



***3 John 6-7: You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the Name!***

## **What is an Advocacy Team?**

An Advocacy Team is the most tangible expression of our church's commitment to support our Goers. This team is a group of 6-12 individuals who take the responsibility to coordinate our church's support and encouragement of one of our 100 People Goers (single, couple, or family) and to serve as their representatives to the Austin Stone church body. The team is our primary link between the Goer and the rest of our church. Because of the strong personal relationships, the Goer can be open and honest, allowing his or her team to see needs and share successes and defeats.

## **What is the Advocacy Team responsible to accomplish?**

There are two major aspects of the Advocacy Team's: *care and representation*. The success of an advocacy team depends on its ability to accomplish these two goals from the time that the Goer prepares to leave for the field until his or her return.

### ***Care:***

Many Goers live in physically challenging environments. Some are raising children far from extended family. Others struggle with cultural adjustments and language barriers. Most significantly, all serve on the frontlines of spiritual warfare. For survival and spiritual health, Goers need the assurance that they are not alone, that there are others in the body of Christ who love them and are committed to their welfare and also to the success of their work. Goers need empathetic listeners—compassionate, caring friends who are not in a supervisory role. The Advocacy Team can consistently provide that kind of spiritual and emotional care. Caring also involves identifying specific needs which the team can meet or organize others in our church to meet.

### ***Representation:***

The Advocacy team also champions the Goer and his or her work to our church body and advocates for ongoing participation in that Goer's ministry even when he or she is far away. Thanks to the efforts of the Advocacy Team, our church feels an ongoing sense of connection that keeps us involved in the life and ministry of the Goer.

## **What are the Advocacy Team's tasks?**

### **1. *Pray.***

Individual members pray consistently for the Goer and encourage others to pray. The team should collect of a working list of prayer requests from the Goer as well as add to that list their own requests for the Goer. The team should have one common prayer request list so that they can all pray similar requests.

### **2. *Meet.***

Not everybody on the team needs to come from the Austin Stone or even live in Austin. But the team leader should be in Austin. The group comes together as a team at least once every two months. If they live in separate cities, they can use Skype to conference call together. The agenda *may* consist of calling the Goer for an update and prayer, then discussing a previously circulated article on Goer life, or brainstorming items for a care package to be sent to Goer.

### **3. *Create a safe place.***

The team establishes an atmosphere in which the Goer feels comfortable enough to be honest and vulnerable concerning his or her situation and needs. High standards of confidentiality are required; if the Goer shares a personal concern that he or she wants to remain within the group, each team member must be faithful in maintaining confidentiality (except in situations where our church policy requires that for moral or safety reasons the information must be shared with the proper authority). The team is not expected to act as professional counselors; if in-depth spiritual or psychological help is needed, the Goer should be referred to an Austin Stone pastor.

### **4. *Maintain communication.***

The team stays in regular communication with the Goer both on the field and on home assignment for the purpose of (a) keeping up to date on prayer requests and answers, (b) learning of practical needs our church might be able to help meet, (c) monitoring the worker's physical, mental, and spiritual health and (d) keeping the worker up to date about what is going on in our church. If at all possible, the team calls/Skypes the worker during each meeting. Between meetings, at least one member calls so that the worker has phone contact a minimum of once a month.

## **5. Provide assistance with support team building.**

A new Goer appointee should be assisted with the challenge of building his support team. The group can provide advice and aid in the development of presentations for various ages and settings, offer childcare, set up computer databases, etc. The Advocacy Team might send a representative with their appointee to each meeting at other churches in the area. There they serve as moral support and prayer partners, and when appropriate, they introduce the appointee and share our church's excitement about his or her future ministry. The Advocacy team can also introduce and recommend the worker to potential supporters.

## **6. Coordinate on-field service.**

As the Advocacy Team becomes aware of a need our church could meet, they identify an individual or missional community within our church body who could provide the solution and make sure that the plan is carried through to completion. The team can recruit one or more missional communities to "adopt" the Goer for a period of time. Then the Advocacy Team serves as a resource to this missional community to sustain the flow of information and involvement. The team can also make sure that cards and care packages are sent regularly to the Goer. Some Advocacy Teams may also help plan short-term trips to serve alongside their Goer. Contact the Make Disciples ministry for more information on how to plan these trips.

## **7. Update the Austin Stone 100 People Network Team.**

The Advocacy Team is responsible to regularly communicate pertinent information regarding the Goer to the Austin Stone 100 People Network Leadership Team ([100people@austinstone.org](mailto:100people@austinstone.org)).

