

GREENLIGHT: MEDICAL

Guide to Ghana

Travel Tips and Cultural Expectations

Updated April 2017

Akwaaba! Welcome! We are pleased to know of your plans to join us in Ghana as a mission volunteer, student or team. Your experience here is important to us. We pray that the Lord will teach you and stretch you as never before and that you will be His vessel here for the ministry that He has prepared for you. Before your arrival, we want you to be well prepared. It is also important to be aware of local customs and traditions. This guide will help make your experience more pleasant. The following are things to plan for and consider as you prepare to visit Ghana.

ABOUT GHANA

Ghana was the first place in sub-Saharan Africa where Europeans arrived to trade - first in gold, later in slaves. It was also the first black African nation in the region to achieve independence from a colonial power. Ghana enjoys double the per capita output of poorer countries in the region, but the income of its citizens is still among the lowest in the world. In 2010, Ghana joined the ranks of oil-producing countries.

Despite being rich in mineral resources and early endowed with a good education system and efficient civil service, Ghana fell victim to corruption and mismanagement soon after independence in 1957. In 1966, its first president and pan-African hero, Kwame Nkrumah, was deposed in a coup. In 1981, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings staged his second coup. The country began to move towards economic stability and democracy. In April 1992 a constitution allowing for a multiparty system was approved in a referendum, ushering in a period of democracy.

A well-administered country by regional standards, Ghana is widely regarded as a model for political and economic reform in Africa. It has a high-profile peacekeeping role; troops from Ghana have been deployed in Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone and DR Congo.

Ghana At A Glance

Population: 27.4 million (2015)

Capital: Accra

Area: 238,533 sq km (92,098 sq miles)

Major languages: English, African languages including Twi, Ewe

Major religions: Christianity, indigenous beliefs, Islam

Life expectancy: 61 years (men), 63.9 years (women)

Monetary unit: Ghana Cedi and Pesewas

Main exports: Gold, cocoa, timber, tuna, bauxite, aluminum, manganese ore, diamonds

GNI per capita: US \$1,590 (2014)

Internet domain: .gh

International dialing code: +233

BEFORE YOU COME

Costs

Each volunteer, student or team is responsible for all costs associated with their trip. Your host will help in establishing a budget for your visit, including costs for lodging, food and transportation. This budget can be adjusted to meet the needs of the individual or group, but generally is crafted to be both sufficient and not excessive. Therefore, guest houses will be clean and comfortable, but not luxurious, etc.

Costs for transportation to and from the ministry site, including excursions, will be borne by the team. The team may also be expected to cover the cost of food, lodging and transport for the host staff that will accompany them. These items cover basic expenses with the exception of personal needs, souvenirs and snacks eaten away from the ministry site. Depending on the program, a project fee may also be determined for each team member in order to obtain materials and supplies to complete priority ministry projects.

For most teams or individuals coming to Ghana, funds to cover all in country costs, including room and board should be sent to the host before the visit. Your host will provide banking information as needed to facilitate the wire transfer of funds. Room and board costs are typically \$25-30/person/day.

Air Travel

As you plan to travel to Ghana, you will book air travel into Accra's Kotoka International Airport (ACC). Numerous international airlines serve Ghana, including British Airways, Delta, Emirates, KLM, Lufthansa, and United. Delta has non-stop service from the US through New York City (JFK). Other carriers require a change of planes in Europe, the Middle East or northern Africa.

The most important consideration in booking flights is the arrival time. Because it is culturally appropriate for the team to meet officials of the Methodist Church Ghana, you should plan to arrive in Accra, the destination airport, some time on a Monday to Friday if possible. If this is not possible other arrangements can be made.

Passports and Visas

All visitors to Ghana will require a current passport and a visa. The passport should be valid for at least six (6) months after the planned dates of travel. Most visitors travel here on a tourist visa. A tourist visa may not require a letter of invitation, but it helps to have one from the host.

