

Here's what Claire's letter to Jenny might look like (ii)

I must admit that at the start I was a bit intimidated by the prospect of raising my own support. But the more I thought and prayed about it, the more I realised how important it was to go to Turkey with the commitment and backing of my friends, people who know me and people whose involvement I would really treasure.

The total I need to raise is just over £10,000 per year, or around £850 per month. This covers my normal living costs, day-to-day ministry expenses, Mid Med back-office costs and a bit for health insurance and pension fund. I've just started working on my support and so far I've been encouraged by the response of a few friends in the church and it looks like I've about £300 per month already pledged, including Gift Aid. The church will give something as well, but it will be next month (at least!) before they decide how much.

When I drew up a list of those I'd like to support me, your name was well up there! We went through so much together, especially in those early days in Sheffield, that I wouldn't want to launch into this next phase of my life without you being involved somehow.

Ideally what this would involve from you would be:

- *giving some financial support – this will be the only source of income I'll have and because my expenses will tend to be regular, then the best option would be monthly support. (I've enclosed a standing order form that Mid Med staff use for this.)*
- *praying for me and the people I'll be working with – I'm well aware that this will be a spiritual battlefield and I daren't go there unprotected.*
- *being an encouragement – it will be a lot different from Sheffield and I know that contact with friends like you will be important.*

From my side, I'll commit to keeping in touch as much as I can. Not sure if I'll be on-line where I'll be living, but I know that there are some internet cafés in the area, so at least we'll be able to keep in touch.

This whole venture is something that I simply can't do on my own and I'd be really delighted if you would be part of the team that make it happen.

In terms of the financial support, there's no fixed amount or anything. It's up to you, but if it helps, the average from individuals so far is around £40 per month with the top amount at £100. Feel free to come at, between, above or below these amounts! Of course, with Gift Aid whatever you give gets another 28% added – it's nice to get some tax back after these years of paying tax!

Would you think and pray about this for a couple of days? I'll give you a call towards the end of next week to get your thoughts on all this. I assume that your mobile number is still 07123 456 789? If not, I have the centre phone number and I'll get you through that. In the meantime if you've any questions about it, feel free to give me a call. My home number is the same (0114 234 5678) but my new mobile number is 07987 654 321. I've also enclosed a reply envelope for you to get the form back to me if you do sign up.

Thanks for thinking about this. Talk to you next week.

Yours,

Claire

Here's what Claire's letter to Jenny might look like (i)

Dear Jenny,

Hope this finds you well and enjoying life in the delights of the Highlands. How's the job working out? At least I presume those who come to your centre are there willingly and enthusiastically, which is more than could ever be said about Year 9's reluctant sorties to the gym in your time here.

The staff room hasn't been the same since you left – your sense of humour was always a good balance to the rampant cynicism of the rest of them.

Life here continues much as before. The new head seems to have made a bit of difference on the discipline front, but other than that there's not much change.

Except that I'm leaving!

Yes, you read it right. You might have already heard some of this on the bush telegraph, but come the end of first term next year I'm following your footsteps out of here, but not to the Scottish Highlands. I'm bound for even further afield and I'd like to see if you could help get me there. I'd love to sit down and talk this all through with you, but I doubt if I'll make it up to Inverness before I go and I don't expect that you've plans to visit Sheffield in the coming months, so a letter is the next best option.

As I'm sure you know, I've been interested in mission work for a long time and you might remember that I went to Turkey for a few weeks the summer you headed north. Well, I've followed up this interest and in the new year I head back to Turkey, this time for as long as God wants me there.

I'll be working with MID MED MISSION, an organisation that helps meet both the spiritual and physical needs of people in North Africa and the Middle East. I'm really excited about this new venture, and also a bit nervous.

I'll be working in an English Centre in a city in the Kurdish region of eastern Turkey, close, but not too close, to the Iraqi border. The centre was set up about 10 years ago by Operation Outreach, a Christian group that Mid Med works with quite closely. Mid Med has had a team working in this area for a few years, mostly involved in a range of public health and education projects. There is a small church nearby that grew out of an Operation Outreach summer team about five years ago. A Turkish couple now lead the church, but I understand that it has struggled to get accepted in the area, which is primarily Muslim. Mid Med staff from the West tend to keep a low profile in the church and work more on one-to-one relationships, which suits me just fine.

I'm really excited about the plans, especially working with the Kurds, who are the largest people group in the world without their own homeland, spread as they are across a number of countries, including Turkey and Iraq. They seem to have got a raw deal from everybody and, until recently, there was also little or no effective Christian witness to them as a group. Mid Med have made the Kurds a focal point for their prayers and work for the next few years. I've enclosed a brochure that gives more detail of Mid Med Mission.

So what did I mean when I said you could help me get there?

Well, the way Mid Med works is that, rather than have a huge impersonal fundraising campaign to raise the money to pay everybody from a central pot, each staff member builds up a group of friends who will support their work through regular financial support, regular prayers and regular encouragement.