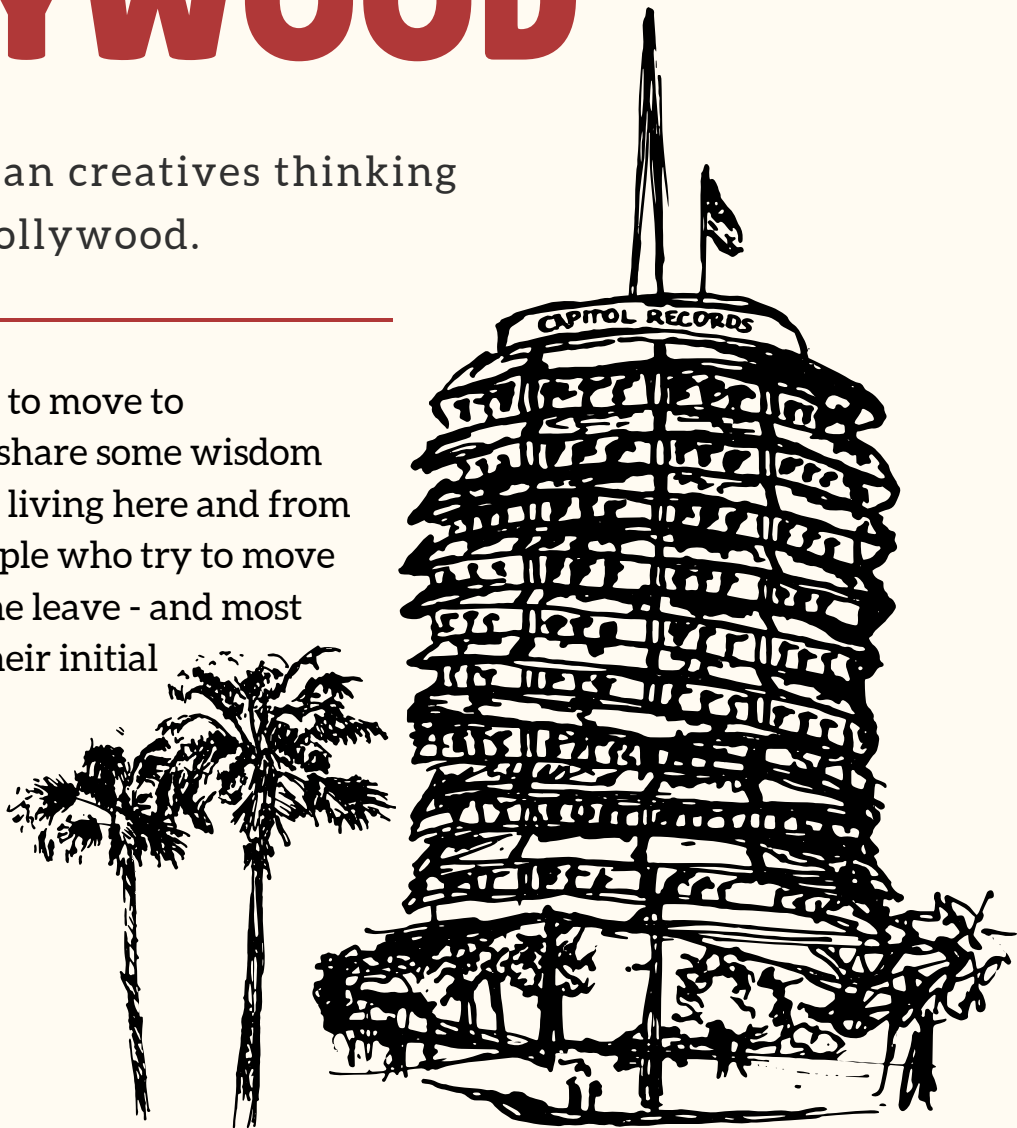


HOLLYWOOD PRAYER NETWORK'S

20 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE COMING TO HOLLYWOOD

A guide for Christian creatives thinking about moving to Hollywood.

