working. Lasting transformation for all of us begins with uncovering identity and vocation. This is how you can be a part of furthering God's kingdom on earth. Build a relationship with the community: find your common identity as children of God and trust Him to reveal the beauty of your shared transformation in Christ.

For Further Discussion

1. How is value measured in the eyes of God? How is value measured in the eyes of the world?
2. How are you/have you been like the Prodigal Son in the parable? The older brother? The Loving Father? If you are comfortable, share some specific examples.
3. We desire to bring transformation when we come into a community; however, people in financial need often possess amazing wealth in other areas. Give examples of wealth that you have seen in this community.
4. God invites us to join Him in His work of reconciliation around the world. How do you feel that you are participating in that work?
5. Where do you most clearly see evidence of the Kingdom of Heaven?

Praying Together: Spend time thanking God and praising Him for sending His Son to restore our identities in Him. Ask Him to help you never lose sight of your identity in Christ which you share with those around you.

Day Seven: Mistaken Identities

Theme: Identity

Scripture: 1 John 3: 11-24



Mistaken Identities. Sounds like a Hollywood movie. Two people switched at birth or something like that -the stuff Saturday night movie rentals are made of.

Do not dismiss it too quickly, though. Mistaken identity happens all the time. It happens to Christians too. It can even happen to you. Right here.

Do you think of yourself as poor? Do you see poverty when you look at your life?

Surely this is not the question to be asking North Americans that gave up vacation time, or took time off of work, to go to another country to help the poor!

Or is it? If you made lists in your first time together, think back to the adjectives that you used to describe the poor. You probably could not put your name at the top of that list and pass off those adjectives as descriptive of yourself. Yet there is more to poverty than economics.

At a basic level, and from a biblical perspective, you have much in common with the poor (Meyers, *Walking With the Poor*, pages 86-90). In fact, you might also say that the non-poor suffer from the same kind of poverty as the poor – only it is expressed in the opposite way. Both kinds of poverty have to do with relationships; both result from a world that isn't the way it was intended to be. Having too much is similar to having too little. In Proverbs 30: 8-9 it says, “Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.” Riches can impoverish. Life can be full of things yet empty of meaning.

In another way, it could also be easy to “play God” in the lives of the poor. It could be easy to assume that our position and privilege give us some kind of right and knowledge to change the community in which we are working. We know a better way! But wait a moment, this is also a result of losing sight of who we truly are. This is essentially a kind of poverty of identity. How quickly we forget that sin is a great equalizer. But more than that, Jesus died for all of us. Equally. 1 John 3 reminds us that as Christ laid down His life for us, so should we also lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. What does that mean? The passage goes on to say that when we see those in need, our response shows that the love of God is in us.

Now that is true identity! And if being a child of God is your profession, then helping others recover that true identity should also be part of your goal as your work to impact the lives of others!

For Further Discussion

1. Discuss the idea of poverty as something that you share with those in the community around you. In what ways is your poverty similar? How, in general, are you similar? Is it OK to look for similarities or does that lead to assumptions rather than a deeper understanding? Discuss.
2. Discuss how you have been conditioned or shaped by North American attitudes toward poverty, wealth, and materialism.
3. Do these attitudes impact your experiences? How?
4. Has God humbled you through this experience? Perhaps share a little bit about how He has done that.
5. Is there a relationship between humility and amount of wealth? Explain.
6. How will this experience, particularly with humility, change your life after you leave here?

Praying Together: Pray together, in unison, the words of Proverbs 30:8b: “Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread.”

Day Eight: So Why Are We Here Anyway?

Theme: Vocation/Calling

Scripture: Ephesians 4: 1-12



So why are we here anyway? That is a good question. Have you thought about this at all?

Why are you far from home, volunteering, taking time away from family and work? What are you hoping to do? At some level, are you hoping to make a difference in the lives of those around you? Making a lasting difference may be a relatively simple or complex thing. It may be a physical change; it may be a change that reaches to the level of attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. It may be about constructing a house for someone who has lost theirs. And it may also be an attempt to reach deeper.

According to Bryant Myers, in *Walking With The Poor*, “the goals of Christian witness are the same as the goals of transformational development: changed people and changed relationships. We desire that all people –the poor, the non-poor, and ourselves–be able to experience the lifelong process of recovering our true identity as children of God and the restoration of our true vocation as productive stewards of God’s creation” (page 211). Ephesians 4 talks about unity in the body of Christ. It talks about walking in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. Bearing with one another in love. Being eager to maintain the unity of the spirit. These are things that we are all called to do. Yet, despite these shared expectations, we are all different. We are all uniquely gifted. We all have something to contribute -wherever we are.