If you are staying longer than 60 days, then your host will assist you with additional requirements to keep your visa valid once you arrive. More information on visas for Ghana,

including the application forms and other information required, may be found at <http://www.ghanaembassy.org/index.php?page=visas>.

On the application form you will be asked for the name and address of two local references. You may use the following information:

Mr. Joseph Atta Amankwah
CEO Methodist Faith Healing Hospital - Ankaase
PO Box KS 1256
Kumasi, Ghana
Phone: 0205888749

Mr. Enoch Osafo
Director of Health and Sanitation
Methodist Church Ghana
E252/2 Liberia Road
PO Box GP 403
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 0244443581

Travel Vaccinations and Medicine

An International Immunization Yellow Card is required for entry into Ghana. Vaccination for yellow fever is also required to enter the country. Vaccination for typhoid fever and Hepatitis A is strongly recommended. Tetanus and polio boosters should be up to date. While good for everyone, all health workers must be vaccinated against Hepatitis B. Anyone coming from the USA or Europe during flu season should have an influenza vaccine. You should also consider getting the meningococcal vaccine as well. Please consult your doctor or travel clinic 3 months (six months for Hepatitis B vaccine) in advance for advice on all immunizations. Additional information is also available on the Centers for Disease Control website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/ghana.aspx>.

We strongly encourage all visitors to take some form of malaria prophylaxis. There are several different drugs that are effective in Ghana, so your doctor should determine which would be the best for you. PLEASE NOTE: Chloroquine is NOT EFFECTIVE against the strains of malaria found in Ghana.

Money

The currency in Ghana is called the Ghana cedi (pronounced like CD but with the accent spoken on the 'C'). As a floating currency, its value is subject to change. Please check for

current exchange rates as it fluctuates. We will change money for you when you get here, so there is no need to exchange money at the Accra airport unless we are not picking you up and you will need Ghana cedis right away. Hotel rates of exchange are usually lower than a Forex exchange rate. Only bring crisp, new \$100 and \$50 bills for exchange. Traveler's checks and smaller bills are difficult to exchange and get a much lower rate.

Despite all travel advice in the US, ATMs are not the best way to exchange money in Ghana. The ATM rates are usually lower than the Forex exchange rates, and may carry extra charges for you from your bank. In addition, if you have not notified your bank, using your ATM or Visa card in West Africa may cause it to be blocked by the bank, as they will suspect fraud. ATMs that take Visa debit cards are generally available in larger cities, but not in smaller towns and villages where we may be working; there are only a handful of ATM machines in the country that take Mastercard ATM cards. There are very few retailers or service providers in Ghana that take credit cards, and most of them will charge an extra 5% or more if you wish to make a credit card purchase.

During your orientation when you reach Ghana, we will familiarize you with the Ghanaian money. We can also help with suggested prices when you are shopping. Shopping is a great way to build relationships here, so look forward to bargaining and talking with the artisans from whom you buy. We will also discuss bargaining at your orientation.

Attire

Men are allowed great freedom in the clothes they wear. For most situations, a nice casual shirt and trousers are appropriate. For ministry and teaching opportunities, a nice golf type shirt or shirt/tie and trousers are appropriate. Blue jeans are not appropriate for 'official' work. If you work on a construction site, old trousers and shirts are acceptable. Just remember sun protection and the heat. Cotton trousers and shirts or polyester/cotton blend breathe easier and keep one drier in the tropics. If you will be teaching or working in a clinic, a semi-formal type dress with a nice shirt and is appropriate. If preaching, also wear a tie. An ordained pastor, however, is expected to wear a collar in the Methodist Church Ghana. Scrubs may also be worn when working in a clinic or hospital setting.

Women must be much more conscious of their appearance. The farther one travels from the big cities, like Accra and Kumasi, the more conservative one must dress. In the north and in villages, dresses or skirts should be worn at all times outside the house. Slacks and capris are becoming more acceptable, though they are mostly seen on foreign women and younger women in the bigger cities. Slacks/jeans are acceptable for ladies working construction. Shorts should be worn ONLY inside the house or at the beach. If you have a wrap to throw on that works nicely. It's best if a woman's shoulders are covered with short sleeves. Please refrain from spaghetti strap type dresses and tops. In the large cities like Kumasi and Accra, slacks or capris may be worn for most casual outings. Bring a one-piece or tankini swimsuit in case you get to go to a pool or the beach.

