

General Principles of Ministering Among Internationals

Things are generally harder in international outreach than in conventional campus ministry among Americans.

- Communication is more difficult, both verbal and written communication. Many are not fluent in English.
- International students have less time than American students. Most of them study very hard. They come here for education and that's what most of them focus on.
- Speed of conversion and discipleship process is slower. They have different background of beliefs. Some don't believe that God exists.
- Spiritual warfare. Many of them believe in other "gods" like Hindus. Muslims believe Jesus is only a prophet, cannot be God. They consider it blasphemy that anyone claims equality with God.

Do

- Understand their needs. They need a good friend and you can be their friend. You can invite them to your house for a hospitality meal. They don't have a car, maybe you can help taking them to grocery stores.
- Build authentic friendships that will build respect and trust. They will be more likely to investigate your faith in Christ when they trust you as a friend.
- Love them and persevere. If they don't want to visit church or Bible study or other Christian programs, continue to love them and persevere in loving them. Maybe next time they will come. Remember there is spiritual warfare going on.
- Learn about their religions and culture. Get to know about who they really are, their beliefs, their culture and customs, their food and lifestyle.
- Share your testimonies: why you follow Jesus Christ, how God has changed your life, your daily relationship with God, and how God answers your prayers.
- Offer prayers. When your friend going through a tough situation, final exams, or difficult situations, offer prayers, and let God work in their lives. Offer prayer when having a meal together and pray for them. They are usually thankful when you pray for them.
- At the appropriate time, give a Bible—English Bible or a Bible in their own languages—invite them to visit church with you, and let them experience how we fellowship among one another and worship God together.

Don't

- Don't debate – don't win the argument and lost the person. Better lost or withdraw from an argument and win the person latter.
- Don't push invitations to Christian programs. Don't rush, let God work in their heart. It's not recommended that you share the Gospel at the first time of meeting your international friends. Develop friendship first.
- Don't criticize or say something negative about their countries, beliefs, and cultures. They may not want to be your friend and avoid you.
- Don't post pictures of your international friends attending religious activities, such as visiting church or Bible study, on social media. They can be in a dangerous situation.

Tips for conversation with your international friends:

- ✓ Ask them about themselves and listen carefully to their responses. Topics might include: family, geography, customs in their countries (family life, recreation, work, etc.), and future plans.
- ✓ Avoid projecting the attitude that “America is the best.” Avoid questions such as, “How do you like America?” Instead ask, “What do you like the best about your time in America?”
- ✓ Don’t ask questions which might appear to “put down” their culture.
- ✓ Allow international students to ask you questions too. They may ask you about topics which are more acceptable in other cultures than in America, such as your age, cost of your house, etc. Don’t be offended or embarrassed.
- ✓ Learn to pronounce their names and help them to pronounce yours.
- ✓ Speak slowly and be patient. Avoid slang and idioms. If they don’t understand you, try to phrase your statement in another way.