



Church Pack

World Refugee Sunday 2018

June 20th is World Refugee Day, and shortly after it was established the World Evangelical Alliance declared the Sundays before and after June 20th to be World Refugee Sunday. In 2018 World Refugee Sunday falls on June 17th and June 24th. Refugee Sunday is a wonderful opportunity for churches to learn more about God's heart for refugees and how they can get involved with serving refugees in their local community. This year, the theme is based on the words of Jesus, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me in" (Matthew 25:35).

Within this Church Pack are some ideas and resources you may like to incorporate into your church service on June 17th, or June 24th.

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has contributed to the World Refugee Sunday Church Pack. A special thank you to Janet Green for designing the posters, Tom Albinson, Whitney Gerdes, Zinash Witsel, Arie de Pater, Joanna Callender, Brian Heasley and Joel Forster.

We would like to thank Talitha Brauer, Caroline Kanya and Dylan Klass, the makers of *'The Peace Between'* and their partners and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to create such a wonderful resource despite such limited resources. And we want to thank all who have assisted in the creation and translation of the resources on www.peacebetweendialogue.com and some amazing advisors who have guided the project.

Grace and peace to you.

Blessings,

Michelle Beckett – World Evangelical Alliance Refugee Task Force
Jan Witsel – Refugee Highway Partnership



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Song Suggestions

Suggestions for Hymns:

A Mighty Fortress – Martin Luther
Amazing Grace - John Newton
Be Still My Soul - John Sibelius
Be Thou My Vision - Dallian Forgaill

Suggestions for Songs:

Be Our Refuge - Peter Vimalasekaran and Andrew Finden
Come Lord Jesus - Noel Richards
Days of Elijah – Robin Mark
Fill Us Up and Send Us Out - Matt Redman
For the Refugee - Rick Brown
God of Justice - Tim Hughes
Hope of the Nations - Brian Doerksen
I Surrender All - Israel Houghton
Lifesong - Casting Crowns
Life of Praise - Mark Hall
Our God Reigns - Leonard Smith
Shine Jesus Shine - Graham Kendrick
Shout to the North and the South - Robin Mark
You Never Let Go - Matt Redman



Prayer

A Prayer for World Refugee Sunday 2018

Father God,

We lift to you every man, woman and child who has fled for their lives due to war, violence and persecution. May you bring your comfort and help them to find a safe haven. Abba Father may you be their refuge. Thank you Lord, in Your Word it says: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).’ Lord Jesus our healer, we pray that you bring healing for the traumas and suffering refugees have experienced. Thank Lord Jesus, in Scripture it says: “And by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

Abba Father, we lift to you the precious refugee children who have become separated from their parents and family. Father God, please keep them safe and protect them from any kind of abuse. Help the children to be quickly reunited with their parents and family. Lord Jesus, heal your children and provide for them. Let them know your peace and everlasting love. Thank you Lord God, in Your Word it says:

“He will take pity on the weak and needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight” (Psalm 72:13-14).

Almighty God, we earnestly pray for an end to all wars, poverty and torture that causes people to leave their homes and become refugees and forcibly displaced. We ask you to: “make wars to cease from the ends of the earth” (Psalm 46:9), so children and families can once again enjoy safety and live life in all its fullness. Lord Jesus, we pray you give each of us your compassion and show us how we can personally and collectively respond to the needs of refugees in our local communities, our nation and around the world.

Lord God, we lift to you our local government leaders, government leaders, officials of the European institutions and the United Nations; that you may give them your insight and wisdom to ensure an effective response to the refugee crisis and to solve the underlying causes of conflict and to build peace.

We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Here Are Some Further Prayer Resources:

Let Us Pray

Provides some creative prayer ideas.

7 Days of Prayer for Refugees and Forcibly Displaced People

Designed to be used over a week, providing 7 different reflections and prayer points for church communities, small groups and individuals to use. Our prayer is that through this Prayer Guide, you will be encouraged and inspired to pray; and engage with the struggles and challenges facing refugees and forcibly displaced people all over the world.



***“He will take pity on the weak and needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight”
(Psalm 72:13-14).***

Sermon Outline

Why Should Christians be Concerned About Refugees?

The Bible is filled with exhortations to care for the needy, vulnerable, marginalized and oppressed. Followers of Jesus Christ are called to be humble people living lives marked by mercy, justice and hospitality. We have specific reasons to be highly motivated to seek the protection and welfare of forcibly displaced people. From the divine banishment of Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23,24) to the final book of the Bible penned by John while in exile on the island of Patmos, stories of forced displacement run throughout Scripture.

Sometimes the causes are simple and other times complex. Some people were forcibly displaced as a result of their own choices and actions (Adam and Eve, Cain, Moses, etc.), while others were driven from their homes in response to climate change/natural disaster (Noah, Lot), conflict (Hagar, Joseph), famine (Jacob, Abraham, Naomi), war/exile (the nation of Israel, Esther, Nehemiah, Daniel) or persecution (David, Jesus, Philip, Aquila and Priscilla, Peter, the early church).

