

SumMIT elective 2017

How to serve the **Church** in your own
home country ?
For international students.



Introduction.

This elective will help you understand the difference between the church in Australia and the church in your home country. By understanding these differences you will be ready for the changes that will take place when you go home.

Since this conference is about church where you will learn a lot about the church from the Bible, this elective will not go over those material again but instead we will talk about practical and relevant issues about the church in your country.

A quick survey.

1. Are you a Christian?

A. Yes B. No

2. Where did you become a Christian?

A. Home country **B. Australia**

3. Do you have a church back home?

A. Yes B. No

4. How many more months/years do you have before going home for good?

5. Are you looking forwards to going home?

A. Yes B. No. Explain

Questions.

What questions do you have about church in your own country? Make a list.

What happens when you go back after your studies?

There will be many changes in your life once you finish your studies. Each of these changes will affect you in different ways and your ability to cope will depend on your attitude and the number of changes taking place at the same time.

Here are the changes that will happen to you:

Study → Work (very little control over your working hours)

Independence and freedom → very little independence (because of responsibilities)

Reverse culture shock – feeling of not belonging. (mix of both cultures)

No money → lots of money (danger of going into debt)

Watch NINA's story video clip.

Comment on Nina's experience. Work and Church.

What did Nina struggle with when she went home?

Question: What should we do about church when we go home? The answer is simple

Hebrews 10:24-25

You will hear many people tell you to find a good church when you go home. There are a few problems with this advice.

1. What makes a church good?
2. Is there a church like that in the place where you are going to?
3. If there is, is it convenient to go to that church?

BUT if there is a good church that you can join then

You must make every effort to join that church.

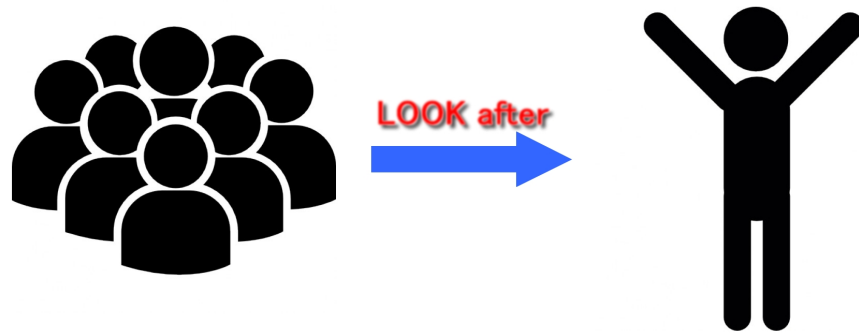
You must realise that there are many types of churches and you must accept the fact that things will be different. Don't expect it to be the same as your Focus group or your church in Melbourne. You will need time to get used to things.

To give you an idea of how different church will be : Look at the factors that make a church different:

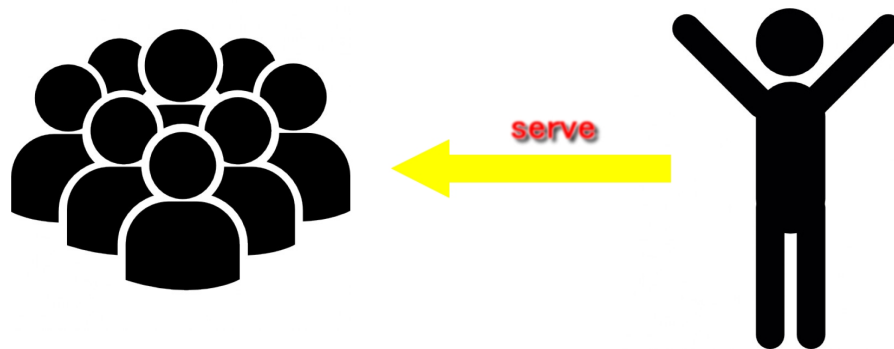
<i>size</i>	<i>involvement</i>	<i>mission and outreach</i>	<i>Relationships</i>	<i>teaching</i>	<i>people</i>
Mega	minister does everything	thinking of expanding only	friendly but superficial	proof texting	multi cultural
Big	pastoral team	mission minded	caring	expository	one culture
medium	volunteers (lay) only	inward looking	legalistic	no bible at all	old people
small	pastors and volunteers		not friendly at all		families
very small					young people
					mixed

<i>location</i>	<i>style</i>
easy to get to	traditional
hard to get to	informal
	conservative
	expressive

compare your experience of church in Australia and church back home?



In Australia - NOT NORMAL.



In most other places.

This changes the way we view church. In other words....

Instead of only going to church when you feel like it you go to church because it encourages other people

Instead of expecting people to do things for you, you look for ways to be helpful to the church.

