**Personal & Spiritual Preparation**

The purpose of this part of the training is to prepare each team member for everything God will do in and through them on the trip. This part of the training involves personal and spiritual preparation.

Personal Preparation

Preparation is a key ingredient to your having a successful and life-changing short-term missions experience. The following issues and questions will be ones that stimulate you to think through how prepared you are and in what areas you might need further preparation prior to your trip.

*Are you prepared physically?* Are you in shape? What kind of exercises could you be doing to be in better shape for your particular team and the particular project (e.g., walking, jogging, etc.)?

*Are you prepared emotionally?* Are you “in-shape” emotionally? Are there any unresolved issues or relationships in your life you have avoided dealing with? Are you having any bouts with depression or discouragement that perhaps should be talked out prior to your trip? Would it be wise to talk these out with a pastor, counselor, or friend? Could you be viewing this trip as some sort of therapy for problems in your life?

*Are you prepared relationally?* Much of your time will be spent with a group of people and your experience will be tied to theirs, so it is important to think through the way you relate on an interpersonal level. Are you prone to any types of disagreements that have hindered your ability to work with others? What are they? When are they most likely to occur? Would you consider yourself a good listener? How might this be improved before going on the trip with a team? Would you consider yourself to be a cooperative person? Why or why not? Are there certain circumstances when you find it harder to be cooperative with others? What are they? Do group decisions frustrate you?

Spiritual Preparation

One of the great benefits of any short-term mission trip is that we have the chance to be freed from all of life’s normal distractions and get to focus solely on God and His purposes.

For example, at home if the car breaks down, your mind goes into Plan B mode: “I’d better call the office and then the Auto Club. Oh, and I’ll call Jim to see if he’s left yet; maybe he can give me a ride. Boy, maybe it’s time to break down and get a new car. But the payments! We’re barely making it now.” On a mission trip such as this, our response is usually different. Something goes wrong and we begin to pray: “Lord, what is it that you want me to do now? What is your purpose for this breakdown? Am I supposed to stay here a little longer because you have something for me to do? Help me be patient and wait for your leading during this change of plans.”

Not only are we more willing to see our time in spiritual terms on a trip like this, but we also see ourselves in a more spiritual light. We pray more. We trust more. We expect God to work through us instead of being surprised when He does. There are a number of ways to prepare spiritually for the trip.

* **Start Listening:** Are you listening to God? Are there quiet times in your day to reflect upon what God is teaching you?
* **Start Reading:** Are you spending time reading God’s Word? How consistently?
* **Start Speaking:** What is your prayer life like? Are you taking time each day to talk with God? Have you taken prayer walks in your own neighborhood?
* **Start Responding:** Are you striving to be obedient to the little things? Are you attempting to apply the things you feel God is teaching you?