“The alien living with you in your land must be treated as one of your native born. Love him as you love yourself...”

The alien is often mentioned in the Bible together with the fatherless and the widow. They are revealed to be vulnerable people for whom God cares. God expects his people to care for them in tangible ways (including shelter, food, clothing, justice and hospitality). The Bible is filled with divine mandates for the people of God to welcome, protect and care for the alien. A small sampling of such texts includes Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Deuteronomy 31:12,13; Isaiah 58:7, Matthew 25:35, 36. They can be summed up with the words found in Leviticus 19:33, 34, *“The alien living with you in your land must be treated as one of your native born. Love him as you love yourself...”*

The Bible is filled with exhortations to care for the needy, vulnerable, marginalized and oppressed. Followers of Jesus Christ are called to be humble people living lives marked by mercy, justice and hospitality. We have specific reasons to be highly motivated to seek the protection and welfare of forcibly displaced people.

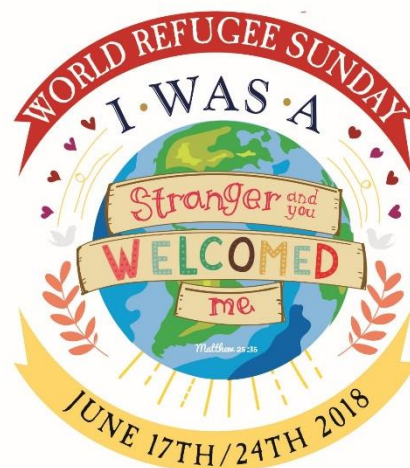
Followers of Jesus are motivated to seek the protection and welfare of refugees because by serving them, we serve Jesus.

Political persecution forced Jesus and his family to flee in the night to Egypt when he was a young child. Upon their return, they did not feel it was safe to return to their hometown in Judea and settled elsewhere (in Nazareth). Jesus personally identifies with the refugee and returnee. They can also identify with him.

Jesus identified himself with the stranger to the point of saying that when we invite a stranger into our space, we welcome him (Matthew 25:35). In similar fashion, Jesus identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, those needing clothing, the sick and the prisoner. Forcibly displaced people often experience all of these conditions.

In a time of multiple humanitarian crises forcing tens of millions to flee their homes and countries of origin, followers of Jesus Christ would do well to rediscover our God-given responsibility and privilege to seek the protection and welfare of forcibly displaced people in the world.

***Sermon Outline provided by Thomas Albinson,
President of the International Association For Refugees.***



Video: The Peace Between

The European Evangelical Alliance, have produced a 30 minute film entitled '*The Peace Between*'. *The Peace Between* is a short, professional film featuring 3 friendships between a European and an asylum seeker, or refugee. Our hope is that churches, student and community groups will want to host an event to show the film and host a discussion.

Local churches could choose to show the film trailer during a service for World Refugee Sunday (17 or 24 June) or any other moment during the week. Churches could then encourage their small groups to host a discussion event in the week or month that follows World Refugee Sunday. Or maybe they will choose to host an event for the wider community.

For more info check out: www.peacebetweendialogue.com

On this dedicated website you will find:

- A trailer of the film
- A simple registration form to receive a link to the complete film
- A facilitator's guide with discussion material
- Outlines for prayers & sermons
- Supplementary materials to go even further



Other Ideas

- **Invite a guest speaker** - does someone from your church work with refugees? Invite them to come and speak about their ministry and share about the needs of refugees in your community.
- **Invite a refugee** who is willing to share his/her own experiences. You can help them prepare their story and for speaking in public.
- **Read out some testimonies** - here are two you can choose from:

The Work of Jonathan



Zinash' Story



Children and Youth Resources

Resources for Children Aged 5-10

In this section there is a selection of activities that could be used during the service, or when the groups meet during the week.

Talk (10-15 minutes)

Objective: To help children understand what is a refugee. For the children to see God's heart for them and; how He wants desires for them to be the hands and feet of Jesus towards refugees.

Key Verse: "Which of these three, do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise" (Luke 10: 36-37).

Opening Question: When you and your family get ready to go on holiday, what has to be done before you can leave? What do you need to bring with you?

Yes, there are many things that need to be done before you and your family can leave for your holiday. You need to pack your clothes, your toothbrush, cuddly toys and make sure all the lights are turned off in your home before you are ready to leave.

Q: Have any of you had to leave your house really quickly and maybe didn't get a chance to take everything you wanted? Maybe, you overslept and had to leave quickly and forgot something for school. Can you remember what it is that you forgot?

(Leave time for answers. Feel free to share a short story of your when you forgot something that you needed for holiday, or for your work day).

It can potentially ruin our holiday, or our day when we forget something. Your teacher may be upset with you if you didn't return your homework, or maybe you had to go back home to get what you forgot and that made you really late. This

can be frustrating, but most of us were able to find a solution, and had a home to go back to with all of our belongings still there.

Q: Has anyone ever heard the word refugee? Does anyone know what that means?

