



Be Prepared

“Do your planning and **prepare** your fields before building your house.” -- Proverbs 24:27

“You yourselves know how plainly I told you, ‘I am not the Messiah. I am only here to **prepare** the way for him.’” – John 3:28

“There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to **prepare** a place for you?” – John 14:2

“Preach the word of God. Be **prepared**, whether the time is favorable or not...” -- 2 Timothy 4:2

Olympic athletes amaze me! Like most of you, every four years, I set aside time with the rest of the world to watch these competitors live out their passion and calling. Some of my favorite moments are the interviews of each athlete as they tell the story of their preparation process during the four “off years.” The time and discipline invested, the money spent, the climate conditions studied, the counseling and coaching they endured to be well mentally and emotionally - All of these things for one moment. Only one moment! It blows my mind.

You have a “moment” that is coming up – except this is a moment that could impact eternity! The question is: Will you choose to invest in the preparation process? Of course, there are many faith moments that we simply can’t be 100% prepared and ready for...that’s why we have to have faith. What I’m simply asking is if you are willing to “prepare as if it depends on you but pray as if it depends on God?”

We see through the wisdom of Solomon, the lives of guys like John the Baptist and Paul, but most importantly through Jesus our Savior, that preparation is a vital component of living out our personal callings. Considering this, as you prepare for your short-term mission trip to Jonestown, it’s important for you to be prepared in three different areas: Spiritually, Physically, and Culturally. Below, I’m going to list some practical examples and “Things to Know”.

Spiritual Preparation:

- Invite a prayer partner into your preparation journey.

- In your own community, spend some time with another Believer who is different from you – Learn to listen and ask questions that are important to them.
- Pick a time to fast and pray for your trip.
- There is much spiritual warfare in the MS Delta – Read Ephesians 6 each day and practice “Putting on the armor of God”

Physical Preparation:

- We walk a lot in Jonestown! If you are not used to this, it would be beneficial to begin walking a little each day.
- Be aware of the weather conditions (especially in the summer) – We work outside the majority of the time – Prepare by drinking plenty of fluids each day (hopefully you’re doing that anyway)
- Practice paying attention to your complaining – I know this sounds silly, but a positive and faith-filled attitude is vital to a successful mission experience! (especially when its 100 degrees outside!)

Cultural Preparation:

- Time looks different here – the value is placed on relationships instead of doing tasks – It’s not wrong, it’s just different. Be aware of any pre-conceived judgements you may have in your heart and ask the Holy Spirit to give you grace and patience.
- Communication is different here – Jonestown says “hello” by honking their horns. Literally! As we walk about and this occurs, just smile and wave back. Begin paying attention to how differently people communicate in your own town. Practice embracing this instead of resisting.
- “Desperate people do desperate things” – You will see many desperate people here living lifestyles that are most likely completely opposite from yours. Remember that they simply want to be loved and seen, not feared and rejected. One way to prepare for this is by placing yourself around “desperate” people (obviously in a safe context). Perhaps there is a local ministry in your area that you could serve with – Practice loving instead of fearing.

Small Group Questions:

1. Pick one of the four Scriptures above to discuss. What type of preparation is the author addressing? What does preparation look like in this passage? What might have happened if preparation didn’t occur? How can you apply this to your own life? How can you apply this to your Short-term mission trip to Jonestown?
2. “Prepare/Work as if it depends upon you; Pray as if it depends upon God” – What do you think this quote is saying? How can you apply this to your mission trip team?

3. Out of the 3 preparation areas listed, which one might be the most challenging for you? Which one might cause the most hesitation or fear? Why is that? Discuss it with your mission trip team.

What will you do to prepare in this area?