

'Do it Well'
Mission Toolkit



Thinking of Going?

BOOKLET 1

Seeks to help you ask the questions you might not have thought of, and to give you the 'big picture' of short-term mission teams.

'Do It Well' at a Glance

Stage 1: Exploration

- Do you know what the Bible says about mission?
- Are you clear what short-term mission is about?
- Have you thought about planning, training, support and follow-up?

'Do it Well' Booklet 1

Thinking of Going



Stage 2: Preparation

- Building church support
- Building connections with people overseas
- Recruiting team leaders and members
- Practical planning

'Do it Well' Booklet 2

Doing the Groundwork



Stage 3: The Team

- Team-building
- Team training
- Supporting your team
- Travelling and working overseas

'Do it Well' Booklet 3

Ready, Steady, Go

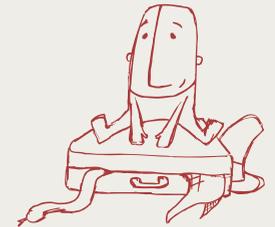


Stage 4: Home Again

- Returning to your own culture
- Reporting back
- Continuing your mission involvement

'Do it Well' Booklet 4

Finishing Well



At Any Stage:

- Need extra help and inspiration?
- Want to know who to contact?

'Do it Well' Booklet 5

Resources & Links



"The Mission Involvement Committee of the Board of Mission Overseas acknowledges with gratitude the considerable time, energy and thought given by Dr Deborah Ford in gathering and writing the material contained in this toolkit, and for the helpful advice and guidance given by the members of the Toolkit Working Group."

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Congratulations!

The fact that you're reading this booklet shows that you're already concerned about playing your part in world mission. Short-term mission is one of the most exciting and fastest-growing movements in the Church today and, with developments in travel and technology, the rest of the world is no more than a few hours' flight or a text message away. More than ever, congregations are taking an active role in sending and equipping teams for Christian service across the globe and that's good news in more than one sense of the word. Mission is no longer the preserve of 'the mission board' or of 'special people' called 'missionaries'; it's opening up to all of us, just as God intended.

'Do It Well' has been developed as a resource to help ministers, congregational leaders and mission activists who may be considering sending a team overseas to engage in short-term mission. The decision to take a team of people overseas is a serious one which affects many people. We encourage you to make it responsibly, wisely, purposefully and prayerfully.

We pray that these 'Do It Well' materials will encourage you as you follow your call to mission, and help you to send short-term overseas teams out safely, effectively and well, to the glory of the One whose Mission and Church it is.



Notes:

You won't find an exhaustive list of all the issues that might be encountered, but the 'Do It Well' series of booklets will help you in the process of deciding whether or not you should send a team overseas. They will also help you in the planning and preparations required before going; in working as a team while overseas; and in making the most of your visit by following up afterwards with your overseas partners and taking time to reflect on and learn from the whole experience.

- This first 'Do It Well' booklet, **'Thinking of Going'**, seeks to help you ask the questions you just might not have thought of, and to give you the 'big picture' of short-term mission teams.
- Booklet 2, **'Doing the Groundwork'**, looks at getting church support, connecting with people overseas, recruiting teams, and practical planning issues.
- Booklet 3, **'Ready, Steady, Go'**, covers all aspects of team preparation, training and going.
- Booklet 4, **'Finishing Well'**, reminds us that coming home can bring its own challenges, and asks how short-term mission can be turned into long-term mission interest in our congregations.
- Booklet 5, **'Resources and Links'**, offers further reading and useful contacts for every stage in the process.

Thought!

Each booklet can be read separately, or combined in any order, according to your particular needs. Read them as leaders, or use the material with your teams in preparation and training sessions.

And don't forget to check for up-to-date information and links on our web-site:

www.pcimissionoverseas.org

To go or not to go?

Before committing your congregation to send a short-term team overseas, it is always best to keep an open mind on God's will in mission and to consider carefully and prayerfully the following key questions:

Why mission?

It may sound obvious, but before you get into the what, where and when of your team planning, you'd better stop and consider just why you're doing all this. The reasons, fundamentally, are these:

- God is a missionary God. He's not a remote, impersonal deity, but a personal, relational, sharing God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Trinity, unity and community. From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures show Him reaching out to the world He loves in creation, salvation and redemption. His people are to be relational people, sharing people, people who reach out to His world in love.
- Mission basically means 'sending', and God is a sending God. He set apart His people Israel to be witnesses to the nations round about them; He sent prophets and teachers; He sent His Son Jesus Christ; He sent the Holy Spirit; and now the Son sends us, the Church, out into the world, just as He Himself was sent.



