

Thinking about Mission service

Has God been prompting you to mission service overseas? Being obedient to the call of God is great news but it will mean some significant changes to life as you know it.

As you contemplate service below are some questions and comments to think through. Many agencies are likely to talk with you about these sorts of issues so having thought through these clearly in advance is a great starting point.

Should you like to talk further about any of these comments, please feel free to [contact us](#).

- **Abilities:** Assess your strengths and weaknesses; understand them well and be realistic about both. Alongside your professional skills and qualifications, what other experiences and skillsets do you have which could be used overseas? What spiritual gifting do you have? Do you speak another language and are you willing to learn one overseas? What do you like doing? What hobbies and interests do you have?
- **Background:** Have you moved around a lot (towns, houses) or been located in one place for some time? How flexible and adaptable to change are you? Do you have lots of friendships and acquaintances or a few strong friendships? Have you been through lots of different experiences?
- **Cross cultural experience:** What previous experience of crossing cultures do you have either overseas or within New Zealand? If you're willing to cross cultures in some way in New Zealand where the familiar is close by, you are more likely to have a greater appreciation of the realities of this overseas. If you are considering long term service, a short term experience may be a good option first if you have not already done something along these lines.
- **Family:** Are you single, married or hoping to be married? Does your spouse feel about serving God in the same way you do? How might your marital status influence your decisions in service? Do you have children and what age and stage are they at regarding education? Do you have ageing family members that may depend on you for care?
- **Professional skills:** Overseas service can require qualified personnel in a wide range of activities. Be aware of the range of areas in which and how your qualifications might be useful.
- **Attitude and personality:** A positive attitude is very important in a cross cultural setting. What characteristics do you have that will assist in your service? Are you reliable, persevering, flexible, servant-hearted, do you have a good sense of humour? Are you a leader? How do you handle stress and frustration? Are you task or people orientated? Are there physical and/or emotional reasons that could affect you living and serving overseas? Be aware that if something is an issue here at home, it may still likely to be an issue elsewhere – going overseas is not a fix for a concern.
- **Church:** How would your church respond to your interest in service overseas? Would they support you in an application and beyond? The church is the sending body for anyone heading into mission service and it is vital that they are an integral part of your journey. What ministry areas are you involved in at the church or in the community? If you have not been active in your church, would going overseas be any different? If you haven't already, talk through your thinking with a pastor, someone on the leadership team or a small group leader. Listen to their reactions and thoughts.
- **Personal faith:** How long have you been a follower of Jesus? How would you describe your walk with God at the moment? Is your faith integral to your life or more something as distinct from your daily activities? Serving overseas requires a robust faith on which to base our time – after all it is because of our faith that we should be going! Like our attitude and personalities, leaving our shores is not a fix for our relationship with God to improve.
- **Motivation:** Not always an easy question to think through and for many our motives may well be mixed. However be as honest with yourself as you can. Think about whether you simply want to escape an issue in New Zealand, or maybe it sounds like a big exciting adventure to live in another country. Or is it very clear that God is calling you to something else?

- **Practical questions:** Think through the length of service you are prepared to offer. In some professional capacities, there may be timeframes required for issues like retaining registration (e.g. the medical arena). Would your wider family be supportive? What financial issues might you need to consider? Are you willing to raise financial support if required? If you have a student loan, you will also need to ensure arrangements for this, especially if you are considering long term service.

Above all else, take time to pray, read the Bible, listen to God. Also take the time to read mission orientated books and articles. Biographical mission stories are a great source of inspiration and encouragement.

Adapted with permission from the 'Journey' resources from BMS World Mission UK.