

## **“Top 10” Questions**

### **What You Should Ask About Your Holy Land Trip**



1. What is the **FOCUS** of the group that I am joining (fact-finding, pilgrimage, sight-seeing, interfaith, etc.) and the **SIZE** of the group (some enjoy the company of large groups -- others do not)?  
*Asking these questions will ensure that you are with the right tour that will suit both your needs and your expectations.*
2. What kind of **PREPARATION** should I do before visiting the Holy Land? (i.e. books to read, videos to watch, etc.)  
*A successful trip requires preparation before departure to ensure you can appreciate your experience to the fullest extent and trip organizers should provide or recommend resource and orientation materials.*
3. Will the group visit **BOTH ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**?  
*Much of the land we call "holy" lies within the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories. While political instability may dictate the need to change an itinerary, visits to and within the Palestinian territories are essential in order to gain a better perspective on the current situation in the Middle East and to meet the local Christians.*
4. Will my group **WORSHIP WITH LOCAL CHRISTIANS** on a Sunday morning, instead of sight-seeing?  
*The Christians of the Holy Land come out of a long and rich tradition of "hosting" visiting Christians and pilgrims to their land. Worshipping with local Christians strengthens faith ties across continents, and helps the local community to overcome their sense of neglect by the churches in the West. Some groups may also offer an opportunity to stay overnight in the homes of local Christians.*
5. Will meaningful time be scheduled in the itinerary to **MEET ISRAELIS & PALESTINIANS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN WORKING TOWARDS PEACE AND JUSTICE** in this volatile region?  
*Standing in solidarity with peacemakers should be one of our highest priorities – our support to these courageous groups is so important that connecting with them during the trip should be ensured.*
6. Will meaningful time be scheduled in the itinerary to **MEET AND LISTEN TO A VARIETY OF CHRISTIANS, JEWS, & MUSLIMS**?  
*Getting a well-rounded exposure to the many peoples and perspectives in Israel and Palestine should be an essential part of the trip. Carefully consider what the perspectives and objectives of your tour organizer might be - especially if the tour organizer is paying for your trip.*

7. Will my group sleep, eat and shop in areas where the **LOCAL PEOPLE WILL BENEFIT** from my visit?

*Even though Bethlehem, East Jerusalem, and other key destinations lie within the Palestinian territories, Israel receives about 85% of all tourism revenue. Many groups stay in hotels located in West Jerusalem instead of Bethlehem and East Jerusalem and the majority of all souvenir shopping in the Holy Land is done in large souvenir shops where the bus driver and guide take commissions on everything the group buys instead of shopping at local fair trade, women's cooperatives/unions, and church-owned-and-run gift shops. These practices contribute to the economic disparity that exists between Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Every effort should be made to ensure the group you choose is using hotels, restaurants, and shops that provide maximum benefit to the local Palestinian people.*

8. Will there be **ADEQUATE TIME FOR ASKING QUESTIONS, EVENING DE-BRIEFINGS, & CONVERSATION** with members of my group?

*Sharing the experience with others while traveling will help broaden your perspective, clarify your experiences, and interpret what you have seen and heard when you get back home. Trip itineraries should be reviewed to ensure that either group time is specifically scheduled or that there is some free time included for these activities.*

9. Will this trip **NUTURE EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS** or **OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP NEW LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS** with Palestinian Christians or Christian institutions?

*Presbyterians have a commitment to do mission in partnership and in supporting the establishment and growth of relationships with Palestinian Christians and Christian organizations investments are made that will ensure the long-term presence of Christians in the area.*

10. Are there plans for appropriate **FOLLOW-UP AFTER THE GROUP RETURNS?**

*After the group returns to the US is it important to provide opportunities to speak to congregations and other groups to share your experience. Opportunities to remain connected with fellow travelers and to pursue partnerships or other activities spawned by the trip should also be provided. Preliminary plans for these activities should be made before or during the trip (e.g. schedule a first follow-up meeting date and time).*

*Want help with any of these issues? Visit [www.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org](http://www.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org) or contact the Israel and Palestine Mission Network's Pilgrimage Team at [travel@israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org](mailto:travel@israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org).*