Mission is in your spiritual DNA. Mission is for every believer, for the whole body of Christ, not just for 'the full-time professionals.' To be a Christian is to be a missionary, a 'sent one.' (John 20:21; Acts 1:8).

- The Bible is a missionary book. Not just the Great Commission, not just even the New Testament, but the whole of the Scriptures tell the 'big story' of God's sending activity, His mission: His plan to reconcile the world - all things, all peoples, all nations, all powers - unto Himself in Jesus Christ, not counting people's sins against them. (Col. 1:20; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). We - the Church - are called as Christ's ambassadors. God has chosen to make His appeal to the world through us. (2 Cor. 5:19).

This 'Good News' of repentance, forgiveness and the coming of God's Kingdom is to be proclaimed in both word and deed (Luke 4:18-19); in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the very ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The call continues until every people-group in the world has heard, (Matt. 24:14; 28:19), and worshippers of Jesus are gathered from every tribe and language and nation (Rev. 5:9). Mission is not an option, to consider; it's an imperative, to obey.

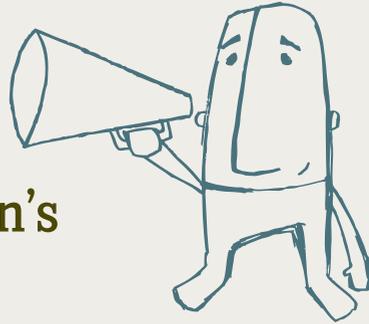


"I have lots of questions about where I feel God is calling me to go on my mission trip."

God is a missionary God, commanding His people to go to all nations and peoples to share the Good News of repentance, forgiveness and the coming of His Kingdom.

Mission is not an option to consider - it's an imperative to obey.

What's your congregation's sense of call?



While Jesus commands us, as His disciples, to go out into all the world, beginning at Jerusalem, moving out into Judea, on into Samaria and, finally, to the very ends of the earth, we all need to consider where it is God is calling us to serve Him – and to do so willingly. As we look through the Bible, we see that God calls different people to serve Him in different places at different times. For instance, Jonah was reluctant to go where God wanted him to serve. On the other hand, while Paul felt that he should go to Ephesus on his second missionary journey, God did not provide that opportunity. Indeed, Paul felt compelled in the end to bypass Ephesus (though he later returned there to stay for two years). In Mark 5, there is an example of a man who offered, indeed begged, to go with Jesus and serve Him. Jesus did not let him and replied to him: “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you.” When the man did this, people were amazed at what Jesus had done for him.

It is not disobedience, nor should it be a disappointment to us, if we are called to serve (at least to begin with) in our home area, in what is our ‘Jerusalem’. It may well be that this is where we are called to engage in God’s mission, not just as a beginning, but for the duration of our mission journey. Put simply, it may be that we are being called to see the importance of mission at home and to serve as missionaries where we currently live and work.

Notes:

What's the cost?



Jesus warned those who would follow Him to ‘count the cost’. There is a considerable financial cost involved in short-term overseas mission trips, although the advent of cheap travel means that many congregations can raise the required funds relatively easily. There may, however, be other ‘hidden costs’ which you also need to factor into your decision on whether to go or not to go:

There is an inevitable element of risk: travel, health, safety, security and so on. There may be some emotional cost to the participants – leaving friends and family, facing unfamiliar and possibly less than comfortable conditions – and to the senders who sacrifice to let them go. Considerable time will have to be invested, particularly by leaders, in the planning and risk assessment process.

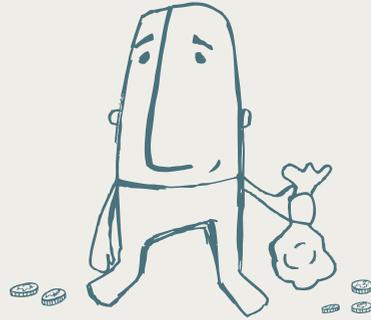
- The cost to work at home. Are there mission challenges at home that are crying out for workers, albeit in a less glamorous, less exotic location? It is in some ways far easier to share the Gospel in a language and context that is familiar to you, without the difficulty and expense of long-distance travel and the challenge of adjusting to a strange climate, food and culture. Remember, you may not need to travel too far from home to encounter people of a different culture, nationality or religion in this day and age.