Packing

Bags: Check with your airline first to learn the checked-baggage weight limits/number of bags, as well as the carry-on allowance. Usually, airlines allow a carry-on size bag plus a purse or computer bag to keep with you on the flight. Most international airlines allow two pieces of luggage, weighing up to 50 lbs. each (and they are very strict about no more than 50 pounds/bag). Again, please check your airline's website for specific weight limits and other restrictions.

Usually for teams, we recommend that each person brings one checked-bag with their own personal items, and we recommend that the second bag/case be used to bring various supplies or goods for the team or host mission's use during your stay. Pack all valuables, like camera equipment and jewelry, in carry-on luggage. Carry all essentials like prescription medications, and contact solution in a carry-on bag. Be careful to follow the limitations of 100 ml of liquid/container of anything inside the carry-on, and it must be in a quart sized ziplock bag.

We recommend one change of clothing should be in your carry-on luggage also in case that your checked bags are lost in route. Pack as lightly as possible. You may want to save room for a few souvenirs on the return trip. If you check more than one piece of luggage, divide your clothing and other items between the bags so that if one piece is lost, you will still have half your things! Use regular luggage or CONTICO plastic trunks, but be sure not to bring items in boxes, as far as possible, since boxes attract attention and usually will require an inspection of contents at airport Customs. If a box is required, contact us for tips.

For your journey, you may want to carry \$10-20 American money in your pocket for small purchases in an airport enroute to Ghana. You will need your passport with immunization card, plus your driver's license or ID card and airplane ticket easily accessible as there are several checkpoints in each airport where you will be required to show them. For your extra money and any other valuables such as a credit card, it's best to use a money-belt or pouch that is worn under clothing. These can be found at luggage stores. Have photocopies of the first page of your passport made and keep them in several separate places from your passport so you will have the information available if needed when your passport is not with you or if it is stolen.

If you'll be driving, an International Driver's License from AAA would be necessary. This is especially for longer-term mission volunteers.

Don't bring any supplies that are military in appearance like olive green or camouflage clothes, Army surplus footlockers or canteens. Also check online for TSA travel restrictions in items than can be carried in hand luggage on the plane such a scissors, nail files, pocketknives, etc.

Please be sure to get your shopping and preparation done well in advance of your departure. Last minute preparations can wear you out before you get to Ghana and make you more susceptible to illness.

