

short - term service

the next step

If you are considering STS, you need to think through what you have to offer, why you want to go, and where. You also need to be aware of the wide range of options available to you no matter what your age or experience.

The STS Directory, published every year by Christian Vocations, contains details of many projects and short-term opportunities from one week to two years in places as far apart as Birmingham and Bangkok. Every entry is indexed by type of work, duration, and location, making it easy to find the information you need. It also contains valuable advice to help you work through your motives and pinpoint the type of opportunity that would be right for you. It also includes reports and testimonies from people who've already been on short-term programmes so that you can get an idea of what it could be like for you.

Call us now for your copy.

Further copies of Guideline leaflets can be obtained from Christian Vocations online and at the address below.

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One of the most exciting developments in mission in recent years has been the growth of short-term service (STS). Churches and para-church agencies not only see this aspect of mission enterprise as important, but essential to fulfilling their aims. Some opportunities today are by nature short-term, hence offering greater flexibility. Many nations of the world are more accessible than they've ever been before, and new opportunities are opening up all the time.

the purpose

1. To fill some short-term personnel needs.

STS enables mission and other Christian organisations to recruit people who will undertake roles within specific programmes, for example, construction projects or evangelistic campaigns.

2. To see and feel the needs around the world and perhaps even test a call to long-term service.

STS gives experience in UK or overseas mission first-hand. Whilst there are some limits to what can be achieved in a short time (language and culture cannot be picked up as easily as airline tickets)

a significant contribution can be made by those who serve short-term.

3. To stimulate you and your home church to greater mission concern and action.

Short-termers can often influence their home churches to become more involved in mission as they share about their experiences.

releasing God's people into God's work

the challenge

STS brings you face to face with many of the major issues in mission today whether in the UK or overseas. To some extent there will be an adjustment to new surroundings or another culture even if it's only a change of food. You'll begin to understand some of the challenges facing career missionaries. For them it is vital to be immersed in the cultures of their adopted countries in order to communicate in a relevant way. Sensitivity and humility are pre-requisites for the short-termer.

Working with other Christians sounds like heaven, but it can often feel like something quite different! STS, like full-time service, demands patience, understanding, a servant attitude, and a determination to make love real - no matter what the cost to personal pride. Mission agencies are not in the business of providing exotic holidays for the untrained to do the unnecessary. Neither is STS cheap missionary service. In fact, it's comparatively more expensive than long-term service, and most short-termers will need to face the challenge of trusting God to provide for their needs, fares, expenses, and support.

No Christian service should be undertaken in isolation. While "on the field," you will need committed prayer partners to pray regularly and persistently with you and for you. Being at the sharp end demands faithful prayer support as well as a personal commitment to pray through every situation.

the benefits

- **An expanded vision for mission and a deeper appreciation for long-term workers.**
 You should return from your STS with a greater understanding of the work that's being done among the unreached millions around the world. You may have a particular vision for your place of service or perhaps for an entire continent. You will also have gained valuable insight into the problems faced by missionaries every day.
- **A greater appreciation of the value of prayer.**
 During your STS you will be in a position where prayer support is extremely vital. Prayer for mission will never be quite the same again, and those who return from STS often become a catalyst for more prayer for mission. Experience inevitably adds a different dimension to it.
- **Increased knowledge about a country, its people, their needs, and the opportunities.**
 STS is very much a time of discovery. You will see what it is like to work with a particular mission, how it operates and why they 'do' ministry in the way that they do. All are important experiences for anyone who is considering long-term mission. And STS enables the mission to find out more about you which is very useful if you later apply for a permanent position.
- **Discovering more about yourself and about your Lord.**
 These are perhaps the most lasting benefits that you will gain. How you work in a team, how you react under pressure, how to maintain a spiritual walk when your programme is packed to capacity; this is all valuable self-knowledge which should lead to spiritual growth.