(Leave time for answers) Yes, a refugee is someone who has been forced to leave their home, because it is no longer safe for them to stay there. This can be because of a war, persecution, or other types of danger. This means that most families have to leave almost everything behind and leave their homes very quickly. They most often have to walk kilometer after kilometer, so they cannot bring suitcases or all the things they need, or want. They leave their homes not knowing where they will go, but they know they can't stay where they are.

Q: Did you know that in the world today, there are over 65 million people who have been forced to leave their homes? And, that over half of those people are children like you? How do you think you would feel if you too had to leave your home because of danger; and you didn't know what was going to happen to you or your family and friends? (For example: helpless, hopeless, sad, angry, etc).

Yes, those are great answers. There are a lot of things their hearts may be feeling at the moment they leave, and even more as they continue on their journey towards safety.

Q: Now, most of us in this room have probably never had to experience this, but did you know that Jesus was also a refugee?

YES! Does anyone remember who wanted to kill Jesus after he was born? Yes, the king named Herod was jealous of Jesus, and feared that he would be more powerful than he was, and so he wanted to kill Jesus. That is why an angel came and told Jesus' earthly dad, Joseph, in a dream to run away. Please can someone read Matthew 2:13-15 for me?

"Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in the dream and said, "Rise take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod" (Matthew 2: 13-15).

How incredible it is that we have a Saviour like Jesus who knows what it is like to be a refugee! We truly have a God who knows what we feel and go through every day.

Q: How do you think God feels about the millions of people who have been forced to leave their homes in the world today?

Yes, He loves them, He wants them to find refuge, and He sees them.

Q: What do you think God wants us, His people to do?

Brainstorm ideas with the children and allow them to share things they can do; and things they want the church to do. Those are all really great ideas! Let us finish with another story.

Q: Does anyone remember the story of the Good Samaritan?

(Retell the story using Luke 10... if you have time feel let the children act out the parable).

Yes, refugees are our neighbours and we are called to be merciful towards them and love them. That is why our key verse for today is:

“Which of these three, do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise” (Luke 10: 36-37).

Prayer

Jesus, thank you that you know what it is like to be refugee. Thank you that you see each person who is afraid, sad, or desperate for safety right now. We ask that you would comfort them with only the comfort that you can bring. Wrap your strong arms around them, and show them your love and mercy right now. Holy Spirit, we ask that you would help us love our refugee neighbours. Remind us to pray, and use us as your hands and feet in this world. We pray for peace; and for wars to cease and your kingdom to come on earth as it is in Heaven. We love you Jesus! Amen.

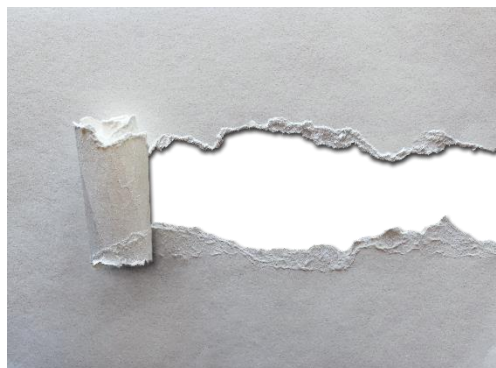
Activities for Children

Building a Temporary Shelter

Divide the group into either pairs, or groups of three. Give each group some cardboard boxes, pegs, sellotape, masking tape and scissors. Each group has approximately 10 minutes to make their own temporary shelter. Once the groups have finished the task ask them to come and sit together as a group. Ask the group to imagine that they themselves were a refugee; who had had to leave their home, school and friends, because of violence and build a temporary shelter elsewhere. Ask them how would they feel? What emotions do you think you would feel? Ask them to think of ways that they could help refugees and forcibly displaced people. Some possible suggestions can include pray, fundraise for a local ministry, or a ministry in another country.

Make a Candle Holder

Decorate a glass jar and put a candle in it. The candle holder can then be taken home and used as a reminder to pray for refugees and forcibly displaced people.



Children's Prayer for World Refugee Sunday

Heavenly Father, please protect every refugee around the world.

We pray that they may know that you love them and care for them, Jesus.

We pray that you will help them to have enough food to eat and that you would give them somewhere safe to live.

We pray for all refugee children and ask that they may be given the opportunity to go to school where they are now living.

We pray the blood of Jesus over all refugees.

Thank you Father God.

We love you Jesus.

Amen.

Resources for Youth Aged 11-18

In this section there are a variety of activities that could be used during the service, or for when the youth meet together.

Talk - What Does Love Look Like?

It is vital that as Christians we respond with compassion to refugees and forcibly displaced people who are suffering and in need. A constant theme throughout the Bible from the Old Testament through to the New Testament is that we are to welcome strangers. In Hebrews 13:2, we are reminded to welcome the stranger because we may entertain angels unaware. The Gospel of Matthew says that as we welcome the alien, we welcome Jesus:

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me' (Matthew 25:37-40)

From Leviticus through to James there is a clear command to welcome the stranger. In fact, James boldly suggests that: "Religion that our God the Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27).

The Bible often mentions the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. God truly cares for vulnerable people. God requires us to care for them in tangible ways including providing food and clothing, ensuring justice, giving hospitality and provision of shelter.