Things to Bring

- ❑ Passport
- ❑ International Immunization Card- Yellow card
- ❑ Copies of medical information, notification in case of death, liability release and medical release forms
- ❑ Copies of drug prescriptions
- ❑ Lightweight clothing - temperatures average in the 80's at night and 90's during the day.
- ❑ Men should bring a dress shirt and tie or nice golf shirt for church, polyester/cotton or khaki trousers, work pants, sport shirts or T-shirts, walking shorts, dress shoes for church, comfortable walking/working shoes, underwear and handkerchiefs, swimsuit.
- ❑ Women should bring summer dresses or skirts and tops, a church dress, capris, swimsuit and items for the beach, a pair of slacks/jeans, cool sleepwear, a light weight bathrobe, modest shirts of your style with short sleeves, a light-weight sweater or sweatshirt (wear it on the plane as it gets quite cold up there), dress shoes for church, comfortable walking/working shoes or sandals, a head scarf or hat for church (just in case), underwear and handkerchiefs.
- ❑ Modest swimsuit
- ❑ Hat, sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher), and sunglasses
- ❑ Ghana's electricity is 220V. Therefore, blow dryer and/or curling-iron must be either multi-voltage or bring a travel transformer with British style 3 prong adaptor. Electricity transformers may not be available for you, so would be helpful.
- ❑ Quick snack foods for travel and any other time. Beware of bars covered with chocolate...they melt!! Recommended: CLIF bars, LARA bars, cheese crackers, etc.
- ❑ Favorite brand of peanut butter (or buy ground nut paste in Ghana)
- ❑ Note: Cheese and coffee are very expensive here. Black Lipton tea is common. Check with host if coffee pot is available. No microwave available, but stove/cook pots, fridge, etc, yes.
- ❑ Gatorade powder packs for use with water bottles. Bring 1 L water bottle!
- ❑ Any special dietary requirements - please let us know so that we can work that into the team menu plan (i.e. vegetarian or health restrictions on your diet)
 - We will be eating mostly Ghanaian dishes
- ❑ Flashlight with good batteries and an extra set of long life batteries
- ❑ Personal toiletries - shampoo, conditioner, hair spray, cosmetics, toothpaste, deodorant, razor, shaving cream, moisturizer, Vaseline, lotion, baby powder, feminine pads, Pamprin, etc. Remember to pack all liquids in CHECKED bags, unless travel size
- ❑ Flip-flops
- ❑ Personal Medicines- Benadryl or Tylenol PM for jet-lag, antibiotic cream, antacids, Pepto Bismol tabs, powder for heat rash, eye drops, cold or sinus tabs, Tylenol, Band

- ❑ Aids, vitamins, Dramamine for motion sickness, Ibuprofen. The above medications are optional but please be aware that many of the familiar drugs you buy over the counter in America are not available here. If several people wanted to go together and bring medications for the team to use it would help reduce the cost for each person.
- ❑ Travel size laundry detergent pack - (not essential as it's available everywhere here)
- ❑ Wet wipes or antibacterial hand gel (optional but helpful)
- ❑ Individual Kleenex (optional but helpful)
- ❑ Pillows and bed sheets are provided for you, but you may bring your own if desired.
- ❑ Bath towels, a hand towel and wash cloths
- ❑ Mesh bag or pillowcase for dirty laundry
- ❑ Alarm clock
- ❑ Extra pair of glasses and/or hearing aid batteries (small cell batteries are seldom available here)
- ❑ Money for exchange at Foreign Exchange sites (For-Ex). We recommend \$50 or \$100-dollar bills get the best rate, traveler's checks are more difficult to exchange draw up to 10-25% lower rate of exchange
- ❑ Camera - if desired. Ghanaians like to have their picture taken, but always be sure to ask permission first! Bring extra batteries or your battery charger and a plug adapter.
- ❑ Bible and devotional book
- ❑ Notebook or journal and pens
- ❑ Stationery and envelopes
- ❑ Chewing gum or hard candy in carry-on for take-off and landing of the plane
- ❑ Insect repellent (6-35% Deet)
- ❑ Depending on where you are staying, mosquito netting for added protection while sleeping will be available, or insecticide spray will be furnished so that rooms can be sprayed for mosquitoes.
- ❑ Malaria prophylaxis - Daily Malarone or Doxycycline or weekly Mefloquine (Lariam) can be taken. Mefloquine is effective but has potential severe side effects. Consult your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel in order to arrange for your medications and immunizations. PLEASE NOTE: Chloroquine is NOT EFFECTIVE against malaria in Ghana.
- ❑ Nametag to wear everyday (**Each person on team should have a nametag!!**)
- ❑ Laptop computer...good for interns and/or one for a team
- ❑ Bring stethoscopes and diagnostic kits (otoscopes, ophthalmoscopes)
- ❑ A few pair of scrubs if working in hospital or clinic
- ❑ Small travel size rechargeable fan (for the heat!)
- ❑ Ear plugs for the 4 AM call to worship and community announcements
- ❑ Poncho for rainy season
- ❑ Rechargeable battery personal fan

Web Resources for Methodist Health Services in Ghana

Methodist Health Ghana

<https://www.facebook.com/methodisthealthghana/>

Methodist Faith Healing Hospital - Ankaase Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/mfhhospital/>

Methodist Faith Healing Hospital - Ankaase Website

<http://www.mfhhospital.org/>

Emmanuel (Manny) Otsin's Blog

<http://anidasowoha.blogspot.com/>

UPON ARRIVAL (The “Upon Arrival” section may be printed for reference during your flight, or “During Your Stay” section may be printed for reference after arrival.)

