PRAYING FOR MISSIONARIES 2

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Category: Christian Life

Your kingdomÂ come,Â your will be done, Â on earth as it is in heaven.

Missionaries talk a lot about doing stuff; attending meetings, preaching, travelling and what have you. But, in the final analysis, it isn't the stuff we do that is important, it is the impact that it has that matters. Ultimately, the work of a missionary is to demonstrate the kingdom of God in word and deed. The meetings, preaching and travelling are means to an end, not the end in itself. If the stuff we are doing isn't contributing to the coming of God's kingdom, then something is going wrong somewhere.

If you are someone who regularly prays for a missionary, why not ask them in what way the activities they are doing are contributing to God's kingdom? It doesn't do anyone any harm to stop and think through the deeper impact of their work. Of course, sometimes, the connection between the day to day activities and the kingdom can be a little distant. It is far easier for a Bible translator to point out the kingdom impact of his or her work than it is for someone running a finance department. But, the translator knows full well that they couldn't do their work without the backup provided by finance and other administrative staff. We can't be too simplistic about this.

It seems to me that there should be two aspects in praying for the kingdom impact of missionaries' work.

The first is that the way in which the work is done demonstrates God's rule on earth. The way in which we work should be God honouring and should contribute to the growth and development of the people around us. The remark by an African church leader that he wanted to see the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of Bible translators before he read the words Holy Spirit on the page is an excellent illustration of this principle. Missionaries need to be faithful disciples in the everyday details of life.

The second aspect is that the results of our work need to have a kingdom impact. It's not enough to preach a fantastic sermon or to translate an epistle, we need to see people drawn into deeper communion with Christ through the sermon or epistle.

So when you pray for a missionary, pray that both the way in which they do their work and the impact of their work will contribute to God's kingdom coming and his will being done on earth - just as it is in heaven.