Before you take the step to move to Hollywood, we want to share some wisdom that we've learned from living here and from observing the many people who try to move here. Some stay and some leave - and most often that depends on their initial expectations and understanding of this city, industry, and mission field.



There are many resources and links regarding most of the topics below, which are available to you on the HPN website under the “Community” tab. Do your homework and make use of them at www.hollywoodprayernetwork.org.

FUNCTIONAL

1. **Financial:** Make sure you know the cost of living in Los Angeles and have at least 3-6 months of living expenses saved up. It is very difficult to find a job quickly, and the cost of living is extremely high. Be prepared. Minimum in bank \$5000.

“But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it?” (Luke 14:28).

2. **Transportation:** Los Angeles is a large area, with many different neighborhoods and parts of town. It’s not uncommon to have meetings thirty miles apart from each other. Many find it most convenient to have a car, although you will end up having to find and pay for places to park (practice your parallel parking!). If owning a car is not possible, you can use Uber/Lyft (which is expensive) or use public transit. While LA is working to provide more public transit options, public transit often takes longer than driving and can necessitate walking the first/last mile of your trip, to and from bus stops. We recommend researching public transit routes near where you plan to live in LA to see if that option will work for you.

3. **Housing:** Find housing before arriving. We highly recommend finding a place with your own bed, not a friend’s couch. Visit LA before you move to scout out locations and choose a neighborhood to live in. Use resources such as [HPN’s “Housing and Employment” list](#).



4. **Self-sufficiency:** You should be comfortable with living in a big city, driving in traffic (usually for an hour or so at a time), and living on your own. LA is a very isolating city. You can't be dependent on other people to live here (even family, friends, and other Christians). You have to be a self-starter, committed to the insecurity, competitiveness, and expenses associated with living in this city.

VOCATIONAL

5. **Commitment:** It will take time to make progress in your career. We recommend you commit to being here for FIVE YEARS before knowing if Hollywood is right for you. It will take that long just to learn the freeway system. After five years, be honest with yourself if things aren't working out, and be okay with leaving LA to work in media elsewhere or finding another career path.
6. **Talent:** Your goal should be to be better at your craft than anybody else. To be great at what you do takes thousands of hours of training and experience. See: Malcom Gladwell and the principle of 10,000 hours. The process has to be as important as the end goal. You should always be training your area of vocation (whether you're working or not) through classes and workshops. Always be creating something in your discipline to build your portfolio and have finished works to show to people. "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."
-Will Durant.
7. **Assessment:** Have at least one professional or teacher in your field who can give you an honest assessment and critique of your work and your skill level. This should be someone who is active either in teaching or in the industry themselves, not just family and friends. Identify what you are really good at. Start with one discipline and hone your skills in that. Have a focus for your career and lay out a path and goals for yourself. When starting out you are NOT an actor/writer/director/producer, no matter what your mother says.



8. **Expectations:** Don't expect anyone to help you find work or give you special treatment just because they are a fellow Christian. Be aware you are one of thousands coming to Hollywood this year vying for the same competitive jobs. Do not expect your first job(s) in LA to be industry-related. If your main goal is to become "famous," Hollywood is the wrong place to come. You must have a "I'm breaking the doors down" vs. a "Who's going to open the doors for me" attitude.
9. **Employment:** It's hard to get work here, especially within the industry. We have limited employment opportunities for people new in town. Check out our [housing and employment list](#) to help get you jump-started into the industry. Note that temp agencies are a great way to make inroads and work temporarily. Once applying for a temp agency, follow-up in person in order to put a face to your resume and to get on their radar. If you need an agent, you must have credits and experience in your field. You also need to be a part of the Hollywood community to build relationships. Having an agent is only one of many things you need to succeed. But it's hard to get an agent. You will find yourself in the vicious circle of needing an agent to get work and needing work to get an agent. Be patient and know this takes a long time, relationships and experience.
10. **Networking:** Be able to meet new people and put yourself out there with confidence. The industry relies on personal relationships. Whoever has the most friends wins...or at least gets to play on the playground.