Thought!

God calls different people to serve Him in different places at different times: some to serve in other lands; others to engage in mission in their own neighbourhood, or some where not far from home.

If you're considering sending a mission team overseas, be sure God is calling you to go. Beware of going merely because others are, or it seems to be more glamorous than mission at home.

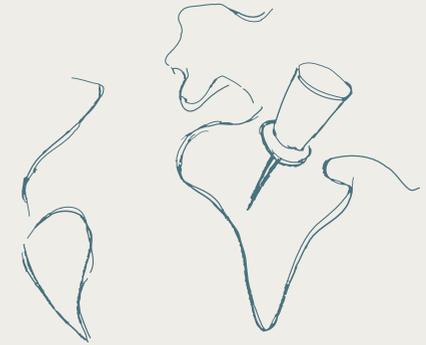
What's the cost?



- In today's borderless world, mission is no longer geographically defined; there can be real mission challenges right here at home. That's not to knock going overseas at all – but are you going overseas because God is calling you to go?
- The high cost of and relatively low return on sending 10 workers overseas for two weeks at, say, £1,000 each. In purely practical terms, much more might be achieved locally by writing out a cheque for £10,000, although this lacks a certain something in terms of relationship!
- The cost of investing in relationships overseas: are you really willing to maintain friendships and build lasting partnerships, or is this just 'a quick foreign fix'?
- The considerable cost to the hosts – whether it be missionaries forgoing their usual schedule and sacrificing family time to take you round, or local Christians killing the only goat they possess to welcome you! They too will be sacrificing time, money, and local resources, and they too may well be taken out of their comfort zones.
- The environmental cost, particularly when flying long-distance.



What's the point of your visit?



Since the aim is *Christian mission*, it follows that any short-term trip should have a clearly-defined and specifically *Christian* purpose. There should be an emphasis on the Biblical basis for mission and on Biblical standards in all that you are and all that you do. A clear purpose is vital if you are to be able to assess whether or not you're being called to go overseas as a team at all. Knowing the purpose of your team's visit will also be crucial in the planning, preparation, and carrying out of the visit, as well as in following it up afterwards. Legitimate 'mission-purposes' will indicate clearly who are to be the 'recipients' or 'beneficiaries' of God's mission as carried out by your team.

The Bible suggests several purposes for short-term mission:

- The urgent need that people hear and respond to the Gospel (Luke 10:1-2).
- To be 'links in the chain' in an ongoing process of salvation (John 4:34-38).
- To evangelise, disciple and encourage believers (Paul's missionary journeys).
- To bring an outsider's perspective (Moses, Amos, Jonah).



Knowing why you are going overseas is crucial in the planning, preparation and carrying out of your mission, as well as in following it up afterwards.

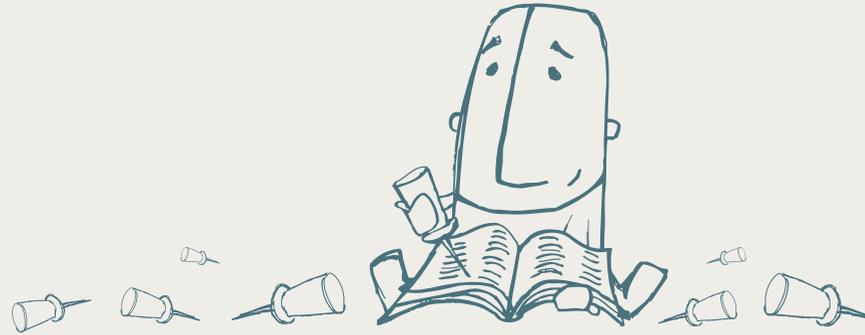
Take time to count all the costs involved. Be sure you have a clear purpose for your visit overseas and that everyone who is going understands it.

What's the point of your visit?