So what is our calling? Is it different if we look at a specific event in our lives or if we look at our life in general? We must live together as children of God, for that is what we are! We must walk and work as His children, using what He has given each of us. We are called to be stewards. Stewardship is a way of living in God’s creation as God’s created people. A steward in Jesus’ day was a servant entrusted with the management of his master’s land or resources. Stewardship is a calling or vocation for which we are uniquely gifted – it requires of us wise and fair management and care, but also the equal sharing of the beauty and wealth of this world in which He has placed us. It is our true vocation. And it will give glory and praise to God!

For Further Discussion

1. What do you see as your true vocation? Is it mostly about your employment? Your family? Your church and service? How does vocation fit in with what you are experiencing here?
2. What do you feel is your contribution to this trip? What gifts do you have, that have contributed to the team, in your interaction with the community, or through this experience in general? How have you felt stretched? Or how have your gifts grown?
3. Bryant Meyers says that God’s Will is for us to be productive stewards. What does that mean to you? Do you agree? How do you apply that in the different areas of your life? Does it mean something different here than at home or elsewhere?
4. Does God’s Will for us change when our circumstances change? Does God still hold us to our vocation and calling when life is full of chaos or adverse circumstances?
5. If you are comfortable, share a time when your life was full of chaos, trouble, or difficulty. How do you handle adversity? How do you regain control? How does God fit in?

Praying Together: Before prayer, invite those in the group to share, if they are comfortable, something that has been difficult for them lately, or something with which they are struggling (here or at home). As each is shared, ask someone to pray a simple prayer for that person, or take note of everything shared and lift it up together to God. Pray for each person by name around the table, thanking God for that person’s unique contribution to the team (which does not have to be named).

Day Nine: Relationships...that is where it is at

Theme: Relationships

Scripture: Philippians 2: 1-16a



You are a child of God. You were made in the image of God. Your neighbour, too, is a child of God and made in His image. At the most basic and important level, this is what defines your identity. You were made to bring glory to God. You were created to take care of the world and be productive in the world. The same is true for your neighbour. That is the vocation to which we are all called.

Notice that both identity and vocation are about relationships. Your identity is about a vertical relationship: you and your Creator. For those who do not know the beauty of their true identity, this relationship becomes triangular: your relationship with your neighbour can help point the way to Christ. In a similar way, vocation is about a triangular relationship: none of us can be productive on our own. We need to work together, to live on this earth in a way that will ultimately point to Christ in our lives!

Philippians reminds us to start with humility. To do everything without arguing and grumbling, even when everything is different -what you eat, where you sleep, what you are doing, with whom you are interacting. Think about your time here so far. Are you “shining like stars”?

This has to do with your group and how your group works in your new environment. It has to do with your story (what you bring to this place), the community’s story (their history, beliefs, fears, hopes, joys and difficulties), and God’s story (the beauty of God’s plan of redemption through history). How do they intersect? You may wonder what you can do in such a short time here. Well, not much, if the emphasis is on you. It is all about the Holy Spirit. Praise God that Jesus is still here among us in the person of the Holy Spirit! Through His incomparable power, relationships are created and strengthened and deepened and made beautiful.

For Further Discussion

1. What is the relationship between members of your group like? Have you drawn closer? If so, what is it that has brought you together in new ways? If not, why do you think that is?
2. Who in the community do you feel you share a friendship with? What is the basis of your relationship? What have you learned about that person? How has this relationship changed how you see this person? How did you establish and develop this relationship? What has been rewarding or frustrating about it?
3. There are people who feel that short-term mission trips do not provide opportunity to establish relationships. Instead, some feel that short-term mission trips reinforce stereotypes and negative power relations. What do you think? Discuss this opinion.

Praying Together: Take a moment for each person to pray quietly to God for someone with whom they have begun to establish a relationship on this trip. After a few moments, thank God for hearing those prayers and ask Him to continue to strengthen and deepen those relationships.

Day Ten: Getting in the Spirit of It

Theme: The Holy Spirit

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16



“The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10). The Spirit knows the thoughts of God. The Spirit impresses on our hearts spiritual truths and realities. The Spirit is a phenomenal mystery, yet also present with us and within us. The Spirit is the closest to having Jesus with us again before Christ’s return. The Holy Spirit is the way we connect with God and emotionally access the truth of what Jesus did for us.

He is the reason our hearts are changed.

