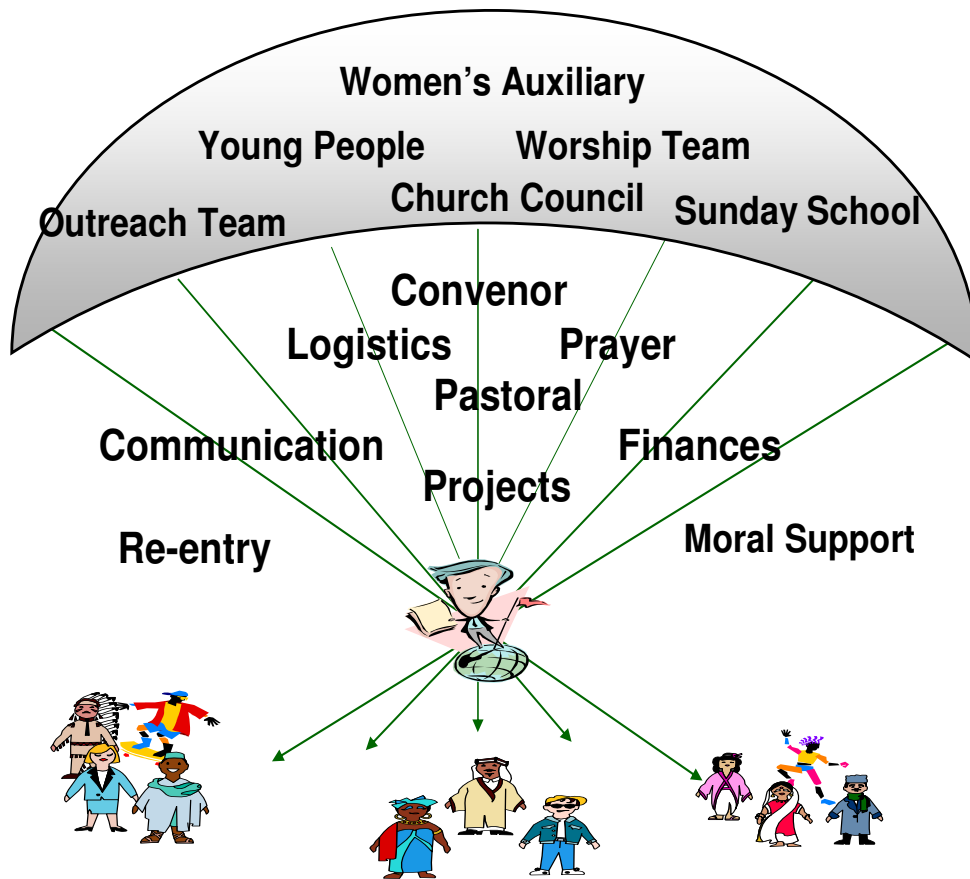


SUPPORT TEAM



THE SUPPORT TEAM

Definition

*A support team is a group of believers, individuals or families that assumes the responsibility of supporting **one specific worker or family**.*

1. Each team member has **specific** functions and is accountable to the other members for the performing assigned tasks. This ensures that the team operates effectively.
2. The support team meets regularly as required. (Once a month initially is recommended).
3. The support team encompasses **nine functions**. One person may perform more than one function, if this does not detrimentally affect any other function.
4. The support team is **sacrificial** in its attitude and practice, because its task is to **serve** and to **support**.
5. The support team is **supportive**; it is not directive, nor prescriptive, nor judgmental. The aim of the team is to offer succour to the worker and the church. Other structures within the sending church and/or the missionary agency are available to guide the worker as to strategy, and in the other formal aspects of his/her ministry.
6. The support team is **fluid** and **adaptable** in its functioning, since it has to keep abreast of changes in the circumstances of the worker and the church. Few circumstances change as quickly as the mission field. The team must be ready to handle sudden changes effectively. The activity level of the team may vary between being extremely busy and placidly quiet, as it closely mirrors the life of the worker.
7. The support team must **not** try to usurp the role of the mission agency.
8. Each function sector in the support team must have a **co-ordinator** with a team that works with him/her to perform the various tasks.
9. The support team should acquire the background knowledge so as to share the worker's passion for the people among whom he/she works.



