



Transforming Lives. Strengthening Communities.

Overview of Sports Friends Ministry in Ethiopia

Thank you for your interest in learning more about how your church can partner together with Sports Friends and the church in Ethiopia to further God's Kingdom in Ethiopia. As you may know, Sports Friends (a ministry of SIM) empowers churches and assists church planters to use sports and games as a relationship bridge to touch the lives of youth, their families and their communities. New churches are being planted; existing churches are reaching their communities; youth and their family members are turning to Christ and being discipled; and God is being glorified through this powerful ministry strategy.

An example of what's happening in Ethiopia: Trained sports evangelists go into an area where the gospel has not been understood, and begin building relationships with young and old using soccer. The evangelists teach how life parallels sport, which provides opportunities to share the Scriptures. Through these relationships and discussions, many have come to trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. During the past several years, over 100 new churches have been planted, mostly in Muslim villages.

The vision of Sports Friends is that many churches in North America would partner with the churches in Ethiopia to spread the gospel in this way, to the glory of God and the spiritual encouragement and growth of all. These partnerships include strategic praying, strategic giving and strategic going on the part of the North American church.

Strategic Praying -- It's on this level that the battle for the advancement of God's kingdom and the planting of churches is won (Ephesians 6:18). The Ethiopian church has much to teach the North American church regarding biblical prayer. Example -- The church of our Ethiopian director has an all night prayer meeting every week. That's not unusual in Ethiopia. Through the persecutions over the last decades, churches have gone to their knees often to praise and petition the Lord. They are convinced that prayer can change them, other people, the events around them, and the world. They are eager to pray for believers and churches here as we pray for them. This prayer fellowship will be mutually enriching.

Strategic Giving -- Giving is rooted in God's character and encouraged over and over again in the Bible (2 Corinthians 8:13; Philippians 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11). Giving through Sports Friends to partner churches in Ethiopia focuses on ministry rather than on the needs of an individual, even though the partnership will be focused around a relationship with a regional sports ministry leader trained and supported by Sports Friends. It's crucial that the North American churches who give through these partnerships realize that their giving, while significant, will not overshadow what they will receive from the examples of their Ethiopian brothers and sisters in the areas of prayer, vibrant worship, relationships, giving out of poverty, joy in their daily blessings and much more.



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Strategic Going – Short-term teams from partner churches will be employed to bolster and enhance the long-term overseas ministry of Sports Friends and the national denominations. These life changing trips will connect those who give with those doing church planting work, camping ministry and related sports ministry initiatives. It is our desire that those who participate in short-term trips not only contribute significantly to the long-term work in Ethiopia, but also become a catalyst in their sending church for renewed passion and commitment to the work of our Lord.

The Sports Friends ministry is a wonderful way to experience a cross-cultural connection via a church partnership in which God is not only transforming lives, families, and communities in Ethiopia, but also transforming the lives, families and churches of his people in North America.

I have enclosed the following information regarding the ministry of Sports Friends and the Church Partnership Program.

1. General brochure and DVD describing the ministry of Sports Friends
2. Overview of Sports Friends' ministry in Ethiopia
3. Summary terms of the Church Partnership Program, including roles and responsibilities of all parties
4. Testimony of an existing Church Partner
5. Brief profile of Ethiopia

If you and your church would like to find out more about Sports Friends' partnerships, please contact Ken or Phyllis Lloyd at 803-802-7300 or by email at ken.lloyd@sim.org.

Blessings,

Ken Lloyd
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Sports Friends