

How to actively serve in worldwide missions where you are in your local church.

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We must labor hard for the global spreading of the gospel because God's heart is for the nations. He beckons the nations to worship Him! Indeed, He deserves worship from every creature that He has made. How can Christians who find themselves established in a season of life vocationally in a particular place, serving in a good ministry, and rooted with family in a particular city? How can a Christian actively serve in worldwide missions where they currently reside in the ministry context in which they already serve?

The New Testament can simply be broken down into two imperatives: **GO!** or **SEND!** There are no additional options. Apathy is not permitted. It has been said that one either goes, or sends, or disobeys.

Are you a goer?
Are you a sender?

James Fraser, a missionary to the Lisu people in China, wrote to his prayer partners back home, "I believe it will only be known on the Last Day how much has been accomplished in missionary work by the prayers of earnest believers at home."

When pleading with those who sent him to China to persevere in prayer for his ministry, James Fraser expressed what any faithful missionary believes: "Solid, lasting missionary work is done on our knees."

You, dear Christian — working full-time, raising a family, established in a church, and serving in that ministry context — can actively serve in missionary work. But it'll cost you. It'll cost you time, effort, labor, and earnestness *on your knees*. The advancing of the gospel thunders when saints bow humbly on their knees.

So how can you serve? How actively can you engage? Indeed, how *must* we involve ourselves in God's global plan for His glory to be displayed for all the nations to see?

1. Give generously.

One very tangible and sacrificial way that you can catapult a love for global missions in your own heart and life is to give your money. Why? Your heart follows where your treasure goes. You want more of a heart for missions & God's plan for the nations? Then put your money there and watch your heart follow! Let us give regularly to the needs of missionaries. Let us give generously to them -- not skimping, not holding more for us, not giving them the leftovers, not heartlessly, but generously and bountifully. Let us give sacrificially. Let us give as if souls depend on it! Let us give so that it actually *costs* us something. Let us give so sacrificially that we have to say *no* to something so that we can *give more* to global missions. Let us give above and beyond. Do we give a certain amount regularly? What if you give more and ask and trust and watch God provide? What if you give for specific needs that arise? Again, if you're not a goer, then you're the sender. Give generously and bountifully and happily and sacrificially so that God's work can spread for His glory.

2. Pray persistently.

Financial giving and fervent prayer go together. A man could give all the money in the world but unaccompanied by the prayers of God's people it is worthless and worldly cash. Let your money be given to your church for the spread of the gospel globally as it is married with your persistent and fervent prayers. So, then, dear Christian, let us pray individually for missionaries. Don't know them? Then start by emailing your pastors/elders (or outreach/missions leader) and get the names and begin praying *one by one* for them, *name by name* regularly. Pray with faith and believe that God will hear and answer your prayers as you pray in accordance with His will as the Word of God guides your praying (begin with Psalm 67 or Psalm 117 or Psalm 115). Let us even pray for missionaries in our home contexts of family worship so that our spouses and children can learn that God's plan far surpasses our own immediate context in our own little city. Let us pray for missionaries in our prayer meetings at church. Let us gather with other believers and pick a missionary, or two, or a location, or a school, or an outreach and pray with others at the church gathering for God's work to spread and thrive. Let us pray with variety to keep things from becoming boring. Pray for revival, bible translation projects, leadership training, church planting, the unreached and unengaged people groups that have never heard, pray for seminaries and bible colleges, and for biblical counseling centers. Pray for the persecuted church that God would use them in the contexts of suffering for the advancement of the gospel.

3. Communicate encouragingly.

Don't forget that we live in a day where we can communicate around the globe instantly -- *literally*. We can send emails, text messages, have Skype calls, and engage with those in the far, remote, distant continents across the oceans. Let us utilize these blessings and communicate encouragingly to these dear saints giving their lives in different contexts for Christ's name. Find the missionaries that your church engages with and send them emails, letters, texts, and encouragement notes. What if one person from your church emailed a missionary *each week* so that a missionary received a weekly report, update, and encouragement from a fellow believer. Imagine the encouragement. What if *you* (yes, *you*, even if you don't know them very well!) initiated a Skype with them. Better yet, what if you have your children be a part of this Skype call so they can learn and engage and be taught about God's global plan. Write letters to them and include church bulletins, flyers, and other little booklets. Encourage one another, dear brethren!

