

## **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MISSIONARIES**

Many churches have one or more people of the congregation who serve as missionaries in another, usually distant, place and in a strange language.

Missionaries are people with needs.

### ***A. Missionaries are needy people***

Sometimes missionaries serve under mission agencies or do part time work.

Nevertheless it is the local church that should assume responsibility for their long-term welfare.

Missionaries are people to be sent out from your church with care and long-term love.

Here are 11 ideas for you to establish healthy, even if long-distance, relationships with your missionary.

In front of each number mark a “+ ” or a “ — “ sign. Mark a plus if your church is already doing it. Mark a “ — “ if your church is not yet doing it. (You will need to use these signs later on to calculate your effectiveness.)

1. First the Holy Spirit wants you to pray with them, long and hard, before they go.
2. Then comes your part in being a physical instrument of letting the Holy Spirit flow through your arms by laying on holy hands. By the way — are your hands holy?
3. Then comes the missionary’s need for assistance with packing up.
  - Their apartment needs to be cleaned.
  - Goods need to be either stored or shipped to a distant destination.
4. Once on the field they need a monthly phone call of encouragement from you their pastor.
  - The phone call should include a short scripture reading, a prayer and questions about health, needs, finances, effectiveness.Be sure you talk to the wife as well, and also any older children.
5. This information then needs to be shared weekly for several weeks with prayer groups and the congregation.
6. And don’t forget **to include the missionary wife and children in regular communications.**

Are there those in your church who will commit to being a pen pal?  
Who will inform them of births, marriages and deaths in the church, someone who can send a favorite tea the wife can’t get there or some such thing... are there kids who would send notes to the missionary kids etc... it is loneliest in my experience for many of the wives.  
Wives don’t always have the exciting responsibilities and input into the ministry work of their missionary husbands.  
One missionary lady was quite blessed. She received a note or a letter or even a care package about once a week while she was in Latvia... it was such a blessing!  
The simplest of notes goes a long way!
7. Missionaries are often lonely, isolated people, therefore members of the congregation should be encouraged to visit the missionary annually.
8. Missionary work is hard and often they lack tools or materials.  
Lead your church into providing practical help semi-annually.
9. Money is the easiest way to quickly alleviate some pressures.  
Be sure your church collects regular offerings for your missionaries.  
Be sure to forward it quarterly.  
Keep money matters above the board.  
Have your missionary report back when funds are received and how much.  
Then share that with the congregation.
10. After 3 years, you as the lead pastor should visit the mission field and make practical observations or participate in ministry.

11. For spiritual fruitfulness it is crucial that your missionaries have the opportunities to live by Biblical principles. Consider the responsibility of your church to provide for them to return home for long-term rest, minimally every 4 years.  
Missionary work is so strenuous that many couples burn out and can even fall into sin after 4 years.

**B. Action time**

Now at the close of this section take time to engage and answer the following questions.

/// 8-2a /// List the number of each item you are already practicing. \_\_\_\_\_

/// 8-2b /// Now list the numbers of the items that you have not yet participated in. \_\_\_\_\_

/// 8-2c /// Now list the numbers which you want to add to your church ministry. \_\_\_\_\_

/// 8-2d /// For each number or new activity you listed, do some research and make a list of ideas as to what you can do.

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