

SEND RESOURCES

CARING

FOR RETURNING SENT ONES



SUPPORTING



PARTNERING



SENDING

CARING FOR RETURNING SENT ONES

When we send out the troops, they're going to come back affected by the front lines. Here are some questions to think through in preparation for their return.

Planning

- What will their needs be as they arrive back?
- What are their expectations of the church meeting those needs?
- What are your expectations for them? Have you communicated with them? How will you hold them accountable?
- Who will greet them at the airport? How will you welcome them?
- Can you provide a meal for them upon arrival?
- How will you help find them a place to live?
- How will you provide opportunities for them to report to the church what God has done in and through them? How will you celebrate?
- How can you leverage them in such a way that they encourage everyone in your church to be on mission rather than seeing only the missionaries as the ones fulfilling the church's mission?
- Will you provide debriefing for them as they re-enter American culture?
- What is your plan for debriefing? Have you shared it with them?
- Who at their mission agency can you communicate with about how they're doing?
- What measure of financial help can you provide?
- What will you do if they need counseling?
- How can you help them to recover from physical illness and fatigue?
- What are your recommended steps for helping them become active in the church's local mission again?
- How can you love their children and help them transition from one culture to another?
- How can you involve the entire church to help?

Presence

- Who will take the lead in helping them through the sense of isolation common to re-entry culture shock?
- What resources/training do you need to debrief them effectively?
- Can they be completely honest with you? How will you assure them?

- Are you familiar with reverse culture shock?
- Are you prepared to grieve with them over the losses they feel?
- How will you respond if there has been moral failure?
- How will you address marital problems that have festered?
- How will you discuss traumatic experiences?
- What will you do if they are not open with you?
- How will you help them get involved in church community among people who aren't familiar or interested in their lifestyle or ministry?

Provision

- What are their transportation needs?
- What are their housing needs?
- What are their communication needs (phone, Internet, etc.)?
- What are their children's educational needs?
- What is their mission agency providing? What are they not providing? How can you fill in the gap?
- Do they need help finding another job? Will there be a gap in income?
- What would they like in their pantry upon arrival from hours of exhausting travel?
- Do you understand that furlough is not vacation? How can you help them take a vacation for deep rest and recovery?

Recommended Resources

Re-entry culture shock:

- Neal Pirolo, *The Reentry Team: Caring for Your Returning Missionaries*
- Peter Jordan, *Re-Entry: Making the Transition from Missions to Life at Home*
- Marion Knell, *Burn-Up or Splash Down: Surviving the Culture Shock of ReEntry*
- Craig Storti, *The Art of Coming Home*

Missionary perspective:

- Thomas Hale & Gene Daniels, *On Being a Missionary*
- William Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*
- David C. Pollock & Ruth E. Van Reken, *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds*

THANKS TO UPSTREAM COLLECTIVE FOR THE USE OF THIS ARTICLE