



## "Make me a Servant"

by Dedria Davis-Tidwell

What are some practical, everyday things we can do to serve and encourage the missionaries whom the Lord has given to us?

### 1. Pray for your missionaries.

When you face frustrations in these everyday moments, redeem the time by praying for your missionaries because they face similar and sometimes more difficult frustrations:

#### Your Everyday Frustrations

long store lines and cooking

problems with car or appliances

hot summer or cold winter

long sermon

conflict with others

physical illness

emotional struggles

spiritual growth and protection

#### Missionary Frustrations

hot, dirty markets and scrubbing veggies,  
no clean water, no fast-foods or  
restaurants

inability to find parts to fix the problem

no air conditioning and no hot water

sermon in foreign language

conflicts with nationals, other missionaries

little or no medical help available

emotional struggles with little or no help

lack of spiritual resources (books, etc.)

## **2. Send Care Packages.**

Have your Sunday School classes participate to involve everyone and share the cost. (Adults for mom and dad, Singles for single, Teens for teens, Children for children).

Contact your missionary and ask them to send you a list of items they would appreciate. Then list one item per 3x5 card with approximate cost. Pass the cards around the classes (remember adults for parents, teens for teen MK, and children for child MK) and allow individuals to choose one affordable item to purchase within the next few weeks. Put a large box in the S.S. room for folks to place their items in, then have someone(s) repackage the items for efficiency. Get rid of outside packaging (cardboard, plastic, shrinkwrap, etc.) and put them in ziplocs (missy can use the ziplocs again!) Check mailing cost-- surface mail, airmail, excess baggage. Use "creativity" in listing contents on the green customs sticker.

Not sure what to put in the package? Customize for your missy but some ideas are:

- Christian tape or c.d.
- taped video of clean t.v. shows, movies, or sports
- book(s) or recent magazines
- food mixes (Martha White, jello, cake mixes, etc.) and chocolate chips
- comic strips or interesting articles from the paper
- newsletter from the church or new church directory
- taped sermons or Christian radio programs
- assortment of cards (b'day, anniver., friendship, etc.) for them to send

## **3. Send Notes of encouragement.**

Pass out blank 4x6 cards and ask everyone to take five-ten minutes to write notes of encouragement to the missionary. (Be sure to spell his/her name correctly!) You can use their latest prayer letter to give you ideas for encouraging them. Don't just say, "I'm praying for you" but say how you are specifically praying. Example: "Dear Mary, I'm praying that you and John will continue to grow closer to the Lord Jesus and to each other-- that you will guard your time with the Lord and with each other." You can also write Bible passages and just insert their names as prayers. Examples: Romans 15:5-6; Ephesians 1:15-19; Ephesians 3:14-20.

## **4. Make a video.**

Have everyone in the class say "hi" and give a few words of encouragement or details of how each individual and/or family is doing. Be sure to look directly at the camera and speak directly to the person so that they'll feel truly "connected" to you as you speak to them via the camera.

## **5. Make a conference call.**

Figure out the time difference and pre-arrange for the missionary to be at home or at the nearest phone for your class to call during S.S.! Have someone serve as the moderator-- you can even take questions or ask for the most up-to-date prayer requests. If you all talk for just 5-10 minutes, it's not that expensive and you'll feel much closer to your "real live missionary" and he/she to you!

## **6. Be a "Tychicus" (Colossians 4:7-9).**

Keep your missionary informed on the latest church happenings-- weddings, babies, deaths, etc. and serve as a conduit for them to pass their news on through you.

## **7. Send and Receive E-mail.**

Send your missionary local, regional, or U.S. news updates, prayer requests, "Good Clean Funnies" and forward their news and prayer requests to others who will pray. Just be sure to check with your missionary first before sending any email attachments since some places charge astronomical prices for downloading!

## **8. Volunteer to distribute their prayer letters.**

You don't necessarily have to do huge mailings of letters for your missionary. Just have them e-mail or snail mail their latest prayer letter, then photocopy as many copies as your church needs on nice copy paper (colored paper makes people more likely to read it). Distribute several copies to Sunday School classes, or make them available in a "missionary prayer letter" rack in the church's foyer or at the doors exiting the worship center. If the pastor will mention from the pulpit that the letter is available and point out where people can get a copy, more people are likely to pick one up.

## **9. Help them with practical things they can't do.**

Use creativity in assisting your missionary with things that they cannot do for themselves because of the geographical distance. For example, one of my supporters wired flowers to my mother on Mother's Day in my name each year that I was overseas!

## **10. Support them financially.**

- Give up a night out and send the money to your missionary.
- Have children do chores for earning money and put the money in a piggybank shaped like a globe. When it gets full, let them give the money to missions.
- Pray as a family about committing to a monthly level of support. It doesn't have to be a large amount. Some of our supporters give \$10-15 a month.
- Give a "one-time" gift for your missionary to use as needed.

## **11. Allow them to be "real."**

Let your missionaries be "real" and vulnerable in their interactions with you. Too many church-members put missionaries on a pedestal. The problem with a pedestal is it's cold and lonely up there and there's only one way off! If you offer your missionary a safe haven through your listening ear, closed mouth, and non-judgemental attitude, you'll be giving him/her a priceless gift. Missionaries especially need this when they return on furlough and experience "reverse culture-shock." They may say and do some strange things as they try to re-enter the United States, but just love them and try not to judge-- they are simply re-adjusting to a very different "home" than the one they left!