



What is Life Support Discovery?

There is something you shouldn't leave home without... a Life Support Team! What's a Support Team? It is people who are committed to joining you in ministry through prayer, finances and encouragement regardless of a local assignment or across the globe. No one can stand alone, we need the Body of Christ.

So, what is Support Discovery? God provides support for those He calls. Therefore, if He has called you to ministry, He has a Life Support Team for you! Support discovery is finding out who these people are. Two primary areas for short-term missions support are *prayer* and *logistical support*. These go hand in hand. Those giving are usually the ones praying for you. Jesus said, "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" Matthew 6:21.

You and your life support team need to see yourselves as a team, united together with the common cause of making you as effective as possible in the task that God has called you to. Your support team must feel a part of your ministry and not just see themselves as one involved in charitable giving. In a team concept, everyone has a responsibility and each person takes it seriously. In a short-term missions task, each member of your team is as important to accomplishing the task as your actual field experience. This team should be for "*Life*," and more members added, for future given assignments God has for you.

Building a Life Support Team

Team Building Ideas

Building a good support team can enhance your short-term experience. The following support ideas consist of several mailings or connections, which may seem like a lot. However, you need to remember this is a plan for involving people in world missions, not simply raising logistical support for yourself and your project team. You are building a team in the midst of a spiritual battle! A team is aware of each other and needs each other. So keep up with your life support team and include them in the ministry!

A Good Support Team is an Informed Support Team

Be specific in your connection letter/call/e-mail:

- Why are you going? • Where are you going and with which organization?
- What will you do? • What are your prayer needs? • What do you hope to learn?
- How does this fit in with your life plans? • How much support do you need?
- What is your support for? (i.e.: food, logistics, materials, transportation, etc.)
- Are gifts tax deductible? (yes) • Where is support sent and how should the check be made out? • Provide an information sheet of the church and the trip

A Good Support Team is a Respected Support Team

In discovering your support team, relationships are key. You may be raising support now, but throughout your life and your individual ministry you will be raising credibility for a long time. Those with whom you have shared and will share your life and your ministry with are usually part of your team already and will be for a long time. You must see this team as a life team, because God's call is a Life Call! *Unless the Lord leads you to, do not ask someone to join*

your support team if they do not know you. Make a list of friends, family, ministry partners, parents of friends who know you, your church friends, etc. If possible, start a database of addresses for continued use throughout the Support Team process.

Provide quality information to your future supporters. This means you should proof your letters and add personal notes. Sign letters in blue ink. A mistake often made is the misspelling of someone's name or sending letters to the wrong address. Be sure to do your homework.

A Good Support Team is an Involved Support Team

People want to be involved and they need to know how. Provide clear ways for them to respond. In your communication you may want to include:

- A stamped, self-addressed envelope will help them respond to you
- Include a response form for them to include comments back to you.
- Clear instructions on how the check is to be written.
- Your phone number/e-mail address so you can easily be reached

Information on your trip departure and events leading up to it. Include a

- training schedule or other information you think would be interesting.
- Personally invite them to services, celebrations and report events during preparation and when you return.
- Consider setting up special prayer times with members or individuals on your team.

These suggestions do not all need to be included in your first connection. As your support team builds, you can determine each individual's involvement.

A Good Support Team is an Appreciated Support Team

When prayer support or logistical support comes in, respond promptly with a personal thank-you note/call. Realize this is a special gift. Think about it. If someone makes \$15/hour and gives \$50 they are sending you almost 5 hours of work! Clearly this warrants some thoughtful, personal communication on your part. Here are some ideas for showing your appreciation:

- Before you depart, send a prayer letter to your team with your final Itinerary, prayer request, etc.
- Take addresses of your Support Team with you and send everyone a postcard. People love to see where you are at.
- Collect something small to bring back for all your supporters as a gift (pictures, etc.)
- When you return, connect back with at least one story and something specific you learned. Add a sheet of copied pictures and enclose your small gift.
- If possible, host a report time for your Support Team. Give them the opportunity to see where they were able to minister by being on your team. Let them know when the Group Report Party is and invite them to come.

Remember this is a Kingdom building process. This Mission project is not the end cause, but being part of God's plan to involve people in His eternal experience as believers and new believers!

My Life Support Team

Use a sheet to list potential people for your Life Support Team