## **8. Representation to the church congregation.**

While the Goer is on the field, the Advocacy Team works with the 100 People Network Team to keep his or her ministry and needs before the church.

## **9. Assist with home assignment plans.**

The Advocacy Team helps the Goer with the practical logistics of home assignment (i.e., “furlough”). This could include finding housing and a dependable vehicle, enrolling children in school, scheduling medical appointments, and many other tasks related to successfully transitioning to our city. If the Goer is not returning to the field, additional assistance may be needed in long-term reentry and adjustment. Other services may be appreciated during the Goer’s time at home: childcare, training in how to use a new computer program, funds to send children to camp, etc. The Advocacy Team can help or recruit others to serve in myriad ways.

## **10. Help with Reconnecting.**

The Advocacy Team assists their Goer to integrate back into the life and care of our church when he or she is in our area. This could include holding various events where the Goer can report and be reintroduced to the church, assisting children to be welcomed back into ageappropriate activities and friendships, preparation of media for presentations, etc.

## **What is the Goer’s commitment to the Advocacy Team?**

An Advocacy Team is most effective if the Goer is willing to be honest and open with them about her needs—spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial. When the worker admits that he is struggling with a problem or has a practical need, the team can assist in finding and implementing a solution.

## **Who leads the Advocacy Team?**

The Advocacy Team in dialogue with the Goer should choose a team leader. This person helps to recruit others, schedules and leads meetings, coordinates tasks, and is responsible for the efficient and successful functioning of the team. The leader also serves as a liaison to the 100 People Leadership Team.

## **How Long Does the Advocacy Team serve?**

Ideally, each person on the team agrees to serve for one term of the Goer’s service or until the worker returns for her next home assignment (usually a 2-4 year period of time). Each team member should make clear to the team leader how long they are committing to serve on the Advocacy Team.

## **Role #1: Leader/Facilitator**

### **Description of role:**

The Leader/Facilitator will be the administrator of the advocacy team. This person will plan the team meetings, facilitate the meetings, and hold the team accountable for their various roles. The Leader will also communicate with the Goer when necessary.

### **Why this role is important:**

Although each person on the advocacy team cares about the Goer and is committed to ensuring their care, for the team to be most effective it is essential that there is a designated leader to handle the administrative side of things, making sure meetings are planned and facilitated, and checking in with the team members to ensure each area of the Goer's care is running smoothly and being carried out. The leader will also be the link between the Goer's advocacy team and the Goer Care Ministry and ASCC mission staff.

### **Best for those with these primary love languages and spiritual gifts:**

Acts of Service, Administration, Teaching, Discernment, Wisdom

### **Examples of Responsibilities:**

- Plan and facilitate monthly or bimonthly advocacy team meetings
- Keep current contact information on each member of advocacy team member and know what role each member is playing in Goer's care
- Welcome new advocacy team members into the team and help them link up with a role/care area that will suit them best
- Have some sort of contact (email, phone call, face to face meeting) with each member of advocacy team member at least once a month and ensure each member is fulfilling their responsibilities within the advocacy team
- Communicate with Goer Care Ministry monthly (via email, phone, or face to face) and ASCC mission staff as needed
- Communicate with Goer as needed to check-in and obtain feedback from them on how well the team is providing needed care, encouragement, and support
- Help in recruiting and training new members of advocacy team

## **Role #2: Communication Manager**

### **Description of role:**

The Communication Manager will be responsible for communicating regularly with the Goer themselves, as well as ensuring the team is regularly communicating with Goer in a variety of ways.

### **Why this role is important:**

Regular, consistent, and varied communication is absolutely vital to the Goer's overall health while they are living and ministering away from home.

### **Best for those with these primary love languages and spiritual gifts:**

Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Mercy, Exhortation/Encouragement, Hospitality

### **Examples of Responsibilities:**

- Communicate regularly with the Goer to 'check in' on how they're doing, offer encouragement, find out prayer requests or physical needs, and offer accountability and emotional support when needed
- Advocate for the Goer to the team to be sure the team understands the importance of offering regular communication, encouragement, and support to the Goer
- Set up and manage some form of calendar for advocacy team members to sign up to communicate with Goer in a variety of ways throughout the month and help Leader/Facilitator in ensuring the team is fulfilling their communication responsibilities
- Work with Leader/Facilitator to set-up occasional Skype dates between Goer and advocacy team members
- Provide suggestions on new, creative ways for team members to communicate with Goer

## **Role #3: Prayer Point Person**

### **Description of role:**

The Prayer Point Person will ensure the Goer is covered in prayer before, during, and following their assignment.