- To provide a specialised service or ministry (Barnabas, Paul, Epaphroditus).
- An apprenticeship, in which Jesus' disciples grow in faith and ministry (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-24; Mark 6:37-44; Acts 16:3).¹

At the same time, there are obvious limits to what a short-termer can do, without any real grasp of language or culture, or any chance to build lasting relationships. So, short-term mission is best seen as complementing, rather than substituting for, long-term ministry.

Jesus' mission was 'not to be served, but to serve.' (Matt. 20:28). This means that your short-term mission work should be primarily geared to the needs of your hosts overseas, and only entered into upon their invitation. Considerable time will need to be taken to develop relationships with your potential hosts. Their perspectives and priorities are paramount, and everything you do must be planned in mutual partnership with them at every stage. The team's purpose and outcomes must be mutually agreed, understood and accepted. You should seek to do things which fit your hosts' long-term missionary needs and objectives, in a way which suits the local culture (not necessarily the same as it's done here!).



While it is God's mission, not our mission, and while we seek to serve, rather than be served, personal spiritual growth and team-building are also legitimate Biblical outcomes in a short-term team ministry.

As well as 'doing', you should also make time for 'being', 'receiving', 'listening' and 'learning.' Primarily, you will seek to listen and learn from God, who will have much to teach you about His heart and purposes through your exposure to a new culture and context.

You will certainly have much to learn from fellowship with national Christians and their experience of God. You may also learn much from your fellow team-members, and, quite likely, you will learn much about yourselves. Sending a short-term team overseas will also help your congregation explore and develop its missionary vision and responsibility.

However, while discipleship-training and personal and even congregational growth and renewal are additional blessings of a short-term mission trip, the primary purpose should always be service. As you seek God's purposes and trust in His power, to what particular form of service is your team called? In what specific ways will your visit positively affect the lives and faith of those whom you seek to serve?



Short-term teams are a great way to engage in God's mission but should always be seen as complementing, rather than substituting for, long-term cross-cultural ministry. Short-term mission should focus on the needs of overseas hosts, and only entered into at their invitation.

Sending a team overseas will help your congregation explore and develop its missionary vision and responsibility - at home, as well as overseas.

Who needs to be involved?

When planning a short-term overseas mission team, the natural focus tends to be on 'those who go,' but remember that short-term mission, just like long-term mission, should be seen primarily as a partnership involving:

- God
- The Team
- Individual missionaries, national Christians and the local church overseas: your 'hosts'
- The facilitating body (Board of Mission Overseas [BMO], mission agency, Kirk Session, Mission Committee or Presbytery) and the team's congregation, families and friends: your 'senders.'

Each partner should be consulted and informed at every stage in the process.

As Paul the great missionary taught, mission can't be done, and missionaries can't 'go,' unless they're 'sent' (Rom. 10:13-15). External facilitating bodies – such as BMO or a mission agency – can share long experience in a number of different contexts, offer helpful advice and provide useful contacts – do make use of them, rather than going it all alone! The 'senders' closer to home – the congregations, families and friends, who support you financially, prayerfully and practically – are also vital links within the short-term mission 'chain'.



Notes:

Senders, in fact, are equal participants with hosts and team members in the work of mission (Matt. 10:40-41; III John 6a-8), and all three groups should be equally involved in all the decision-making.

Before starting out, you should, therefore, consider whether this is something which could feasibly inspire and involve your congregation as a whole, and particularly your church leadership.² The trip will need to be owned by the whole congregation and not just by a few enthusiasts. At the same time, you will need trusted people who will 'champion' the trip and devote time and energy to initiating and developing the overseas link and supporting the team.³ They will need to be enthusiastic organisers and inspirers, capable of communicating vision, sustaining momentum, and 'making it happen!'

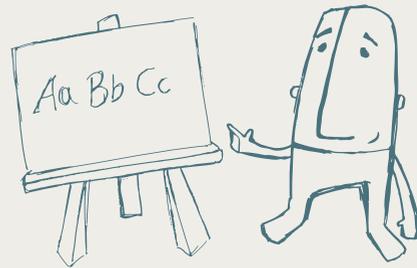
It's also worth thinking through whether there is potential for or benefit in partnering with others at the home end; for example, could you join with another congregation, group, presbytery or even a denomination to form an overseas team, rather than 'going it alone?'

Thought!

Short-term mission overseas is a partnership between team members, hosts and senders. All are equal, vital participants, and all need to be actively involved in decision-making.

