

BIBLICAL SUPPORT FOR RAISING SUPPORT

First, FORGET everything you "feel" about receiving financial help for this trip. YOU ARE NOT "FUND-RAISING"! You are people-raising, friend-raising, ministering to and blessing others. Whether or not God has already given you the resources for the trip, He may desire you to do some "faith building" in your life by having you play an active role in the receiving of the financial support for this trip.

Support raising is a wonderful blessing. It is a special opportunity that God has given you to meet and/or bless some of His precious saints, to share your excitement about the trip, to open their eyes, and to share a vision. As you do it, the Holy Spirit will use you to change lives. As you tell them of your dreams, your vision, and your calling, you give them the opportunity to carry the Lord's Great Commission out through you.

The key to all of this is you must understand that *God* is the source of our funds—not the donors, not our plans, or our hard work. Jesus says "we have not because we ask not." The word "ask" is used in the gospels 113 times. God wants to teach us about asking Him and others. It is a proven fact that most people will tell you they give because they were asked! It is not unspiritual or fleshly to ask. It is biblical, spiritual, and faith-building to ask. Let's not hide behind our fears. Let's walk toward them and render them powerless! The worst thing they could say is "No".

SUPPORT RAISING IS BIBLICAL

III John 8 – believers urged to financially support those who were going out on behalf of the gospel because that made them "fellow workers in the truth".

Numbers 18:24 – The Jews gave their support to the priests.

Luke 8:2,3 – Many people supported Jesus and the disciples.

Mathew 10:9,10 – A Kingdom worker is worthy of his support.

Acts 18:4,5 – Paul stopped tentmaking to preach full time on support.

1 Corinthians 9:1-18 – Paul had the right to be supported by the churches.

In Hebrews 13, twelve Hebrew spies went into the Promised Land to take a look before the whole nation was to enter and claim what God had given them. Only Joshua and Caleb came back ready to invade. The other ten spies were so terrified of the giants they saw in the land that they confessed, "we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." Instead of trusting God and moving out with courage, they let fear paralyze them. How they viewed themselves affected how the giants viewed them. It is the same way in support raising.

The confidence level that we have in our God, our vision, and ourselves can make us...or break us!

All of us have different "giants" in our own minds that will keep us from beginning and persevering in the process of assembling a full support team. These are some common "giants" we must conquer:

- It's too hard*
- It's a burden*
- It's not fun*
- It's a "necessary evil"*
- PROCRASTINATION*

Just as God had prepared the land for the Israelite people to simply go in and take it, we can believe that God has prepared the hearts of the donors and we need to walk boldly in faith to find those givers and ask them to join us in this ministry.

Have a "when I raise my support" attitude, not an "if I raise my support."

GET READY TO HEAR SOME LIES!

Some lies the enemy will whisper in your ear about support raising:

*You can't ask your friends for money!

- You're NOT just asking for money. You're asking for them to make an investment; an investment in your life and in reaching the lost, which is certainly a worthwhile investment. Philippians 4:17 says, "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account." There is an account in heaven that each of us will be able to enjoy for eternity. And, while it is true that we "can't take it with us," Scripture teaches that we CAN make deposits to our heavenly account before we die. These trips bear an incredible amount of fruit for God's kingdom.

*You don't need to raise support because you can afford to pay for the trip yourself.

- The enemy's hidden agenda in this lie is to make you prideful. If he whispers this one in your ear, the best way to counteract this attack is to pay for another trip member and raise support for your own trip costs. If God has blessed you financially, GREAT! But, don't deprive someone of receiving the blessing of giving just because you are blessed. "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35. Also, God may want to use YOU to assist someone else!

*Times are hard, people are struggling, the economy is bad, people can't afford to give...

- Don't believe this one and STEAL a faith-building experience in THEIR lives. God may be using YOU to draw THEM closer to Him. 1 Kings

17:7-16 tells of God commanding Elijah to go to Zarephath and ask a widow for her last meal. What blessing of seeing God's mighty power she would have missed if Elijah had been too embarrassed to ask!

**You don't know that many people/Christians.*

- It may take some serious thought on your part, but YES YOU DO! Church, Sunday School class, bible study, work, clubs, etc. Also, don't miss an opportunity to witness to a non-believer by assuming they would never give. You can have an incredible ministry in the lives of others, and you might be their ONLY connection to Jesus Christ or His Great Commission. Don't sell God's power short. He can prompt the heart of anyone. His ways are not our ways.