### **Why this role is important:**

Prayer will be the powerhouse in all other advocacy team roles and in the life of the Goer. What a joy and honor it is to go before the throne on behalf of our Goer and the people the Lord will bring into their life. God's word encourages us:

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ. -Colossians 4:2-3

Be joyful always; pray continually. -1Thessalonians 5:17

In everything by prayer and petition present you requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus -Philippians 4:6-7

And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I may fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel. -Ephesians 6:18

### **Best for those with these primary love languages:**

Acts of Service, Words of Affirmation

### **Examples of Responsibilities:**

- Stay up-to-date with the current needs of the Goer and share these with the advocacy team.
- Come up with creative ways to remind people to pray (magnets, maps, bookmarks, etc.).
- Create a different prayer focus each month. (stateside preparation/support/travel, new relationships/language study, cultural holidays)
- Set up recurring group prayer times at least monthly.
- Pray for the advocacy team as they serve the Goer.
- Pray for the people the Goer will influence.
- Research the country and people group your Goer will be serving so you will know how to pray.
- Visit your Goer so you may pray in person.

## **Role #4: Physical Needs Manager**

### **Description of role:**

The Physical Needs Manager is primarily charged with the responsibility of ensuring the Goer has their physical needs met while on the field. The physical needs can include: health, safety, fitness, food, finances, resources, etc.

### **Why this role is important:**

This role is important because physical needs are of utmost importance in ensuring the Goer can sustain a multiple year stay in another country. Without having their basic physical needs met, a Goer will not have the needed energy or spiritual and emotional resources to be effective in their ministry field.

### **Best for those with these primary love languages:**

Gifts, Physical Touch

### **Examples of Responsibilities:**

- Obtain a 'wish list' from the Goer before their departure of items they anticipate needing (clothing, toiletries, blankets, food, etc.) along with items that would be a blessing to them to receive (favorite food/snacks, clothing accessories, iTunes gift cards, coffee, etc.)
- Work with team to plan for regularly scheduled care packages to be put together and sent to the Goer. Member of the team can either contribute items or contribute money so that the Physical Needs Manager can purchase items for the package.
- Manage finances for the team (ie: organize monthly financial support, money for care package items and shipping, phone cards, etc.)
- Check in with the Goer (or advocacy team leader) regularly to be sure the Goer's physical needs are being met. If the Goer is running low on funds or items needed for daily living or ministry, communicate the need to the advocacy team and make a plan to meet the need(s). Communicate with the Goer Care Ministry or ASCC mission staff when extra assistance is needed.
- Ensure that the Goer is healthy. If the Goer becomes ill and needs medicine, a doctor, etc. discuss this with your team (and the Goer Care Ministry or ASCC mission staff when needed) to help get the Goer well as quickly as possible.
- Work with team to help someone or a few people from the team make a trip to visit the Goer when possible.



## Role #5: Furlough/Re-Entry Organizer

### Description of role:

The Furlough/Re-Entry Organizer will manage the details of the Goer's Re-Entry to the States, either for a temporary furlough/home assignment time or the time of their conclusion to their field work overseas.

### Why this role is important:

When a Goer returns to The States after living for an extended time away from home, there will be many practical needs that they will have (airport transportation, housing, vehicle, cell phone, food, etc.) as well as an incredible mix of emotions to work through (excitement, joy, relief, sadness, exhaustion, confusion, reverse culture shock, fear, etc.) It will be vital for the Goer's advocacy team to be ready to help meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs they will have upon returning to the States. The **Furlough/Re-Entry Organizer** will organize and mobilize the team to be ready to meet those needs, helping to make the Goer's Re-Entry experience a very smooth and positive one.

### Best for those with these primary love languages:

Acts of Service, Gifts

### Examples of Responsibilities:

- Know the exact dates of the Goer's arrival and departure
- Ensure that the entire advocacy team, ASCC mission's staff, and Goer Care Ministry Team are all aware of Goer's arrival and departure dates
- Organize for members of the team to meet the Goer at the airport
- Ensure that upon their arrival, the Goer will have access to housing, a vehicle, a cell phone, meals, etc. (This can be discussed and organized within the group or with Goer's family.)
- Plan for debriefing time with one or more members of advocacy team
- If needed, help Goer with planning opportunities to share with missional communities or other groups
- If needed, work with ASCC mission staff or Goer Care Ministry to have someone available for counseling and debriefing