Immigration and Customs

You will be required to fill in an immigration form on the airplane before landing in Accra. This card will be turned in to the immigration officer who checks your visa and passport. The immigration form you fill out on the plane will ask for your address and phone number in Ghana. The contact address is:

The Methodist Church Ghana
Wesley House
Ridge, Accra, GHANA

Phone: 02044443581 (Mr. Enoch Osafo)

Or your host may give you a different address to use, depending on where you are working and staying during your visit.

When you arrive in the airport terminal, you will proceed through Immigration and Customs. After customs, please stay together as a team to help each other with the bags. Please note this: There may be ‘official porters’ with yellow vests inside the baggage area, and ‘unofficial porters’ outside the building. The official porters will help you if you choose, but you may handle your own carts and baggage on your own. Most times one can manage your own bags. If porters are used, they will receive about the equivalent of \$1 per cart in

Ghana Cedis, but no more. For this, wait for your hosts to help after the bags are in the vehicle. Meanwhile, **DO NOT** pay in American dollars. People have learned that unwitting visitors will believe them if they request dollars as payment. Unknowingly, some visitors have been persuaded by porters to pay as much as \$10/cart, which is too excessive and appears foolishly wealthy. Again, the host who is to pick you up can pay the porters with cedis when your luggage has been loaded into the vehicle.

After collecting luggage in Baggage Claim, proceed through Customs as a group. You do not have to stop unless they ask you to. If they do, just explain to the officials that you are a team/volunteer going to help the Methodist Church Ghana and name your work location. They will ask what is in your bags. You may respond clothes, books, toiletries, personal items. Your bags may be checked by customs. Just relax, greet the customs officials and answer any questions they have. Any ministry related items or personal items should attract no fee whatsoever. If bringing equipment of any sort, a letter from your home church or organization telling Ghana Customs that all items brought into the country are donated for ministry purposes will be helpful. Use official church or ministry letterhead.

If your bags are checked, video cameras may require a 10% of cost deposit fee for bringing it into the country. The Customs officials should refund this when you leave Ghana. It is best to keep such a camera in your carry on. Any other work related item or personal item should attract no fee whatsoever.

After Customs, proceed down the ramp and out toward the waiting crowd. You will have to show your baggage tickets at the bottom of the ramp to be checked for security. Keep them easily accessible to speed this process. Due to international travel regulations, non-passengers, like your hosts, are no longer allowed to come into the baggage area, but will meet you just before you exit the airport building.

Please keep your hands and eyes on your own luggage, especially as you are greeting your hosts and moving to the parking lot. Do not let anyone 'help you push' your luggage unless you know they are affiliated with our group. These unofficial porters request unreasonable sums of money just for helping push your luggage. Push your own baggage cart!

DURING YOUR STAY

Language

Though scores of languages are spoken in Ghana, no indigenous language has the widespread use as does Twi. Being a former British colony, Ghana uses English as the official language, but you will soon find out that a little effort opens up many doors for relationship and ministry. We strongly encourage you to try to pick up at least a few phrases. Here are just a few very important ones.