4. Host happily.

And when a missionary comes in town, if I may so bluntly say it, cancel everything and clear the calendar to host these dear saints. Sure it'll bless them to have a bed to sleep on and some warm home-cooked food to enjoy. But *you* will find yourself the one most supremely blessed as you sit and talk with them and hear how God is working, saving, sanctifying, and spreading His gospel around the world. So, if a missionary comes to town, let us eagerly host them, let us lavishly serve them. Indeed, I would suggest that we shower them 'over the top' and overdo it and show them double-honor as those who are giving their lives for the cause of Christ. Give them rest. Let them read and sleep and pray and meditate on Scripture. Enjoy them but don't make them so busy that they cannot rest.

5. Focus geographically.

As you personally focus on praying and serving in worldwide missions (from *wherever* God currently has you), the world is big and there's lots of ministries out there. So start with a specific geographical region. Start a bit smaller, be specific, and be intentional. Maybe pick a few missionaries or a few locations that your church supports (and, thus, where your faithful, regular, sacrificial giving goes) and pray in specific ways. This may mean you need to contact the missionaries and get some specific requests that they have. Then, pray and watch. Pray and watch. Pray and expect. Pray in faith. And see God work. Pick a region of the world and pray for it. Pray for the lost -- *by name*. Pray for cities and villages -- *by name*. Pray for unreached people groups -- *by name*. Pray for the unengaged who have never heard the name of Christ. Focus your time and your efforts and instead of large-sweeping prayers: "God save everyone in China" consider praying more specifically, more intentionally, more focused, and more knowledgeably and watch the Lord use you to further the gospel as your prayers speed God's Word through His laborers globally!

6. Talk intentionally.

Don't forget the missionaries. One great hardship in serving overseas is that it can become very lonely -- quickly. You in your local church can begin to talk with others about global missions. Your church doesn't talk much about it? That's ok. *You can*. Start a conversation with a friend and talk about how God is growing *you* through your praying, contacting, letter-writing, communicating, and family worship as you uphold a missionary in a particular ministry and in a particular location in the world. Even consider talking with others about going, sending, giving, supporting. Don't be afraid to ask others what they give to. Don't be afraid to ask others how they give financially globally. Let's encourage each other by talking intentionally, helpfully, and deliberately about God's work going on around the world. Indeed, one profound and powerful conversation that, I believe, should be had often is to encourage young people to go! Young people who are not yet married, who have the time, who aren't established in careers yet, who have energy and vigor and zeal should be encouraged to give all for Christ and prayerfully consider if God may have them serve around the world and take the gospel to a people group that has never heard of Christ! Of course it's hard! It's dangerous! Christ never said following Him would be easy or safe. But walk by faith. Serve Christ happily and eagerly. See how God can use you -- *a weak vessel* -- to encourage others in your ministry context to prayerfully consider serving Christ around the world.

All that said, never think that missions work is '*their*' job out 'there'. Never fall into the trap of just heartlessly giving a few bucks here or there when a missionary comes in town. Involve yourself. And if you don't see many opportunities, then *find them! Make them! Create them! Initiate them!*

Not sure where to start? After going first to your local church for information on the missionaries they support (where your money that you give goes), then go to these websites and pick a region/missionary and begin praying, contacting them, and start friendships and relationships:

TMAI.org — The Master's Academy International

Heartcrymissionary.com — Heart Cry Missionary Society

Frontlinemissions.info — Frontline Missions International

Let's remember the solid counsel from James Fraser who pleaded with those who sent him to China to persevere in prayer for his ministry: "Solid, lasting missionary work is done on our knees."