

Are You Prepared?

As a country we would not consider sending troops into battle without preparation. This preparation takes all forms: physical, emotional, and spiritual. Preparation is also a key ingredient for a successful and life-changing short-term mission experience. The following issues and questions will stimulate your thinking and perhaps be the basis of some group discussions as you prepare for the trip.

Physically

According to the news media, Americans are generally not in good shape physically.

- What exercises could you be doing to get into better shape?
- Are you in good health?
- What steps could you take to improve your health prior to the trip (e.g., diet, sleep, etc?)

Emotionally

- Think about these questions:
- Are there unresolved issues or relationships in your life?
- Are you having any bouts of depression or discouragement that should be talked out prior to the trip? Would it be wise to talk about these with a pastor, counselor, or friend?
- Could you be viewing this trip as some sort of therapy for problems in your life? If you are, what problems are you trying to “escape”? Why?

Spiritually

- Each of us should always be developing and improving our relationship with God. Reflect on where you are spiritually.
- What will give you a richer experience if you begin to do it now?
- Start listening. Are there quiet times in your day to reflect on what God is teaching you?
- Start reading. Are you spending your time in God's word? How consistently?
- Start responding. Are you seeking to be obedient in the little things? Are you attempting to apply the things God is teaching you?

Relationally

Because you will be spending much of your time with a group of people to whom your experience will be closely tied, it is important to think through the way you relate on an interpersonal basis.

- Are you prone to any types of conflict that hinder your ability to work with others? What are they? When are they most likely to occur?
- Do you consider yourself a good listener? How might you improve your listening prior to joining the team?
- Are you comfortable being transparent with others? What factors determine whether or not you will share with another? What obstacles do you have when it comes to being open and vulnerable?
- Would you consider yourself to be a cooperative person? Why, or why not? Are there certain circumstances when you find it hard to be cooperative with others? What are they? Do group

decisions frustrate you?

Realistic Expectations

Write down your expectations for this trip on a separate piece of paper. Make your goals as clear as possible.

- Are they compatible with the goals of the trip?
- Go back and make a check by the expectations that could be unrealistic. Why are they unrealistic?
- How could they be adapted to become more realistic?
- Have you ever been disappointed due to unrealistic expectations?
- As you look over your expectations, what areas of potential disappointment do you see on this trip?