

Things to Know for Saturday, June 23, 2018

1. Wear your team t-shirt and team cross on Saturday. Be sure you have your passport!
2. Your personal suitcase must weigh less than 50 pounds. You can also bring on board a carry-on item and a "personal item" like a purse or satchel at no charge. Those carry-on items are not weighed. Julius will have a scale in the hotel Friday night to weigh your bag. We have neon flagging tape so that we can easily recognize all of our bags on a conveyor belt.
3. We need to leave the hotel on their bus system probably in two waves. Plan to be in the lobby at 6:15 to leave at 6:30 a.m. We plan to go to the domestic terminal to start check in no later than 7:00 a.m. at the Atlanta Airport on Saturday, June 23. We would like to check in at the same time. The first bus load will wait for the second load to try to get our second bags comped using Julius's Delta Skymiles card. Once through security, we will get on the underground transit system to the international terminal and our assigned gate. Our flight, Delta 686, departs at 9:50 a.m. If we check in on schedule, there should be plenty of time to eat breakfast at the airport once we have cleared security. However, the flight boards early and you need to be back at the gate by 9:15.

When you check your bags at the Atlanta airport, you will get little stickers on your boarding pass that contain the serial numbers that are identical to the airline tags on those checked bags. **Do not discard these little stickers.** You will need them to pass through customs in the Santo Domingo airport. You will have to have a receipt for every checked bag, and the numbers must match. The customs agents check.

4. Bring your water bottle empty to the airport. You can fill it once you pass through security. Do not fill up your bottle anywhere in the DR from a tap. Buy bottled water or use the bottled water jug at the camp. We will have bottles of water on the bus to the camp.
5. While we are in route to Santo Domingo, you will receive Dominican immigration and customs forms to fill out before we land. They are in Spanish and English. For the area that asks for your address while you are in the Dominican Republic, put this address: Calle Santiago #114, Gazcue, Santo Domingo. That is the street address of the office of the Diocese of the Dominican Republic, and we are in the country as their guests. Write clearly so the DR Immigration officers can read the form. Staff at the DR office will always know our daily location, either at the camp in El Pedregal or at the Novus Plaza Hodelpa in Santo Domingo. On the form in the area for purpose of trip, mark "Pleasure."

Julius will have packets of Dominican currency that you can get from him anytime during the trip. 1000 pesos is roughly \$20. He will have an IOU notebook that you can sign when you get the pesos. After the trip, Julius will mail you a summary of the number of your IOUs, and you can mail him a check for the US\$ amount.

6. When we get off the airplane in Santo Domingo, the first official thing we do is enter immigration control. In the past we had to pay a \$10 entry visa charge but now that is being collected through airfares. They may be photographing and fingerprinting arriving passengers during the passport check. Fingerprinting is by electronic scanning, no ink involved.

7. In Santo Domingo when the duffle bags come off the conveyor belt in the arrivals area, pull off all our marked personal suitcases and black duffle bags, put them all in one area, and we will match them up with the team members before we proceed through Customs. There are free luggage carts in the arriving baggage area that you can use for the rest of the time you are in the Santo Domingo airport. Get your boarding card out to show the agent your baggage receipt numbers.

8. We will all stay together in the Santo Domingo airport while passing through immigration and customs control points. Julia and Grady will be at the front of the group, and Julius and Phyllis will be at the rear of the group. If you are pulled aside in the customs area for inspection, a team leader will stay with you. Our experience in that customs area is that mission teams wearing team t-shirts and staying tightly together as a group pass through without any special attention. However, if this time is different, we'll deal with it.

When we get out of customs in Santo Domingo, we will be met by Karen Carroll, our contact in the bishop's office and the Bishop's wife, Jeannette Pringle, our 14th missionary who will ride the bus to El Pedregal with us. Karen will take a group photo of us for *From the Field*, get us on the bus, and give us empanadas and bottled water to eat on the bus. We will stop for a break around 4 to 4:30 p.m. at the Jacaranda rest stop. They have food choices there too. You need pesos to pay here.

9. We will probably arrive at the camp in El Pedregal around 6 or 6:30 p.m. We think that we will be staying in the second floor of the main dormitory, which is accessed by two external sets of stairs. These stairs contain several "uneven" steps, in the sense that the rise in some steps is slightly higher or lower than others. If it has been raining, the tiles on the steps will be slippery. There is a handrail. There are 8 rooms on the second floor. All of us will stay there except Grady who will stay in a ground floor room in the De Colores house so he doesn't have to climb the stairs. Roommates are Julia and Julius; Meg and Phyllis; Mary and Caroline; Casey and Fred; and Paul and Wil. Steph, Sally, Jeannette and Grady have single rooms.

10. Problems Friday night or Saturday morning before our flight leaves? Call or text Julius at [\(229\) 563-0209](tel:2295630209). Once our flight takes off, Julius will turn on his Dominican phone, [\(809\) 653-0433](tel:8096530433). Calls or texts to either number should work during our mission trip. As always, communication conditions are always different on each trip. However, Julius is never out of contact for long.

11. And...the Lord be with you! And with all of us and also with our friends in the Dominican Republic who are eagerly awaiting our arrival. It will all work out. It always does.

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you
Wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness:
Protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing:
At the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing;
Once again into our doors.