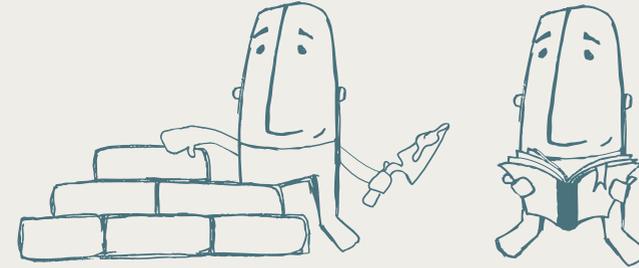
Note particularly that any overseas trip needs to be owned by the congregation as a whole and not just by a few enthusiasts.

What's involved?



Effective short-term mission is not simply confined to the time overseas but also involves preparation and follow-up. 'Do It Well' Booklets 2 and 3, 'Doing the Groundwork', and 'Ready, Steady, Go', cover all the practicalities of trip and team planning, but for now, as you consider whether 'to go or not to go', bear in mind the following key points:

- Ideally, the preparation process should begin at least 10 to 12 months before the team hopes to go.
- Considerable time must be given to developing a relationship with your hosts and to working out the details of the trip in mutual partnership.
- Timing, travel plans, type of ministry to be engaged in, logistics, and a daily team programme will all need to be sorted out.
- At the home end, thought will have to be given to publicity, selection of leaders and participants and fund-raising.
- People will be needed to provide practical, emotional, prayerful and spiritual support before the team goes, while they're away and once they're home again. The Bible lays great emphasis on the importance of those who 'send' as well as those who 'go' in mission. See Booklet 2, 'Doing the Groundwork', for more information on this vital sending role.



- As well as information about the practicalities, you will need to provide participants with an opportunity to think through what Biblical mission means, some cross-cultural orientation, and regular sessions for team-building and spiritual and ministry preparation.
- Those who are going to send you will also need guidance, with regular communication and prayer updates provided before, during and after the trip.
- Coming home from a strange culture, however well things have gone, can raise adjustment issues, and therefore it is vital that team members receive an adequate debriefing – time to talk and be listened to – when they return.
- You will want to tell the people back home just how things went, and reporting back to the church on your mission experience is a vital Biblical principle (Luke 10:17-19; Acts 14:27-28).
- You will also want to maintain contact with your hosts.
- Short-term mission is a great opportunity to enhance personal and congregational missionary vision. You will want to build on this momentum.



Taking time to properly prepare an overseas mission team is as important as the period the team will spend overseas.

'Do It Well' Booklets 2 and 3, 'Doing the Groundwork' and 'Ready, Steady, Go', cover the practicalities that need to be considered in planning, preparing and going overseas.

Summing it all up:

The big picture of short-term mission

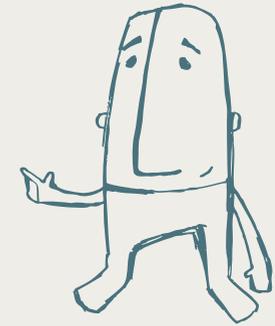
- Short-term overseas teams are a great way to serve God in His mission, but they should always be seen as complementing, rather than substituting for, long-term cross-cultural ministry.
- There is a cost involved, and your decision to go 'overseas' should be weighed against the mission demands of your own locality and what God is saying to you individually and congregationally.
- Both as individuals and as teams you can, and should, learn much. However, your short-term teams should always be primarily geared towards the needs and cultural methods of your hosts.
- Short-term mission is a partnership between team members, hosts and senders. All are equal, vital participants, and all need to be engaged in the decision-making process.
- Short-term mission is a process: not just the time away, but also lengthy preparation and careful follow-up.
- Short-term mission is an ideal opportunity to expand your vision for mission and develop lasting friendships and relationships across cultures. It brings great blessing, but also much responsibility.

"A short-term mission trip is successful when people say, 'Look what God did,' rather than 'Look what we did!'"