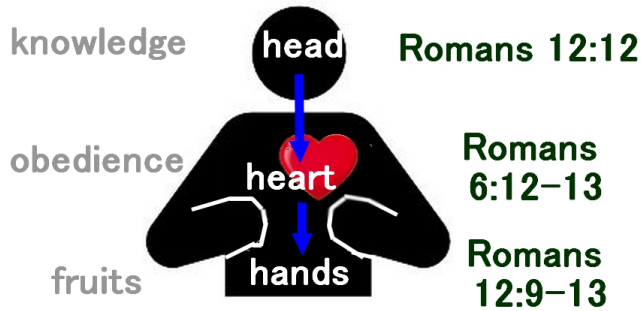
Instead of giving up when things are difficult, you keep making an effort to persevere.

Instead of depending on others to welcome you, you find ways to get involved

This is one of the biggest changes that you need to make if you want to survive as a Christian.

**You are responsible for your own growth in Christ.
(1 Tim 2:11-12)**

**growing in maturity
IN CHRIST**



This leads us to ask the question:

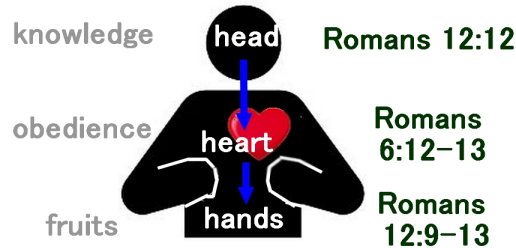
What does it mean to keep growing as a Christian ?

Colossians 2:6-7

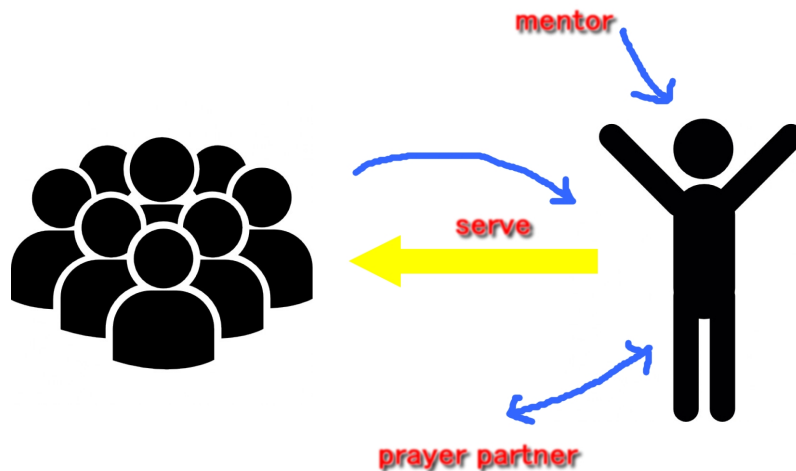
You are responsible for your own growth!



**growing in maturity
IN CHRIST**



It is normal to expect that your church helps you grow in all these areas but the reality is the church doesn't always do that. The church might help with one or two of these areas but usually not all. If there is a church that does all of them then make every effort to join that church.



If your church only helps you in one or two ways (for example the people are friendly and caring but the teaching though correct but is not very deep) then you need to find other ways of growing your knowledge of Christ and serving people. You don't have to leave your church but find other ways to help you in the other areas. For example:

Find a mentor to help you grow

Find a prayer partner

Find a mission organisation to support or serve (voluntarily)

And because you have these other supports and ways to serve, you can keep serving your church even though your church may not be completely helping you. This allows you to keep serving your church even though it is not meeting all your needs.

Noteworthy warnings.

If you are not familiar with the churches in your home country and you are looking for a church to join there are some churches which you should avoid. Sadly there are many of these around.

Cults like Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses , Churches with strange teaching about the 2nd coming of Jesus.

Churches which are legalistic (emphasises ceremonies, rules and rituals)

Churches which give license to all kinds of behaviour (including sexual immorality)

Churches which teach one thing but do another thing.

How to choose a church ?

Choose a church which is easy to get to. If there is none nearby consider moving closer to one.

Give your self time (1 –2 years) to get to know people and for people to know you unless you discover something that is wrong.

Be adaptable

If you have a mentor in Australia make every effort to keep contact with him/her so that they can continue to guide you. Your mentor can help you process issues that you are facing and also help keep you growing even though your church may not be doing so.

When should you change your church (only if this is necessary) ?

If going to that church causes you a great deal of unhappiness.

If that church is teaching false doctrine.

If that church is very controlling – ie. Controls the members.

If that church sees itself as the only church that is correct.

If that church has a lot of infighting.

Only think of changing church if there are no other options available to you , do not take the decision to change church lightly.