The co-ordinator

Responsibilities

1. He/she is the leader of the support team.
2. While the rest of the team is involved in the different aspects of the worker's life, the co-ordinator focuses on mobilising and motivating the team members.
3. The co-ordinator is the chairperson for meetings of the support team.
4. He/she facilitates and co-ordinates co-operation between team members.
5. He/she encourages the team members to be accountable and responsible in fulfilling their tasks.
6. He/she is responsible for the vision of and the unity within the support team.
7. He/she motivates the support team members regarding their own spiritual growth, knowledge and participation in missions.
8. He/she is responsible for continuous training of team members and equipping them in new and specific aspects.
9. He/she makes contact with and represents the worker on the missions committee, the missionary agency and in other organisations involved.
10. He/she may act as the spokesperson both on behalf of the support team and the worker at church and other meetings. If he/she is not a good public speaker, any other member of the team can act as the spokesperson.
11. The support team **sensitively** ensures that the worker is sufficiently supported so that he/she can effectively apply his/her time and energy to the ministry. A worker that is not well looked after carries a heavy extra burden.
12. The co-ordinator serves under the leadership of the local church.
13. Before a worker leaves for the field the co-ordinator together with the worker, arranges the commissioning service with the pastor.



Moral support

Phil. 2:25,30 & 4:10

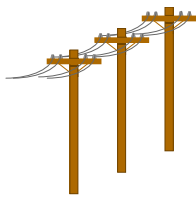
*The Philippian church sent Epaphroditus to Paul to attend to his needs. Paul appreciated him as a **fellow-worker** and **fellow-soldier** who risked his life to give Paul the help that other people could not give.*

Paul rejoiced in the way the Philippian church showed their concern for him. (4:10)

- † Although moral support cannot be defined or measured, it is an indispensable part of the support system.
- † The person responsible for moral support is the worker's close friend, the person who understands the worker's heart and is his advocate.

Responsibilities

10. Moral support is the **foundation** of the sending and supporting process. Mobilisation of moral support has two aims:
 - a) to give moral support to the worker and his/her family,
 - b) to broaden the moral support base within the Christian community who sent the worker.
11. Always be ready to inspire the worker with courage and hope.
12. "Do it simply - and simply do it".
13. He/she is a non-judgemental supporter, a good friend with whom the worker can share his feelings.
14. His/her task includes the expansion of the moral support base within the church to the extent that the church can say and experience that: "*He/she is our worker ... and we praise the Lord for his/her ministry.*"
15. He/she is focused on supporting the worker and his/her family during times of personal or ministry crises. (Is. 42:3)
16. He/she remembers the birthdays and other anniversaries of the worker and his family.
17. He/she continuously reminds the worker to focus on his/her calling. When the worker becomes discouraged, it is his/her task to encourage the worker to pursue his/her vision with new vigour.
18. He/she should be at the airport when the worker leaves for the field; be there when he/she returns home.
19. He/she should acquire the background knowledge so as to share the worker's passion for the people among whom he/she works.



Communication

Rom. 16:22

Paul needed assistance in writing his letters.

- † Be to the worker what Tertius was to Paul - his scribe, the person who assists in spreading information.

Responsibilities

1. The communication co-ordinator must have access to e-mail.
2. This function mainly is to communicate to church members the information on the work, which they want and need to know.
3. He/she is the link between the worker and the church.
4. This task is of the utmost importance, since it is difficult for each worker to keep all his/her supporters informed so that they may feel involved in the work.
5. He/she is responsible for all formal contact with the worker by letters, fax, e-mail or telephone.
6. All the feedback to the worker from the different team members should be channelled through this person.
7. He/she must make it unnecessary for the worker to communicate personally with every person on the team. All communication happens through the communication co-ordinator.
8. He/she ensures that all the sending churches and other supporters **are kept informed** of the work.
9. He/she must establish communication with all support team members and make sure that all information from the worker is passed on to them.
10. He/she duplicates and distributes the worker's newsletter. The writing of the newsletter must be negotiated.

11. He/she collects personal letters and makes up a parcel to send along when someone goes to visit the worker.
12. This member may do the secretarial work for the support team.
13. This ministry guides church members on how to communicate with the worker in a meaningful and responsible way. It trains other people in the importance and application of security guidelines.



Logistics

2 Tim. 4:13



Carpus in Troas kept Paul's belongings for him and made it available to him when he needed it. He was available to give practical assistance.

- ✦ Workers often leave behind them people, belongings and unfinished business that need attention while they are away.

Responsibilities:

1. Takes care of these matters on behalf of the worker as far as it is feasible.
2. Handles the care/renting/selling of property (home, car, etc.) or the storing of other belongings that are left behind.
3. Sees to personal business that needs to be taken care of (e.g. tax forms).
4. Ensures that the worker has medical provision (medical aid, insurance, etc.)
5. Handles enquiries/problems about home school programmes and/or correspondence courses for him/her.
6. Handles matters concerning tax, citizenship, and registration for referendums on behalf of the worker (and his family).
7. Takes care of children that stay behind, or elderly parents who miss their children.
8. Handles matters when someone dies, e.g. the will, air tickets, etc.
9. Obtains ministry material for the workers and sends this to the field (DVD's, Bibles).
10. Organise a visit to the worker for the support team members and other members of the church.