⁴ *"Jesus' mission was not about giving His disciples the time of their lives...Jesus' mission was about then receivers, not about the goers."*⁵



Over to you



Everyone inevitably has mixed motives, but answering the questions below might help refine your thinking about whether or not you should send a team at this particular time:

- Can you give a Biblical rationale for what you're doing? Have you taken the time to examine the Biblical mandate and understanding of mission - found on every page of the Scriptures, not just in a few familiar texts?
- Are you convinced that mission is the call of every believer, not just 'the full-time professionals'? Have you got, potentially, the right mix of 'real people' for the team?
- Are you aware that 'the mission team' must include not just 'goers,' but also 'hosts' and 'senders'? Is each entity in place, and is there sufficient time and energy to invest on all sides in developing strong, supportive relationships and in committing to a lengthy planning and follow-up process?
- Do you have a clear, mutually agreed purpose in view for the team? Are you able to distinguish between primary goals (service) and secondary benefits (team-building, spiritual growth, enlarged worldview, congregational renewal)?
- Why, particularly, are you going overseas, rather than on a short-term mission at home?



"To go or not to go?"

You can only answer this question after full discussion with all involved, at home and overseas; careful consideration of all factors, for and against; and prayerfully seeking God's guidance.

Don't rush your decision, take your time! It's better to wait a year or more and get it right, than to go ahead at short-notice and risk being ill-prepared or missing God's purpose for your team.

Over to you

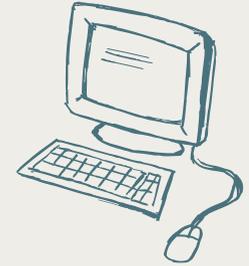
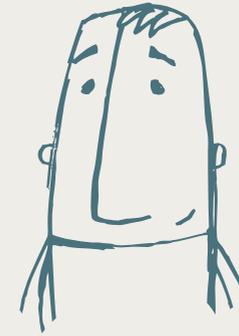
- Have you considered the cost – financial, practical, emotional and spiritual – of going?
- How does this team fit into your congregation's overall mission strategy?
- A very subjective point, this one, but is there a sense of spiritual 'fit' and assurance about your taking this particular step at this particular time? Have you invested sufficiently in prayer and do you have confirmation and support from your church leadership? There is, of course, a sense of spiritual urgency about mission: eternal destinies are at stake. At the same time, in today's proactive, 'have a go' society, you need to be sure that you're not just jumping onto the latest bandwagon, but that you're listening, waiting, and keeping in step with the God of mission, who urges His disciples to 'wait' until they are clothed with power from on high. The only "non-negotiable 'must'" ⁶ in the decision whether 'to go or not to go' is the Holy Spirit:

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard me speak about." (Acts 1:4).

"If your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here." (Exodus 33:15).



References

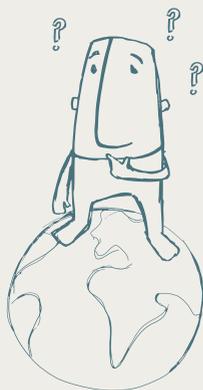


- ¹ Adapted, with additions, from Ingleby, Jonathan, 'Theological Reflections on Short-Term Mission,' in Proceedings of a Meeting of Christian Short-Term Overseas Programme Organisers, Tear Fund, 1992, 3-7.
- ² Adapted from 'Getting a Church Partnership Going,' in Jeffrey, Tim, with Steve Chalke, Connect! (Carlisle: Authentic Media, 2003), 106.
- ³ Ibid., 108.
- ⁴ Adapted from Fann, Anne-Geri, and Greg Taylor, How to Get Ready for Short-Term Missions: The Ultimate Guide for Sponsors, Parents and Those Who Go (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 44.
- ⁵ Adapted from Slimbach, Richard, 'First Do No Harm'. Evangelical Missions Quarterly, October 2000. www.bcg.gospelcom.net/emqonline (accessed 13th June 2007).
- ⁶ Peterson, Roger, Gordon Aeschlimann, and Wayne R. Sneed, Maximum Impact Short-Term Mission: The God-Commanded Repetitive Deployment of Swift, Temporary Non-Professional Missionaries (Minneapolis: STEMPress, 2003), 52.



Whatever your involvement in God's mission, your aim should always be to 'Do It Well'! This means taking time to reflect on your relationship with God, discern His call, and seek His guidance and equipping as you prepare for the mission He calls you to do.

Now you have read this first booklet in the 'Do It Well' Mission Toolkit, please take time to read the other booklets in the series.



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- 2. Doing the Groundwork**
- 3. Ready, Steady, Go**
- 4. Finishing Well**
- 5. Resources & Links**


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