

# **Everything You Need to Know about Watermark Discipleship Trips**

Watermark now launches about a dozen trips every year to Haiti and Ethiopia. Here's what we believe about all our trips:

- The “good news” should accompany “good works” – as we serve, we want to provide for people's spiritual needs while meeting many other needs.
- We want to work through, empower, and support *local* (“indigenous”) churches and ministries.
- We focus on developing people and restoring systems – not just on providing relief. Over time, we see that development take place through trips to the same locations.
- International trips are a powerful opportunity to disciple our own people through training, the trip itself, and debriefing following the trip.

If you are interested in other overseas work (including water well and orphan sponsorship, Teaching Trips to Central Africa, or serving overseas long-term, please visit [watermark.org/international](http://watermark.org/international).)

## **ETHIOPIA TRIPS**

Through our relationship with E3 Partners, Watermark members help plant churches, build relationships, and share the gospel directly in Ethiopian villages and cities. Our Discipleship Trips to Ethiopia focus largely on evangelism and relationship-building in partnership with indigenous churches.

In the course of a trip, small teams travel daily to outlying villages. Alongside translators and disciple-makers from the local church, teams build relationships with those they encounter - from village leaders to children. Following our trips each summer, the local churches are able to continue those relationships. We have seen hundreds of individuals make decisions for Christ and encouraged many believers.

Because of the intense nature of these trips and the training required, several months' preparation is involved. But this also allows teams to bond well before serving together halfway around the world.

## **HAITI TRIPS**

Watermark first got involved in Haiti following the devastating earthquake in 2010. But our goal was always to find an incredible partner who knew the people and their needs, and to remain far after the international spotlight left. Fortunately, we have been able to accomplish both of those things!

Mission of Hope Haiti serves a region of Haiti north of Port-au-prince through a school, an orphanage, food distribution, and local construction that builds homes for families. MOH also provides medical care to the region, including providing prosthetic limbs to those who need them. Through Watermark's long-term partner with Mission of Hope, we have seen our work continue to progress and now have the chance to partner with and impact an entire village in our return trips to the country.

We take several trips each year; individuals are encouraged to apply, but Haiti trips are also excellent for groups. Training for these trips generally involves 5-6 meetings across a 2-month period.

# **General Requirements for Watermark Discipleship Trips**

## **Membership**

While we encourage anyone to invest in needs around the world, our Discipleship Trips are reserved for those who have chosen to go "all-in" with us through membership. This includes being in an ongoing community group and serving regularly in a ministry inside or outside Watermark. (You are welcome to apply if you are presently pursuing membership, but this process must be completed before the trip.)

Why is membership a requirement for discipleship trips?

First, trip-goers are representatives of both Christ and Watermark, and they're participating in projects and relationships that Watermark has been building for many years. Second, we know that it's important for people to have community around them who can help them process this opportunity, help them prepare, and pray for them throughout the process and during the trip. Third, we believe it's important for people to have exercised their gifts and talents locally before using them overseas. Finally, we truly want to disciple participants through the preparation, the trip itself, and the follow-up after the trip. Membership is important for the commitment and accountability involved.

## **Funding**

We do not want cost to be a barrier to your participation in Discipleship Trips. But at the same time, trip participants are asked to help provide for the cost of their trip. For those unable to pay from their own resources (most of us!), we will coach you on raising support from others. Your team leaders and other leaders will be available to help walk you through that process, as well. Plus, you'll be encouraged along by an entire team who is facing the same task.

Enlisting "ministry partners" can actually be an exciting way to involve others in your trip, and even begin spiritual conversations with nonbelievers. People are often very willing to hear about your overseas work and consider supporting the trip.

Because of the cost of trips, applicants should consider their financial situation (including any debt). This is important not only because of the cost, but also because you may be asking others for support.

## **Processing in Prayer and with Community**

As with any major decision, Watermark will always encourage potential trip participants to process that decision prayerfully, as well as with their Community Group and any others who know them well. Are you spiritually ready to undertake this significant ministry opportunity? Is this the best time in your life (and in the life of your family) for you to participate? Are there any significant concerns about the time involved in training, personal preparation, and the trip itself?

Questions like these should be prayed through as well as brought before others who are willing to speak honestly about your readiness for overseas ministry.