God expects His people to treat foreigners with justice. Examples include Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:33-34 and Deuteronomy 1:16. Please can I have three volunteers to look up and read these particular verses, thank you. In Luke 10:27, Jesus clearly commands us to love our neighbor. An expert in the law once asked Jesus to define, 'who is my neighbor?' His intent was less to know who he was commanded to love, but rather to know who he was not required to love. Jesus responded with the well known parable about the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). It is the story of a man who was walking through dangerous territory. The man was vulnerable.

He was beaten, stripped and left almost dead. When a priest and a Levite saw the man they did not stop to help him. When a foreign Samaritan saw the man he stopped to give him medical care and took him to a safe place where he could care for him. The traveler also promised to cover any additional costs to pay for the care of the man.

This story has as much relevance today as we perceive the similarities between the victim in the story with refugees. Like the victim in the story, they too are vulnerable as they have travelled along a dangerous road having experienced robbery, abuse, physical suffering, trauma, exploitation and near death.

Throughout the Bible there are stories of displaced and persecuted people and how God goes with them. Firstly, there is the divine banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3: 23-24) to the final book of the Bible written by John while in exile on the island of Patmos. The stories of forced displacement run throughout Scripture. There are some people who were forcibly displaced as a result of their own choices and actions such as Adam and Eve, Cain, Moses, while Noah and Lot were driven from their homes in response to climate change/natural disaster, Hagar and Joseph were driven from their homes due to conflict. Jacob, Abraham and Naomi left because of famine. The nation of Israel, Esther, Nehemiah, Daniel left their homes due to war/exile and David, Jesus, Philip, Aquila and Priscilla, Peter, the early church left due to persecution.

The pervasive refugee narrative flows through the Bible and it is apparent that God is powerfully at work in the lives of people who have been forcibly displaced. In the light of having looked at what the Bible has to say about refugees and displaced people it would be good to think about what God is asking each of us to do to help. Allow the group to discuss possibilities of how they too can be involved in helping support refugees and forcibly displaced people in their local communities, nation and globally. Some possible suggestions can include pray, fundraise for a local ministry or a ministry in another country; get involved with a local project that works with refugees and asylum seekers.



Youth Activities

- **Sleep Out for Refugees**

Sleep Out for Refugees is a simulation experience designed to enable young people to connect with the lives of refugees from across the world. Sleep Out for Refugees challenges young people to spend 24 hours living in a temporary shelter such as a tent and to eat only one hot meal. During the 24 hours there can be several opportunities to pray for refugees in different parts of the world. We hope that as young people join in prayer and experience what life is like for refugees their hearts and minds will engage at a deeper level with a desire to see transformation in the lives of refugees.

- **Fundraise**

Prayerfully consider fundraising for a local refugee ministry, or a refugee ministry in another country.

- **Make a Candle Holder**

Decorate a glass jar and put a nightlight in it. The candle holder can then be taken home and used as a reminder to pray for refugees.

- **Build a Prayer Tent inside Your Church**

The tent could be used as a place where people pray, or as a poignant reminder over the 65.6 million people who are currently displaced due to war, violence and persecution.

- **Graffiti / Prayer Wall**

Invite people to create a message wall (on several large flip chart pages) with pictures, words and messages depicting refugees (boats, tents, water, desert, ruin, loss, family, headline titles, scripture verses, etc). Ask others to add to it as they come and go.

- **Prayer Ideas**

Hand out newspapers and ask people to cut out a story about refugees or people fleeing violence in the Middle East, or another region of the world. Ask people to read the newspaper clipping. After people have read you could have a time to pray about the situations that have just been read from newspapers. Set out 65 colored nightlights on a heatproof tray or tray of sand. Once the nightlights are lit ask the group to pray for over 65 million men, women, children and babies who are refugees and displaced around the world.

A Youth Prayer for World Refugee Sunday 2018

Father God,

We lift to you every man, woman and child who has fled for their lives due to war, violence and persecution. May you bring your comfort and help them to find a safe haven. Abba Father may you be their refuge. Thank you Lord, in Your Word it says: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Lord Jesus our healer, we pray that you bring healing for the traumas and suffering refugees have experienced. Thank Lord Jesus, in Scripture it says: "And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

Abba Father, we lift to you the precious refugee children who have become separated from their parents and family. Father God, please keep them safe and protect them from any kind of abuse. Help the children to be quickly reunited with their parents and family. Lord Jesus, heal your children and provide for them. Let them know your peace and everlasting love. Thank you Lord God, in Your Word it says:

"He will take pity on the weak and needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight" (Psalm 72:13-14).

Almighty God, we earnestly pray for an end to all wars, poverty and torture that causes people to leave their homes and become refugees and internally displaced. We ask you to: "make wars to cease from the ends of the earth" (Psalm 46:9), so children and families can once again enjoy safety and live life in all its fullness.

Lord Jesus, we pray you give each of us your compassion and show us how we can personally and collectively respond to the needs of refugees in our local communities, our nation and around the world.