English	Twi (Written)	Twi (Pronunciation)
Good morning	Maa kye	Ma chee
Good afternoon	Maa ha	Ma ha
Good evening	Maa dwo	Ma joe
Welcome	Akwaaba	A qua bah
General response (to all of the above)	Yaa son	Yaa sone
Good night (retiring to bed)	Da yie	Day yee eh
I am from America.	Me firi Amerika	May free America
How are things?	ete sen?	Eh tih sane
They are good.	eye	Eh yeh
Things are peaceful.	bokoo	Bauh kauh
My name is ____.	Me din de ____.	May din day_____
And you?	Na wo nsoe?	Nah, wone sway?
Good bye	Baa Bae	Bye Bye
Excuse me/ Please	Mepa wo kyew	May pow choe
Thank you	meda ase	May dah say
How much does it cost? (Answer will usually be in English)	Ne boe ye sen?	Ne boe yeh sane?
I am full.	Ma mee	Ma May.
It tasted very good.	Na eye de	Na eh yeh deh.
Where is the bathroom?	Tiafi (or Washroom) wo he?	Tee afee (Washroom) waw he?
I need to urinate.	Dwonso de me.	Jon saw day may.
Ghana is beautiful.	Ghana ye fe.	Ghana yeh feh.
God bless you.	Nyame nhyira wo.	Nyame n shi rah woe.

Greetings

Greetings are one of the most important things a visitor to Ghana should learn. Even if you cannot speak the Twi language, you should always greet anyone you meet. Use English or Twi if you can. When you greet someone, the ‘greeting’ time seems very prolonged to our ‘American culture’. The Ghanaian will often ask about your family, how you are feeling, etc. It is appropriate for you to ask them the same even if you don’t know their family. In fact, getting ‘right to the point’ of a conversation is considered rude in Ghanaian culture!

When greeting a group of people, you often will shake hands with everyone. As you face the group, always start shaking hands with the first person on your right side then work around counter-clockwise. If there is a group of you and a group of them, let them lead the procession to make it easier to follow the right procedure. They may shake hands with you several times during a welcoming ceremony.

A Ghanaian may also hold your hand for an uncomfortable length of time after shaking it. Relax and enjoy the culture. Men are allowed to hold hands with other men, even walking down the street. There is no sexual meaning, only friendship. The same applies to women with women. Men and women do not hold hands or kiss or show affection in public. This is slowly changing, though, in the modern cities.

When arriving in the country, you may be expected to greet certain individuals at Methodist Headquarters. You will also greet church leaders, village leaders and others in the area where you are working. This may seem excessive to Americans who are only visiting, but it is extremely important to our Ghanaian hosts. We will arrange these meetings before your arrival.

When exiting a vehicle, do not be surprised if someone wants to help you with whatever large or small parcel or load you may be carrying. Please *make sure* they are associated with your group. If they are, they just want to be courteous. They really do want to help. So let them, and thank them in Twi. Say, "Meh dah say."

Customs

Ghanaians have names based on the day of the week one is born. Before you come, find out what day of the week you were born because you will be asked. When you arrive you will learn your Ghanaian nickname.

Your left hand is considered your dirty hand. It should never be used to wave, shake hands, eat, or place your offering in the box at church. If speaking in church, gesture with your right hand and hold the microphone with the left.

If you tell a Ghanaian that you like something they have or are wearing, they will think you want it. They might then go try to get it for you at whatever cost to themselves, even if it means going into debt. Instead, to compliment a Ghanaian, say, "That suits you." or "That looks good on you." In that way they do receive the compliment.

One should not cross your legs, especially at the knees, while sitting down, as it can be a sign of disrespect, especially when the sole of your foot/shoe faces an elder. It might be interpreted as an insult, especially to the elderly and other important persons unknowingly in your midst, and gives the appearance of superiority.

Devotions and Meals for Work Teams

Meals for teams will be together with members of the host mission team. Each team will be expected to have members lead at times of devotions and sharing, usually both in the mornings before breakfast and in the evenings after dinner. These experiences will serve as opportunities for us to relax and enjoy Christian fellowship and spiritual growth, as well as review the day and make announcements. Your team leader will work with us to decide how each member can best contribute and benefit from our time together.

Depending on the arrangements, you may be called on to help with food preparation and clean-up. If you are in a Guest House or Hotel which provides meals, you will not, of course, but if you are in a mission hostel, missionary home, or a guest house which does not provide meals, you will be assigned to meal duties by your team leader. Menus will be designed so

that you have the opportunity to enjoy Ghanaian food. Part of the experience is to have cultural exchange, and we strongly encourage everyone to try a little of everything. Ghanaian food is generally very spicy to American palates, but we try to tone it down for guests.

