

Holidays

Holidays are often one of the hardest things for mission workers to enjoy. Sometimes they are so motivated in their ministry that they feel obliged not to waste time being unproductive. Or they are so aware of their obligation to those who have given sacrificially to their financial support that they don't feel happy wasting their money on lazing around. This situation isn't helped by the general public thinking that the whole of your 12 months HA is a 'holiday'!

You deserve a holiday, just like anyone else. You've worked hard, for long hours, in difficult conditions, and you have earned some time off. And as well as deserving it, you *need* a holiday. The sort of work you're doing is draining. You need to take regular time out to recharge your batteries, recuperate from fatigue, and make some space for yourself to recover. So don't feel guilty about it.

Syzygy recommends that you take two holidays, one at the beginning and one at the end of your HA, each for a week or two, depending on how long you are back – not on how much time you think you can afford. And when we say holiday, that doesn't include conferences or retreats – they count as work! You need to get away and go somewhere you can switch off. What you do with the time is up to you. Whether you want to do some sport, lie on a beach, or go on a city break, the important thing is that you do something that you enjoy. Don't mix it with work. Leave the laptop behind. Don't take reports with you. If you can't be out of touch for a week, there's either something wrong with your organisation or with you.

Arranging a holiday can simply be a case of going to stay with friends, renting a cottage online, or going through a high street travel agent, just like anyone else would. But there are also options specially geared for Christians. There are Christian tour operators and Christians who operate hotels and holiday cottages. Oscar (<http://www.oscar.org.uk/service/logistics/comingtoug/holidays.htm>) have a list of various Christian holiday providers, including details of those who give discounts for people in full-time missions.

Holidays can be a difficult time for single people. You may not get on well enough with your family to holiday with them. Your friends may have got married, or may not be able to get time off work when you're available. So do you go on your own? That can be a very lonely experience. Alternatives include trying to arrange a group from your church, or trying to get your HA to coincide with that of other single mission workers you know, so that you can holiday together. There are also a number of Christian holiday companies which run tours on which single people are welcome, and the friendly and informal style helps you to make new friends really quickly. There are also plenty of non-Christian groups which organise holidays for singles but be careful – you might not be entirely comfortable with their programmes, so check carefully first!