Lord God, we lift to you our local government leaders, government leaders, officials of the European institutions and the United Nations; that you may give them your insight and wisdom to ensure an effective response to the refugee crisis and to solve the underlying causes of conflict and to build peace.

We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Youth Worship

You could have a time of worship which is led by the young people. Here is a selection of songs and hymns that could be sung:

A Mighty Fortress – Martin Luther

Amazing Grace - John Newton

Be Still My Soul - John Sibelius

Be Thou My Vision - Dallian Forgaill.

Be Our Refuge - Peter Vimalasekaran
and Andrew Finden

Come Lord Jesus - Noel Richards

Days of Elijah – Robin Mark

Fill Us Up and Send Us Out - Matt
Redman

For the Refugee - Rick Brown

God of Justice - Tim Hughes

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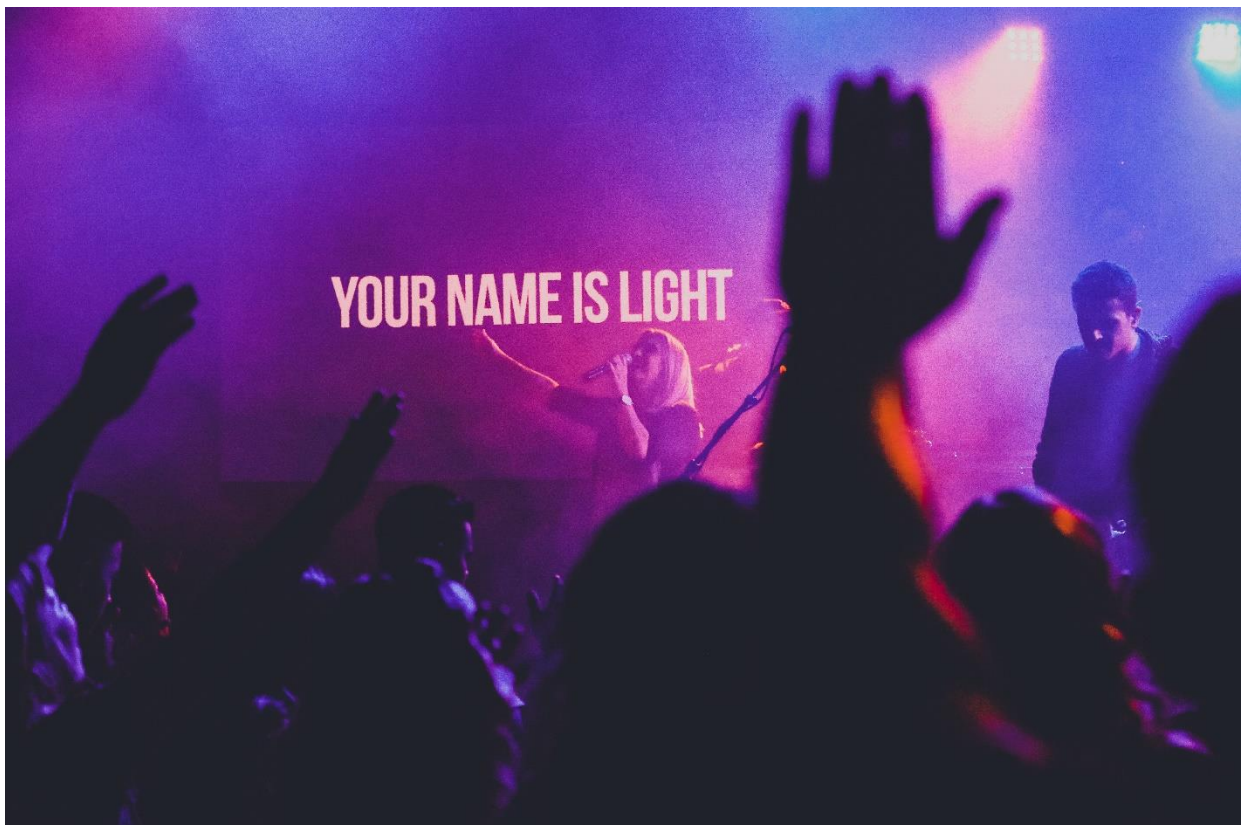
Our God Reigns - Leonard Smith

Shine Jesus Shine - Graham Kendrick

Shout to the North and the South -
Robin Mark

I Surrender All - Israel Houghton

You Never Let Go - Matt Redman



Let Us Pray

Let us join together on World Refugee Sunday 2018 to pray together for over 65.6 million people who are currently displaced in the world today.¹ We would love to see churches, cathedrals and places of worship putting up a tent inside their buildings as a poignant reminder that there are men, women, children and babies who are displaced and seeking refuge. The tent serves as both a symbolic reminder to people and as a place for people to pray together.