Finances

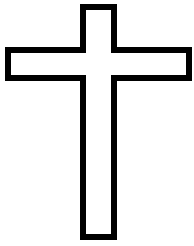
Phil. 4:10-16

The Philippians "shared in Paul's troubles". They were the only church that "shared with him in respect to giving and receiving".

They took care of his financial needs and provided what he needed.

Responsibilities:

1. Sees to it that the worker has the funds to perform his ministry.
2. Encourages church members to give and to trust the Lord for extra finances. This funding is for world evangelisation, which is God's command to every believer.
3. The funds that are generated for the functioning of the team can be deposited in a separate bank account.
4. Being creative in getting more people involved in giving, and in generating funds.
5. Encourages church members to support projects the worker launches to promote his ministry in sharing the Gospel.
6. Other churches can be approached for additional financial assistance if the sending church does not manage to provide the needed funds.
7. Financial systems already in place (as arranged by the sending church or the missionary agency) should not be changed or the control usurped.
8. Needs in the mission field can change suddenly. Provision must be made for sufficient funds in the account in order to meet unexpected emergencies.
9. Provides in advance for expenses during furlough.
10. Funds that are received are for the worker and must be used as such.
11. A financial management structure is needed in the team. The team and the worker must come to an agreement about the use of the funds.
12. Long term goals must be set in application planning. (Plan for extra home leave and for training).



Prayer

Col. 1:7, 4:12

*Epaphras was to Paul a “dear fellow-servant and faithful minister of Christ”. He was a faithful intercessor. “He is always **wrestling** in prayer for you.”*

- † Support like that of Epaphras is indispensable to the worker and his/her ministry.
- † Prayer is the most important form of support for any worker.

Responsibilities

1. This person must mobilise as many prayer partners as possible.
2. He/she encourages church members to pray diligently.
3. He/she organises prayer chains that operate regularly and committedly.
4. He/she organises a crisis prayer chain.
5. He/she compiles and distributes prayer calendars and prayer cards.
6. He/she regularly communicates prayer needs to intercessors.
7. He/she trains intercessors on how to pray for workers.
8. Mobilises Bible study /Cell groups to pray for the worker, his/her mission, and the people among whom he/she is ministering.

Re-entry



Acts 14:26-28

This indicates that Paul was heartily received back by his sending church. They welcomed him and made him feel at home. The fact that he stayed with them for a long time indicated the extent of their caring.



- † Few people realise that the adaptation to home culture on returning home is often as difficult, and sometimes more difficult, than adapting to a foreign culture.
- † For a time the main focus of the worker's life has been on being an instrument in God's hands in a foreign culture. At home he/she easily feels useless. In stead of relaxing, the furlough becomes a time of stress.
- † Permanent return from the “front lines” requires great adaptation, especially in terms of his/her career.

Responsibilities

1. This person's tasks are usually intermittent, but they are critical in the life of the worker.
2. While the worker is in the field:
 - Sends newspapers and magazines in which he/she can read about the changes on the home front: increases in prices, changes in interest rates, sports events, new leaders, new fashions, etc.
 - Finds out where the worker's interests lie and sends him/her magazines, pamphlets, etc.
 - Sends DVD's and photographs of his/her hometown, family and friends to him/her so that he/she can see the changes; also news about key people in the community and in the worker's life.
3. Before the worker returns home:
 - Discusses the worker's home leave with him/her before he/she leaves the field.
 - Arranges for transport / a vehicle for use by the worker during his home leave.
 - Arranges accommodation for permanent return as well as during furlough.
4. During furlough:
 - Arranges for the availability of sympathetic counselling.
 - Co-ordinates the worker's program while he/she is on furlough - time for a holiday to rest, time alone for retreat, appointments with church members.
 - Arranges appointments in the church, with cell /Bible Study groups, and appointments at other churches.
 - Sees that the worker gets any required medical treatment during furlough – dentistry, eye test, injections, perhaps general medical check-up (arrange together with the logistics co-ordinator).

Sources:

Serving as Senders - Neil Pirolo; The Sending Cell - World Perspectives; Home Front Handbook - Woodrow Kroll

Support Team for

AREA	WHO	ASSISTANTS
Co-ordinator <i>Leader of the team</i> <i>Motivate and inspire team members</i>		
Moral Support <i>The missionary's good friend</i> <i>Broaden moral support base in church</i>		
Communication <i>Main contact with missionary</i> <i>Keep other team members informed</i>		
Logistics <i>Handle practical matters</i> <i>Take care of Medical aid, Pension, etc.</i>		
Prayer <i>Mobilize prayer and prayer chains</i> <i>Provide intercessors with information</i>		
Finances <i>Assist with the budget</i> <i>Manage the finances</i>		
Re-entry <i>Keep the missionary informed about SA</i> <i>Co-ordinate program during furlough</i>		
Pastoral <i>Provide pastoral care on field</i> <i>Provide debriefing on home assignment</i>		
Projects <i>Help with projects on field</i>		

