

GOING TO THE MARKET—PART 2

Dear Friends,

In the November article, I introduced you to the local markets of Ghana. If you missed it, please check the FLC website to catch up. Now, on the new & improved FLC website, ALL of my past articles are posted for you in the archive link!

This month we will look a bit further into the topic of markets. The typical village market is 'fed' by produce from the farms. Such markets function particularly on special days. For example, there are markets all over Ghana where most of the produce comes in for trading on Saturday. This means if you went to the market on any other day you wouldn't see most of the things that are brought in for sale on Saturdays. Such village farm markets exclusively sell produce from the surrounding farms. So, if the area is noted for the production of palm tree fruits, you would see that sixty percent of the commodity on display will be palm fruits or related products like palm oil, brooms made from the branches of the palm tree, etc. If that farm is in a location where plantains, bananas, and root crops like cassava and cocoyam are predominant, that is what there will be more of in the market. In Ghana, therefore you would have markets named after days where trading takes place. Again, I wish to reiterate that the products brought in on a particular day are meant to be sold the same day. In most village markets none of the products will be stored as leftovers. Because most of the items are perishables, the farmers harvest what they hope to sell that day. You will also see live goats, sheep and chickens, etc., sold in the market. This is one aspect you will not see in the big markets in the towns. Except for those who are regularly in the markets, and therefore will 'own' a spot as theirs, you go in and just pick a spot and display your wares (food items) to sell.

The simple village market is practically an empty spot in the village until the next market day. Of course, one will see a few women displaying some wares for sale. Sometimes some of the traders stay the night when their goods are not sold and they hope to sell the rest the following day.

When you go down to the towns and villages on the coast you would find that they have organized 'fish markets'. Until recently, fish markets mainly functioned on Wednesdays and Fridays. In the towns and villages on the coast, it's a taboo (a prohibition) to go fishing on a Tuesday. The cultural belief is that Tuesday is the day for the 'god' of the sea, so no 'man' (no human being) dare go fishing, at the peril of loss of life, sometimes of the entire crew. There are also coastal markets to buy live goats, sheep, cattle, etc.

In the big towns, there are both markets and also what we normally refer to as 'malls'. The malls in Ghana are more the type you would see in Cleveland, where all kinds of shops are found: food shops, retail outlets, small supermarkets, etc., all in one place. The supermarkets are not as big as those you'd find on Miester Road, Lorain, or in Elyria. They are smaller in size, but designed in terms of functionality like your huge supermarkets, with aisles for groceries, toiletries, etc.

As indicated earlier, the markets in the large towns are very different from the village markets, because they are organized into particular 'item spots'. We have specific places for specific items so you need to know where to go to shop for what you want. In a town market you will find booths or stalls for specific items. More on this topic next month - watch for it in the *Lectern*, online or in your mailbox.

Blessings, Pastor Ben