**You don't need to send out support letters. God knows your needs; If God wants you to go, the money will come in.*

- While your trust in God (by making this statement) is certainly admirable, anyone who has successfully raised funds will agree that it never "just comes" without effort. It is true that God does provide. But, He requires some effort out of His servants. Faith without works is dead.

**You don't have time to do this! Or, You can do it later (closer to the trip).*

- Ask God to GIVE you the time (expand your time, help you prioritize, etc.). Don't be selfish by not giving people enough time to pray about how much they should give and time to budget-in a donation. Give GOD enough time to speak to them.

GETTING STARTED

Although this is not something to be taken lightly, you can have a lot of fun mixed in with all the hard work. Here are some more suggestions to help you get started.

STEP 1-PRAY. Express your total dependence on our Lord. Pray that God will

purify your motives and direct you to people who will join your "support team". We need to bathe ourselves and our donors in prayer before, during, and after this process. God will go before you. He will also build a love for your donors as you pray for them individually. Recommit yourself to God right now. Ask Him to help you to be willing – willing for ANYTHING, ANY TIME, ANY PLACE, ANYWAY. That's total surrender. God doesn't just want you to be willing to be a short-term missionary. He wants you to be willing for anything. Commit yourself to pray daily for yourself and your support partners from now until one month after you return home.

STEP 2-BEGIN WITH YOUR HOME CHURCH. Talk to your Sunday school class, BSF group, or small group about how they can help. Explain the ministry, your plans for involvement, what you will be doing and why you want to be a part of this ministry.

STEP 3-MAKE A LIST OF PROSPECTS. Pray for ideas and list everyone who comes to mind. Include church friends, relatives, neighbors, school mates, club and civic contacts, foundations, corporations, Christmas card list. How about your doctor, lawyer, dentist, mechanic? Don't automatically rule anyone out! You WILL be surprised.

STEP 4-CALL EVERYONE ON YOUR LIST (OPTIONAL). A direct call is critical. If you can meet with some of them in person, that's even better. If you have a list of 50 people, call five people a night for 10 nights and tell them: 1) What you are doing, 2) Why you are doing it, and 3) What you'd like them to do for you (which is to pray about joining your support team).

STEP 5-MAIL SUPPORT LETTER. This should be mailed as soon as possible and you have been provided with sample support letters for examples and tips. (Note: NO EMAILS! It's too impersonal)

STEP 6-MAKE FOLLOW-UP CONTACTS. Again, in person is best, by phone is next best (no emails). 10 nights after your first call, call them back and ask

them 1) Did you receive my letter? 2) Do you have any questions? 3) Have you had a chance to pray about support me? How has God directed you?

STEP 7-THANK BEFORE YOU BANK. You've worked hard and you are now beginning to receive money. It seems to be coming in faster that you can handle. You are busy and it seems that you are falling behind in correspondence. It would be easy to forget about it all together. But, supporters need to be thanked and more than that, need to feel that they are a part of your ministry.

STEP 8-KEEP TRACK. As you receive gifts, have a simple way to keep track. It is very important that YOU be accountable for the gifts you're receiving.

SUPPORT LETTERS

Finally, here are some tips for preparing and sending out your support letters:

1. **PRAY!** Before you even begin drafting your letter, ask God to give you the words.
2. The sooner you get the letters out, the sooner you will see God's power to provide for your needs. Support letters should be sent out **NO LATER** than 60 days prior to your trip.
3. Send letters (**NOT** e-mail) to **EVERYONE** you know...believers and non-believers. You might be surprised to see whom God chooses to partner with you in this ministry.
4. Personalize the letter. The more personalized the letter is, the more the recipients will feel/want to be involved.
5. Be sure to include the trip dates.
6. Be sure to specify the date you will need to receive donations by. Generally, all donations should be received before you leave on your trip.
7. Be sure to specify that all checks should be made payable to "Volunteers For

Christ". DO NOT have supporters make checks out to you, but they do need to send them to you.

8. All financial donations are tax deductible and each person who gives toward your support will receive a receipt from Volunteers For Christ to be used for tax purposes.

9. It is a great idea to include a pre-addressed, postage paid return envelope with your initial support request, so each recipient has an easy way to respond. The easier you make it for them to participate, the more likely they are to get involved.

I am sure this is more information and "help" than you actually needed, but we want to make this as easy as possible. This part of the mission trip really is one of the biggest blessings and we simply do not want you to miss out on what God has in store for you.