

You've returned from your ministry trip full of exciting stories, great memories, and "on fire" for God. How do you keep that passion and excitement strong over the next year? What do you do with the next fifty-one weeks?

Keep the Fire Burning

God's fire always falls on sacrifice. And you sacrificed. You gave your time, energy, money, and talents. God sent his fire. But it's not your team leader's, church's or even God's responsibility to keep your passion burning. Like Levitical priests commanded to keep the flame alive (Lev 6:12, 13), you, as part of God's new priesthood of believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9), have the priestly responsibility of feeding your fire.

Here are some tips to keep the flame burning:

1. Return in Joy

Joy is your gift and part of God's Kingdom (Romans 14:17).

- Remember, Relive and Retell all the good things God did!
- Know that God rejoices over your trip (Luke 10:21).
- Spend time worshipping and celebrating your efforts—you partnered well!

2. The Truth About Reentry: You've Changed, Others Haven't

A great temptation toward anger and guilt over the Western lifestyle can hit upon returning. The truth is God put you in exactly the right time and place to do the works he prepared in advance for you (Esther 4:14; Eph 2:12).

Do:

- Thank God for the blessings He's joyfully given you
- Journal how your experience compares to your pre-trip expectations
- Discuss what you're thinking and feeling with your teammates or likeminded people
- Pay attention to what the Holy Spirit is stirring in your heart

Avoid:

- Making generalized judgments about your culture
- Immediate drastic or unrealistic changes
- Applying new personal convictions to your friends and family

3. Personal Responsibility: Find God's Grace and Follow It

Trying to do everything the Bible says at once is impossible and exhausting. Instead, determine where God's grace exists for you right now and follow it. Ask God what changes to make in how you spend your time, energy and resources (Hebrews 4:16).

Pray about your:

- Devotional life
- Future involvement with *this* ministry

- Future involvement with a *different* ministry
- Other goals and ideas (like obtaining a skill/degree, volunteering locally, learning a language)

4. Action Steps: Sustaining the Fire

Acting on the leading of the Holy Spirit yields fruit and increased passion. What God asks is always possible in him (Phil 2:13).

- Make realistic, measurable goals
- Find accountability
- Write yourself a letter detailing your plan, seal it and open it in 60 days
- Start today