Prayer is Powerful

The Bible teaches that prayer is the most transformational force in the lives of individuals, churches and even nations.² Right now we are faced with an unprecedented scale of global migration due to causal factors such as climate change, war, violence, persecution and hunger. If ever there was a time to pray it is now. Let us hold fast to the truth that prayer is powerful and God answers our prayers. Indeed, the apostle James states that, “the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

God’s Promise to Us

As we pray God will do something, as prayer changes everything. As God’s people, let us hold fast to His word, praise Him at all times and humble ourselves in prayer. Across the globe, as the Body of Christ may we truly bow the knee to our Heavenly Father on behalf of all the precious refugees and forcibly displaced people. In 11 Chronicles 7:14 we are reminded that:

‘If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land’ (11 Chronicles 7:14)

This is a truly magnificent promise from God.

¹ UNHCR, *Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2016* (20 June 2017), p.2.

² Greig, Pete, *Dirty Glory* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 2016), p. 8.

A House of Prayer for All Nations

The vision for World Refugee Sunday is to create “a house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:7) in our churches across the world, just as the mandate was for the apostles. Let us remember that prayer is inextricably linked to mission and justice. We are not solely focusing on prayer, but also mission. Pete Greig, Founder of the 24/7 Prayer Movement around the world, explains in his book *Dirty Glory* what is meant by a house of prayer for all nations:

“When Jesus denounced the temple for its inadequacy as ‘a house of prayer for all nations’, he was not condemning it so much for a lack of prayer (there were regular times of prayer in the temple each day), but rather for failing to turn those prayers outwards to be a missional and hospitable blessing to ‘the nations’. His message was unequivocal: a house of prayer that is inaccessible, unwelcoming and disengaged from the lost is failing to be a true house of prayer, no matter how many hours of intercession and worship it might clock up along the way. Those who pray without engaging missionally are simply missing the point.”³

The Church needs to be the place where we pray and then go to the world, to the needy, the poorest and the lost. If we skip the second part, we’ll have no power to speak up and influence the course of history in this refugee crisis and human tragedy.

To become a real house of prayer for all nations, we propose to open our churches to refugees and forcibly displaced people, so they can come to not only find a shelter and refuge, but also fill their spiritual needs to come to know the love of Jesus, pray and worship him.

³ Greig, Pete, *Dirty Glory* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 2016), p. 183-184.

7 Days of Prayer for Refugees and Forcibly Displaced People

About This Prayer Guide

Currently, over 65.6 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations.⁴ World Refugee Sunday is taking place on the 17th and 24th June 2018. The Refugee Highway Partnership, the World Evangelical Alliance and the European Evangelical Alliance, are calling Christians to pray for transformation.

The Bible teaches that prayer is the most transformational force in the lives of individuals, churches and even nations. As God's people, we are called to hold fast to His word, praise Him at all times and humble ourselves in prayer.

In the book of James we read that: "the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective," so we must start with prayer; crying out for change.

The vision for World Refugee Sunday is to focus not simply on prayer, but on mission too. As we start to pray, our hearts are transformed and we are driven into the world to practically bring change.

How to Use This Prayer Guide

This Prayer Guide, designed to be used over a week, gives 7 different reflections and prayer points for church communities, small groups and individuals to use. Our prayer is that through this Prayer Guide, you will be encouraged and inspired to pray; and engage with the struggles and challenges facing refugees and forcibly displaced people all over the world.



⁴ UNHCR, *Global Trends for Forced Displacement in 2016* (19 June 2017), p.2.

Day 1: Refugees Have a Name

Reflect

We so often use the term 'refugees' that it's easy to forget that this is not the sole identity of those who are seeking refuge. Each individual refugee has a personal name, and family name; and these are known by God. God knows each name; He knows each story. Every refugee is loved by God.

In the Bible, Hagar was a slave and she found herself displaced and on the run. Yet, in this place of desperation God met with her and transformed her perspective:

"She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me" (Genesis 16:13). Irrespective of how the world categorises people, God sees each individual for who they are.

Pray

Lord, we pray for the individuals and families who have been displaced and labelled as refugees. God, you know their names and you love them for who they are. Help us to see beyond the label, and remember they are people like us with fears, dreams, desires, hopes and futures. God help us to view them as human beings through your eyes. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



