

LETTERS TO PROSPECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS

The purpose of letter writing is to help pave the way that people are expecting your call and are introduced to your ministry. (In some cases you may want to use letter writing as your primary contact. You might do this if the individuals you want to contact live a long distance away. If that is the case, include a return-address, postage-paid envelope to return the contribution.)

Suggested content of letter to someone you know personally:

1. **Introduction.** Begin with some good opening statements (i.e., family news, ask how they are doing, tell how school has been going, etc.). Make the letter warm and personal.
2. **Presenting your ministry.** Explain the opportunity you have, emphasize your call to this ministry, and share your excitement to be involved. Share about the specifics of the work in which you will be involved and the practical training you are receiving.
3. **Present your need.** Explain your need for financial and prayer support to be involved in this specific ministry. Explain the concept of a support team and the accountability system.
4. **Follow up plans.** Tell the person you are writing about any plans you have to call them or visit them to discuss your letter in person. You may also want to include a commitment to write after the trip is over to share what the Lord did.

Whenever possible, follow letters with a personal call or visit. However, if you do not plan to do either, omit this section from your letter. If you do tell someone you are going to call, remember to call promptly as explained in your letter. Keep an accurate record of letters sent, dates, times and other information you need to follow up.

5. **Closing.** Finish your letter with a personal touch, and express appreciation for the friendship of the person you are writing.

After you mail the letters (mail around 25 at a time) you should call the prospective contributors in seven days.

Special hints for your letters:

1. You can hand-write or type personal letters depending on how many you want to send.
2. Write correctly. Incorrect use of the English language can be offensive.
3. If you are sending more than about 25 letters, you may want to consider using a form letter. Be sure that it does not lose its personal touch.
4. Write simply and clearly. Vague details and muddled paragraphs can prevent a letter from communicating effectively.
5. Write positively. Negative attitudes or criticisms of other groups can defeat a person faster than any other problem. Strive to give your letter a pleasant, joyful tone (Phil. 4:4). You want your reader to be encouraged by the work the Lord is doing in your life.
6. Be specific about the amount you need. Tell them the total amount and give them an amount to consider. Here is a three-program strategy that might help:
 - a. Ask most prospects for small amounts (\$15-\$50).
 - b. Ask several prospects to consider giving a slightly larger amount (\$50-\$100).
 - c. Ask a few prospects to consider giving a larger amount (\$100, \$200 or \$300).

7. Write personally. Personal letters say that the individual receiving the letter is important. They say fundraising is important enough to you to give special time to your efforts.

(Mass-produced letters when done very carefully and with special guidelines will work. BUT the general rule is to be personal. A form letter can give a negative impression. Be very careful! Hand-sign each form letter and perhaps add a few personal handwritten lines.)

8. Be clear and concise in stating the purpose of the trip. A well-written letter should be **one page** (there are exceptions to the rule). Edit your letter until you are confident you have used the least amount of words to share the most important message.
9. Make it easy for people to respond. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
10. Be clear about deadlines. Let them know when you need the money.
11. Give a progress report. After the first wave of responses (about a month) send a second letter telling them how far along you are. Thank those who have contributed, and let them know how near you are to your goal.
12. Send a thank you note as soon as you receive a check from a donor.
13. Have your letter proofread. Ask for help; it is available.

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear

Hi! How are you doing? I hope that God is doing as many exciting things in your lives as He is in mine! I am having a wonderful year at (your college name).

Every day I wake up anticipating what God will do next, and He has recently begun a new and exciting work in my life. In January, I will be in Indonesia working to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. I will be part of an advance prayer team, preparing the way for future evangelistic efforts. Our goals are to encourage the few believers. What an awesome opportunity to let these people know that their Creator loves them and to make the path for future missionaries to share the gospel.

I will be living among the Indonesian people as a way to get to know them and their culture better. I am hoping this will give me a greater heart of compassion for people around God's world.

But wait! That's not all! I have more exciting news for you. First and foremost, you can pray for me and the team in the following ways: 1) That God will prepare me, each team member and also each Indonesian spiritually for our visit. 2) That God will provide financially for our trip. I need to raise \$_____ That is quite a challenge! 3) That God will bless our journey, keep us safe and move powerfully through our team as we minister His love, compassion and grace to the Indonesian people.

Secondly, you can be involved by seeking God's direction in helping me/us financially. Would you consider supporting me with \$25 or \$50? I have included a postage-paid envelope for you to use if you are so led. I need the money by _____ in order to pay for airline tickets and other expenses. Please make checks payable to _____.

I look forward to letting you know about all that God has done once we return home in January.

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear

Hi! I hope this letter finds you and your family well. I'm doing fine. It's getting down to the wire as far as this semester goes; I have one more paper, two tests, then finals. Yuck. I've had a very good semester academically, and I love apartment life.

In case I haven't told you, last May I surrendered to God's call to a career in missions. I still don't know exactly when or where He'll lead me, but I am trusting that He'll reveal that in His time.

This January, He has given me a wonderful opportunity to minister and experience the mission field for a short time. I will be going to Indonesia to work on building relationships with the Indonesian people and to pray for the future work to take place on the island. I am really excited about this opportunity because I feel it will prepare me to eventually be on the mission field full time.

So as not to be a burden on the mission we are working with, (I or our team) will be raising my/our own support to finance this trip. I am writing you to enlist your prayer and financial support. God has given me a special call to "go," and I am counting on Him to call those of you He has called to "send." I also know that He has a special team picked out for prayer support. As I made out a list of people to whom to send this letter, God kept giving me names.

I had qualms about writing this letter, and I have put it off for weeks because I felt as if I were asking for myself. God has shown me that I am asking on behalf of the people that do not know Jesus. After growing up in the Bible belt, I cannot imagine people actually not knowing and having an opportunity to accept Jesus. Both of these churches have a small core of excited young Christians with very little training. Their pastors are working at discipling them, and we hope to ease their load a little this summer.

Please understand that I realize that not everyone is called to help every cause. I trust that you will hear God's voice and know if this is an area in which you can minister. If you can support me with either \$25 or \$50, I would be very grateful. I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope for you to use if you are so led. Either way, I know everyone is called to pray, and I would very much appreciate your prayer support.

I plan to write all of you again after I get back and let you know how the trip went so you can share in praising God for the results I know will come from this trip.

Thank you for being people that love me and love Jesus. I really do appreciate all of you.

(This is a warm personal letter which brought results even though no blunt appeal for money was made. The letter emphasizes the support team concept.)