If any team members have dietary restrictions, please let your hosts know as soon as possible and bring any necessary supplements. Also, some teams may be asked to bring food items for personal snack times as well as some ingredients for additional meals.

Health and Living Conditions

Most people find quarters to be reasonably comfortable. This is Africa, however, and some things will not be like your favorite Holiday Inn.

The rooms will have screens on the windows to reduce the threat of mosquitoes, which are a very real threat. Even with proper prophylaxis, malaria can be a problem if you expose yourself to many mosquito bites. We will spray rooms to kill mosquitoes, and will provide bed nets where practical. You may bring your own personal bed net to use.

Washing your hands often is a good health practice wherever you are. Please remember to do so often esp. after shaking hands with many people and before eating. Other normal health practices include eating only "safe" foods, and drinking only filtered water or bottled water to reduce the threat of typhoid fever and hepatitis A. Occasional diarrhea can still occur but is usually not a serious health threat. Bottled water is readily available, and also labeled sachets of water are usually safe to drink and are inexpensive.

Running water should be available in most places you will stay. However, there may be times when the water is not flowing. When this happens, you may have to fetch water from a tank and take a bucket-bath. Relax and enjoy this as part of the Ghana experience. The tap water is clean for washing, but we do not recommend drinking it. We will help provide filtered or bottled water for drinking, but the system is often slow. As you may expect, one needs to drink plenty of water, ideally 3 liters per day, because of the climate.

Toilets in Ghana are almost always on septic systems, and as such are subject to frequent clogging. Therefore, toilet paper and other items are almost never flushed here, but instead are placed in trash receptacles provided for the purpose. Some toilets, particularly public ones, do not provide toilet paper, so it is always a good idea to have some tissues on hand.

Clothes can be washed if necessary. Hand-wash detergent is readily available in local kiosks. A Ghanaian we know may appreciate the opportunity to be hired to assist with hand washing if needed. Make sure that you have **labeled everything** before you bring it so that it will not be lost in the laundry. Clothes may be hung inside or outside as needed depending on the article. Any clothes that are hung outside usually dry quickly if the sun is shining. Clothes should be brought in before late afternoon, since any left hanging outside

afterwards may be visited by a tumbu fly that deposits “mango worm” eggs. These are nasty if they get in contact with skin. To be free of this problem, either let your clothes dry to the bone, or you should iron them. If hung indoors, there is no danger. We will provide an iron and ironing board for your use. With proper care this is not a major consideration, and very unlikely to cause problems.

Depending on work location, team members may be expected to help with food preparation, clean up, filtered water collection and storage, and general cleanliness of the guest quarters. Your hosts will advise you as to what duties are required. House helpers will sweep, dust and clean the guest quarters regularly as a matter of routine for all teams and volunteers.

Please note: Wildlife is everywhere, but not big game. The biggest problem is the mosquito. Also, there are snakes and scorpions in Ghana. We have never been bitten, but we know of local people who have been while farming. Therefore, be extra careful! If taking a walk in a rural area, keep your legs and feet covered. Some varieties of large game can be seen in a couple of game parks, mostly in the north of the country. Ghana has some very beautiful birds. Lizards abound like squirrels in the U.S.

Electricity, Telephone and Internet

Electricity can be unreliable in Ghana, and periods of “lights out” are not at all uncommon. Generally this is only a nuisance, but it does get dark at night! Therefore, we recommend that everyone bring a flashlight or torch and keep it in a readily accessible place. You don’t want to have to dig through your entire suitcase in the dark! Extra batteries are highly recommended, as batteries are not always available in more remote areas.