Day 2: Pray For Peace

Reflect

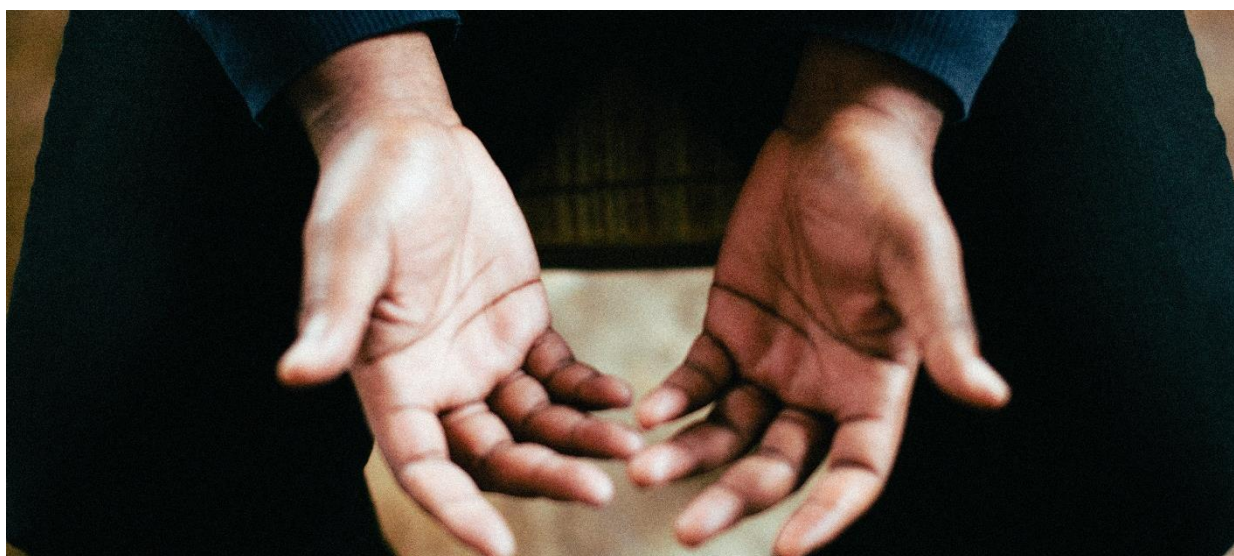
World peace can easily become a routine prayer we use when we can't think of anything else to say in response to difficult situations. However, we should regularly be passionately praying for peace to prevail in our broken world. If peace breaks out; the world changes.

Let us hold fast to the truth that prayer is powerful and God answers our prayers, and persist in praying for peace, to our God, who is the Prince of Peace.

"The LORD gives strength to His people; the LORD blesses His people with peace" (Psalm 29:11).

Pray

Almighty God, we earnestly pray that you would raise up peacemakers and bring peace to countries where wars, violence and persecution are forcing people from their homes. We pray especially for peace and safety in countries especially affected by forced displacement like Syria, Colombia, Afghanistan, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Nigeria, Ukraine, Yemen⁵ and Myanmar. We ask you, Almighty God to, "make wars to cease from the ends of the earth" (Psalm 49:9), so children and families can once again enjoy safety and live life in all its fullness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



⁵ UNHCR, *Global Trends for Forced Displacement in 2016* (19 June 2017), p.6.

Day 3: Families Belong Together

Reflect

In times of chaos and war, families become separated. Children get lost; fathers go ahead; family members drown at sea. In a new and foreign place, it is impossible to imagine what it must feel like to be disconnected from blood relatives; isolated and alone.

We believe that families belong together. Today, our prayer is for the vulnerable, lost and frightened. If you are able, you can help refugees to find a sense of family and home by hosting one or more refugees, either at home or in your community. There are many different initiatives that offer support in this area that you can find online.

Pray

“He will take pity on the weak and needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in His sight” (Psalm 72:12-14).

Abba Father, thank you that you provide protection and care for the weakest and vulnerable. Protect children, parents and family members who have been separated from their relatives. Keep them safe, and help them to know your peace and everlasting love. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.



Day 4: Don't Turn Your Back

Reflect

The Irish rock band, U2, wrote the following lyrics in one of their songs:

*“And it's true we are immune
When fact is fiction and TV reality
And today the millions cry
We eat and drink while tomorrow they die.”*

In the middle of this week of prayer, it would be so easy to become immune and apathetic to the challenges we're praying for. Yet, we're reminded of Jesus, who saw the multitudes harassed and helpless; he endured and persevered even to the point of death. He didn't turn away; he didn't turn his back.

Our prayer today is that we will keep going and that we will persevere in prayer; in giving a voice to the voiceless; that we won't turn away and stop looking because it's too painful, but with Christ's help we will face the reality of the suffering in the world with a sense of hope.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up...” (Galatians 6:9).

Pray

Lord God, today we commit to not look away. We ask for your compassion; for your Holy Spirit to empower us to keep going, to keep asking, to keep helping refugees who are suffering. Father, come to those who work directly with refugees; give them fresh energy from heaven to keep going. Help us to remember your example of endurance and fix our eyes on your hope even in the brokenness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



Day 5: Remember Forcibly Displaced Children

Reflect

An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from their homes. Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.⁶

Pray

Pray for these precious children who live in very difficult circumstances. Pray that God would give them their daily bread. Pray that Jesus would heal their hearts, minds and bodies from the traumas they have suffered. Pray that Abba Father would protect His beautiful children from people who would like to prey upon them and exploit their vulnerability. Pray that they would know their Heavenly Father's presence with them and that He would renew their faith, joy and strength with each sunrise. Pray that God would give them hope and give thanks that He knows the plans He has for them:

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

God's ultimate plans for all forcibly displaced children are not affliction and evil; but rather His promise is a future and a hope. God, in His infinite wisdom, mercy and unfailing hesed (covenant love), has destined them a future beyond their suffering.⁷



⁶ UNHCR, *Global Trends for Forced Displacement in 2016* (19 June 2017), p.2.

⁷ Barnabas Aid. (May/June 2016, p.3).

Day 6: What Can I Do?