The Spirit gives us the conviction to be agents of change in the hearts of others. He sends us to go out and do that work. Yet it is He alone who is able to do the changing. In fact, the Holy Spirit is absolutely central to what is happening here in this community.

The book of Acts gives some excellent examples of how the Holy Spirit is involved in mission (Bryant Meyers, 40), and is similar to what you are experiencing. In Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit communicates that Barnabas and Saul are to be “set apart...for the work to which [He has] called them.” *Service is initiated* here by the Holy Spirit, *convicting hearts* for service. But it doesn’t end there. In Acts 8, Philip is prompted to take a certain road and on that road he meets the Ethiopian eunuch, who was reading the book of Isaiah. The Spirit once again initiated mission, but also *guides it* by telling Philip to “go to that chariot and stay near it.” (vs. 29). And lastly, the Spirit also *produces a response*. In Acts 16:14, the Spirit opens the heart of Lydia “to respond to Paul’s message.”

The Holy Spirit will initiate, convict, guide, and produce a response here too. He will make the difference in this community. You never know what gesture, what smile, what participation, what relationship, what action He will use. You may not see it now, but He will, in His time, do amazing things with the little things that have been done.

For Further Discussion

1. When do you feel the Holy Spirit most intensely?
2. What is the Holy Spirit doing in you and around you?
3. How have you experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life? Have you experienced the Holy Spirit here in this community since your arrival? If you have worshipped with the community, or interacted with the church members, how have you experienced the presence of the Spirit through worship and fellow believers?
4. What sort of response to this experience is the Holy Spirit producing in you?
5. God is much bigger than this trip. Through the power of the Spirit, He will turn our feeble efforts into something. He does not need us, but He chooses to use us to accomplish His purposes. Discuss.

Praying Together: If you have not yet done so, seek out an opportunity to pray with members of the community through your translator. Ask for the power of Spirit to give you the words to pray that the hearts and minds of those with whom you are praying may be united with yours before God.

Day Eleven: Making it Stick!!

Theme: Wrapping Up

Scripture: Psalm 104



Praise the Lord, indeed!

What an incredible picture of the active role that God takes in this world. We are certainly blessed to have a God who is in control. But, even more than that, Psalm 104 points to the dependency of creation (including us!) on God and His provision. In other words, God sustains life on this planet.

Everything –from water to the cycles of the moon, from cattle to lions, from the trees to people –is “satisfied with good things” when the Lord opens His hands. It is not just about the provision of food and the essentials of life. God also sends His Spirit to “renew the face of the earth.” Renewal is change, the kind of change that our best efforts cannot hope to accomplish. While the Holy Spirit initiates that change, Psalm 104 promises that God the Father is more than able to make it stick. He can sustain life and the things of life.

Think of what your group has accomplished, or rather, what the Holy Spirit has accomplished through your group. Some results may be immediate and visible, while other accomplishments will happen slowly and be seen over time. Undoubtedly, our Triune God has used you for His glory. Despite your sins and failings. Even taking your best and making it infinitely better.

Through His hands, feet and heart, Jesus Christ embodies perfection in His serving and love, providing the model for volunteering. He also gives us direction in furthering His Kingdom on earth. He gives us purpose in providing us relationships through which we can find our identity in Him and our vocation in this world. The Holy Spirit helps us to go out and apply Jesus’ model, the “Kingdom” direction and the “relational” purpose for mission and service. And God the Father will make it stick.

Praise God for this experience!

Praise Him that He has been with you and has guided you through it!

May you pray with the Psalmist, “Establish the work of our hands for us –yes, establish the work of our hands.” (Psalm 90:17b)

For Further Discussion

1. What have you learned here? What will you miss?
2. Has your understanding of God changed? Do you have a better sense of what the global church looks like? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the church in North America? How does it contribute to the global church? What about the church in the developing world as you have observed it? What does it contribute to the family of God?
3. Do you think you have changed while being here? How? Is it realistic to expect those changes to last?
4. What is next for your group after you return home? Think about how you can continue to serve God at home. Or think about how you can continue to support the ministry you have been working with in the last week or two. What else can you do? How else can you serve? Be creative.
5. Think together about how to talk about your experiences when you go home. Will you talk about the importance of the work? Will you talk about what was accomplished? About long-term impacts? Are these things important? Will you joke about the food or the different customs and habits? Is this demeaning? How can you talk about this experience in a way that is positive, God-honouring, and fair to the people here?

Closing Activity

If you had (anonymous) prayer partners during the week and want to share who you prayed for over the time you were here, then now is the time to share. You should have received an explanation on how to do that. Enjoy and be blessed by this experience!!