Cell phones are common in Ghana. While some USA cell phone carriers do offer roaming for your USA cell phone, here the roaming charges are extremely expensive. We prefer that you not use your personal phone. Your host will have a phone available for emergencies during your stay. Units can be purchased to load on the phone for calls. You can pass on that number to family back home after you arrive. **Let friends and family know that you will not be able to call home regularly or reliably.**

The Internet can be accessible and is a suitable form of communication when needed. The internet is not comparable in speed to the US internet. A mobile wifi with modem will be available to use when needed at designated times. E-mail will not be available every day, though at some Accra guest houses there is wireless internet access. Please remember that you are coming to Ghana to minister here, to meet Ghanaians, to participate in the culture. Try to think of this time in Ghana as a time away from the constant contact of e-mail, Facebook, cell phones, etc, that you have in the US. Let your friends and families know that you want them to pray for you, that you will update them from time to time, but you won’t be able to be in constant contact with them while you are here. This will help you focus on what God wants to say to you while you are here.

Workday

Each day depends on the activity/project focus of the team or individual. Plans for the following day will be reviewed during nightly debrief. Your leaders/hosts will discuss the routines/rhythms that will be followed during your program. With most teams, the day begins at 8 AM with devotions at the hospital or clinic and generally finishes around 3-4 PM. This is more of a guideline similar to a Ghanaian work day, and may be adjusted depending on the project or outreach. After hours are good times to walk around the village, meet people, practice your language skills, shop, rest, play basketball, table tennis, football or “soccer,” or any other games.

Gifts

Many times individuals bring items as gifts for Ghanaians. Gift giving is an important part of the culture, especially among new friends. Take your time, as this can be a pleasurable or a miserable experience. Build relationships. Be aware that many of these people have very few possessions and believe all Americans to be very wealthy. They will indeed be quite appreciative. However, at times they may appear greedy and jealous if items are distributed in a haphazard fashion, especially when given en masse. So, for example, please do not plan to hand out candy on the roadside. Culturally, many of the Ghanaian people in general will also be quite bold in asking for anything that they think you can provide. They believe it does not hurt to ask, but they also respect a polite response of “No” or “I will have to pray and think about it first”. Above all else, pray first before you make any response. Smile. Divert the conversation or joke around about something, as that is always welcome. Ask questions of the person. Give a hug or shake a hand and give a smile... Ask yourself what kind of a message you want your visit and actions to convey? Many people will be watching how you respond to their plea. Please don't hesitate to consult with one of the missionary hosts for any advice.

Your heart will be moved often. Please do not make any future promises or considerations to a Ghanaian's request that you will not or cannot keep. This may include providing copies of photos, gifts, money, supplies, and letters of correspondence or any other expressed need by a new Ghanaian friend. Always discuss with your leaders/hosts. Thank you.

The Team Experience

We believe the mission team, student and volunteer experience to be an excellent way of serving the Lord, enriching your own spiritual journey, helping people in need, and having an experience you will never forget. To make these things happen does require a willing and flexible attitude and an effort on the part of each volunteer, team leader, and host. We will do our best to prepare for your time in Ghana. We also see that teams which are as prepared as possible are helped by their planning and team building before arrival. We will also be open to comments and suggestions. One will need to realize that occasionally problems might arise for various reasons. Together we can work through each one to God's

glory. Please remember we are all here to serve and glorify Him, not anyone else or any project.

Your leaders have been given responsibility for various details of the team experience. These persons will coordinate the team experience with the Ghanaian hosts.

The team leaders should also obtain a list of allergies, dietary requirements, medications and any medical illnesses of each team member, including a written permission for a medical release, including process for medical evacuation according to insurance, a liability release, *as well as contacts for emergencies and notification of death, from each team member.*

All volunteers are expected to refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, inappropriate clothing and profanity from the time of departure until the return home. Use of tobacco and alcohol are not generally accepted in the Ghanaian church. We do not wish to be a stumbling block to others.

Conclusion

We do look forward to each individual and team visit. It is a wonderful time of growth and discovery for the team and a ministry to the people of Ghana. You will be a big encouragement. May God bless you and encourage you as you prepare to come to Ghana for His ministry here!!