

Culture Study: Short Term Missionary-Honoring the People You Serve

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Prepare:

Orange Juice (about 5 cups)
1 large papaya
1 pineapple
6 bananas
Optional — Sugar, honey, or whipped cream
Large Bowl
Large Spoon
Knives for peeling and dicing the fruits
Small Bowls — one for each woman
Forks or Spoons

Immerse:

Read: Romans 12:10-16

Being a servant of God is a calling that all of us share. We may serve in different ways, in different areas, even in different cultures, but the love of Jesus Christ must be at the center of all we do. Romans 12:10 tells us that we must *“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.”* That can be difficult in situations where values and cultures are different.

First we need to search our hearts, humble ourselves before our God and ask for His heart and His love. This can make us more ready to see the hurts and needs of the people. There is no better way to honor someone than to share the most important thing in your own life, your relationship with Christ.

Read: Mark 10:45

Our call is not to change them, but to lead them to Jesus and His love. This can take time and effort on our part. Many times we must demonstrate a life of service in front of them before their broken hearts can even begin to hear us. *1

Our work is in the cultures of the country of Ecuador, but you also live in a land of diverse cultures. Many times even our family cultures vary greatly. I remember well when my husband, Jon, and I were pastors in Virginia and had the privilege of leading a dear woman to the Lord who had lived a life of prostitution and selling illicit drugs. She had never even attended a church before. She was not crying out for *rules*, she was crying for *love*. God did a miracle in her life and she became hungry to live more like Him.

Then God called us to serve Him in Ecuador. We had to learn about the Ecuadorian culture, and the “heartbeat” of the people before they were ready to listen to our message.

In praying and seeking God’s will He changed us, and we began to see the “sameness” of the needs instead of the differences in our cultures. We learned that many of the differences were just that...different; not better or worse, just different. We have been blessed to watch as these friends grow more like Christ in ways we never would have thought, and in the process we have become more like Him as well. They may speak a different language, sing a different song, and

even eat different foods (guinea pig is fed to us often as a food of honor), but their love and faith in the heavenly Father has made us one. *2

What is different about those around you who are lost? What is the same? Ask God to truly help you see their hurting hearts and how His love can save them. He is able! Romans 12:15-16a tells us to “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.” Through learning to honor those we serve, we are honoring our Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.

Close in prayer.

Engage:

1. Think of the saying “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” What does this statement mean and how does it pertain to the idea of *honoring the people you serve*?

2. Make Ecuadorian Fruit Salad!

Ingredients

5 cups of orange juice

1 large papaya, peeled, seeded, and diced

1 pineapple, peeled, cored, and diced

6 bananas, peeled, and diced

Sugar or honey to taste

Optional – sugar, honey, or whipped cream to serve on top

Instructions

Combine the diced papaya, pineapple, and bananas in a large bowl.

Mix in the orange juice, add sugar or honey if needed.

Serve immediately or chill for about 30 minutes if you prefer it very cold.

Share the fruit salad and discuss how the different flavors blend to make *one* dish.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the differences you see in the members of your family/church family?
- What are some of the differences you see in the lost in your community? Are they as worthy of God’s salvation as we are? What can we do to take a step toward a relationship with them? How can we show them God’s love?