

# Maintaining support while you're overseas

One of the big mistakes that many people make is to disappear off to some remote place halfway round the world, and then reappear a few weeks later only to find that people didn't really know how to support you. Now that mobile phones and computers have connected the world in a totally new way, it's almost a sin to be out of contact for more than a couple of days. For mission workers this represents a wonderful opportunity to maintain support which shouldn't be ignored.

These days there are few locations on the planet that are completely out of touch. At the very least, you should be able to pick up a signal and text a friend, even if you have to look around for a bit to get connected. Regular texts or tweet, reassure family and friends that you're still alive, and are an excellent way of getting fresh prayer behind an event or issue that's happening. Check the cost with your phone company before you go as indiscriminate texting can rack up huge bills very quickly, but a cheap alternative is often to take with you a basic unlocked handset and buy a local SIM card to put in it when you arrive.

If you're away for several weeks, updating Facebook with photos is a good way of helping people see what's going on – and if people can be visually engaged they are far more likely to be committed to it. I like to send an email out every week if I'm away for a few weeks, just so that people's memory is jogged and they don't forget to pray for me. Postcards home are old-fashioned but people still love to get them, although if you're away for only a fortnight, you'll often get home before the postcard arrives!

Another way of keeping people on board while you're away is by planning ahead: before you go sign up friends to pray for you on a specific day of the each week. Hopefully they'll put the date in their diaries, or on their phones, so they'll get a reminder. Giving them in advance specific tips on things that will need prayer ('I hate flying', 'I don't enjoy humidity', 'I'm nervous about doing drama in public') will help them to buy into your experience. And at church, appoint someone whose job it is to remind the leadership to include you in the prayers, so that you don't get overlooked.

Remember: out of sight is not necessarily out of mind!