EMOTIONAL

11. **Self-awareness:** Know what your moral and ethical lines and boundaries are. Know that the industry is stressful, demanding, and competitive and that you will need to be able to handle it emotionally. You're coming into Babylon. Be like Daniel and his friends. You may be put in charge of the magicians and enchanters. Study how to handle this but don't be afraid!



12. Community: You cannot do it alone. Artists need friends, supporters, pray-ers, and advisors. Find communities of Christians and non-Christians, both inside and outside the industry. It's important to get input, support, and perspective from a balanced variety of people. Be like Mozart and find a great patron to support you emotionally in your work. You must immediately get plugged into a church, a small group or ministry, and community. We have found that the Enemy attacks Christians in Hollywood in three major ways: isolation, discouragement, and fear. Fight those off by being in community.

13. Therapy: Therapy can be beneficial to anyone and everyone, and can be especially helpful if you're moving far from home to a completely new city. If you are looking for a Christian therapist, check out HPN's list of recommendations.

SPIRITUAL

14. Church: You must be plugged into the body of Christ, the Church. There are hundreds of churches in the LA area, and we highly recommend that you check out a few and commit to one soon. Long-term church-hopping is not recommended. Attending a church with many Industry people in attendance can be helpful, especially if you are new in town. Remember, there is no perfect church, and LA churches may be very different from your home church. Pray about what God has for you, how He can use a new church to provide comfort and support but also a healthy challenge to your faith.

15. Prayer: Have people back home and in LA praying for you. Get your family, church, and friends to pray for you. Sign up for an HPN prayer partner.

16. Serve: Have the mindset of serving others, not gaining from them. One of the best ways to get a job in Hollywood is to give rather than just receive. Learn the term: "Servant Leadership". A good place to start serving is with the ministry The Greenhouse.



17. **Spiritual Growth:** As a Christian working in Hollywood, you need to put your spiritual growth as a priority in order to thrive, not just survive. We recommend you join a church, commit to a small group and build relationships with other Christian professionals in order to have accountability, friendship, encouragement and fellowship.
18. **Perseverance:** The Christian life is full of trials, and life in Hollywood is no different. You will likely work long hours, spend time with people who sometimes care more about getting the job done than protecting your feelings, face temptations you may not have faced at home, and feel as though you've hit the wall. Be prepared to suffer, and have places to go to get spiritually filled when you feel you've run dry. "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial that has come upon you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed at the revelation of His glory." (1 Peter 4:12-13).
19. **Small Groups:** If you look at the lives of great Christian artists like C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, you see that they did life in community. We recommend committing to a small group for accountability, prayer, and support (both spiritually and vocationally). Find one through your church or through an entertainment ministry.
20. **Spiritual Battle:** You will get worn down - not by "sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll," but by isolation, discouragement, and fear. Understand spiritual battle, how it can sneak up on you, and how to deal with it. You must know the "WHY you are here" before you learn the "HOW to make it here."

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12).



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Christian Entertainment ministries:
<https://hollywoodprayernetwork.org/entertainment-ministries/>
- Solid Entertainment-Friendly Churches:
<https://hollywoodprayernetwork.org/church-list/>
- Housing/Employment lists:
<https://hollywoodprayernetwork.org/housing-employment/>

BOOKS

- [Imagine by Steve Turner](#)
- [Behind the Screen: Hollywood Insiders on Faith, Film, and Culture](#)
- [Before LA Kills You: Everything Actors Need to Know About the Biz Before Moving to Hollywood \(if you're pursuing acting\)](#)

MOVIES TO WATCH BEFORE YOU COME

- [Sullivan's Travels \(1941\)](#)
- [Sunset Blvd. \(1950\)](#)
- [The Player \(1992\)](#)

Also, check out [AFI Top 100 Films](#)

