

Helping your Friend Thrive in China

Course Outline

Each year thousands of Chinese students go overseas to study. Some of them will respond to the gospel. Two out of three will return home to China within five years. Sadly 50-80% of those who become Christians while studying overseas will abandon their faith within a year of returning. This course will examine the issues that cause returnees to believe that Jesus has no place in their lives in China. We will look at some strategies to change this as well as some practical things that can be done.

Introduction

Meeting the other participants and the facilitators

Opportunities and problems

In this section we will explore the problems that Chinese returnees face when they return home to China.

- Returnee stories
- Returnee issues

Following in the steps of Jesus

What does it mean to be a Christian and follow Jesus? We may have people attending our churches or fellowships here, but they may not be coming for the reasons we believe (or hope) for. We hope they are responding to the gospel, but in reality, there are other reasons they could be coming along. It's important that we are sure of their real interests so we know how to help them. In this section we will consider some of the reasons Chinese people may show interest. We will also consider what it means to follow Jesus. Jesus does not promise his followers a life of ease, on the contrary he says that to follow him is to "take up your cross." How should this impact the way we prepare returnees?

- What did they respond to?
- Christians and suffering
- Preparing to face difficulties

Key issues reported by returnees

There are three main areas that returnees struggle with after returning home. Issues to do with their families, issues to do with work and the problem of finding and settling in a church. This section examines these areas and gives some suggestions for helping your friend.

- Issues returnees face with family
- Issues returnees face with work
- Issues returnees face with church

Helpful ministry strategies

What can we do to prepare our friend to return to China? In this section we will consider a ministry strategy of three parts. Discipling them for the Chinese context, giving them some pre-return training and introducing them to a Church in China.

- Discipling Chinese believers for the China context
- Pre-return training
- Referring to a church or fellowship in China

Other issues to consider

Most returnees believe that when they return home, they will pick-up where they left off. They expect to get off the plane and walk back into their old lives. They don't understand that they have changed while overseas and home has changed. In the same way they struggled with culture shock when they moved overseas, they will struggle with re-entry stress when they return. In this section we will look at ways to prepare for re-entry. Some of those we meet may be dealing with emotional trauma from their childhood. We will also consider what this is, how to be aware of it, and what can be done.

- Re-entry and stages of transition
- Emotional trauma

Case Studies

Conclusion

Reflecting on what has been learnt and discussing implications for ministry.