Reflect

As Christians, we are called to take action against injustice. Here are some ways we can make a difference:

- **Continue to Pray**

Commit to joining in prayer at 9:36 a.m. and 9:36 p.m. every day for refugees and forcibly displaced people. Jesus took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me” (Mark 9:36-37).

Form a prayer group that meets regularly to pray. Even if you can't be physically in the same room, arrange regular times of prayer for refugees and commit to stop and pray at the same time.

- **Advocacy**

Find out what your local and national leaders are doing in response to the refugee crisis. Pray for them and offer to support them, but also challenge them to do more.

- **Talk to Your Church Leaders**

What are they doing? What is your church's response to the refugee crisis?

Pray

Lord Jesus, give each of us your compassion, and show us how we can personally and collectively respond to the needs of refugees in our local communities, our nation, and around the world. Help us to take action where we should. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others” (Philippians 2: 3:4).



Day 7: Leaders Who Are Peacemakers!

Reflect

The refugee crisis is complex and fraught with challenges, but we need brave leaders, with open hearts and minds to look for innovative and creative ways in which to bring about an end to this crisis. We need leaders who will be peacemakers, and will work hard to make peace. We must pray with hope that God can inspire those who lead our nations with ways and means to solve this crisis.

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Pray

Lord God, we lift to you local government leaders, government leaders, officials of the European institutions and the United Nations. Please provide insight and wisdom to ensure an effective response to the refugee crisis and to solve the underlying causes of conflict; and ultimately to build peace. We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



The Work of Jonathan



I was walking through Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya and saw my friend, Hamid,¹ sitting outside of the simple mud brick shelter that he calls home. He called me over and asked if I remembered our conversation earlier in the year.

How I could I forget?

Hamid had invited me for tea in his home. He told me how he and his family had been refugees for more than a decade with no end in sight. His wife was suffering from debilitating depression. They were losing heart.

He introduced me to his children and asked whether they would ever be able to leave Kakuma. The question is valid. Many refugees are well into their third decade of living in the camp.

Hamid shared his very real fear of losing hope – something many refugees struggle with on a daily basis. To them, hope is as tangible and essential to life as food and water.

I'll never forget his words: *"I know you cannot open the door to America for us, but perhaps you can open a window?"*

I told him that I don't have the power to open a window or a door. But I went on to say that I know the One who has all authority and who can open doors that no one can shut. I told him how the Bible says that God loves us and cares for us. I shared how we can tell God about our needs and struggles and that we can ask him for help in the name of Jesus. I asked if he would like me to pray for him and his family. With his permission, I prayed with him under the hot Kakuma sun. He appeared deeply moved. I left his home that day wondering what God would do.

Fast forward to the present conversation.

After recounting our visit together last February, Hamid said, "God heard your prayer! That very day, the UN contacted us to ask if we wanted to register for resettlement to the USA! Your God heard your prayer!" His wife then came out of their home. She too was smiling. She looked at me and said, "God heard your prayer! Thank you!" She was clearly in her right mind. What a transformation!

God heard. Faith projected fresh hope onto their circumstances. Hamid and his family found new strength to help them on their difficult journey.

Scripture tells us that when David was a refugee on the run from King Saul, his friend, Jonathan, went into the desert to find him and "*help him find strength in God*" (1 Samuel 23:16). While Jonathan may not have been able to rescue David or meet all of his humanitarian needs, he could still offer life-giving hope and encouragement.

Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, noted that "*...for the vast majority of uprooted people, there are few things as powerful as their faith in helping them cope with fear, loss, separation, and destitution. Faith is also central to hope and resilience.*"²

Humanitarian agencies work hard to provide refugees with safety, shelter, food, water and medical care. But even when these important physical needs are met, refugees still wrestle with fear, heartache and isolation. There remains a need for people to meet them on their journey, offer relationship and strengthen hope.

One in every 122 people alive today is forcibly displaced.³ Many of these women, children and men are losing heart. They need a Jonathan. Just ask Hamid.

By Tom Albinson, President of International Association for Refugees

¹ Name changed

² Opening remarks by Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at the "High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges - Theme: Faith and Protection". Delivered at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, 12 December 2012. Page 4.

³ "Worldwide displacement hits all-time high as war and persecution increase", UNHCR, 18, June 2015. See <http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html>.

Zinash' Story



“Show your love for refugees, but respect their privacy”

After surviving her own journey, Zinash Witsel supports other people arriving to Europe. “I try and help them as best as I can, because I know how it feels to be a refugee.”

“As a refugee you don’t always feel as a human being”. Zinash’ long journey to Europe lead her to lose confidence, hope and her own identity.

Now many things have changed. She found stability, a new home, married Jan and “God gave us a beautiful daughter las December”, she explains. They live in Antwerp, Belgium.

“In my life I didn’t get a chance to study, what makes it more difficult to find a job I really like. For the moment I’m at home with my baby but in future I hope to do some courses and get a nice part-time job.”

Her desire now is to connect with other refugees, help them to find a safe place and give them hope. “In our church in Antwerp we meet many refugees from different places and also in my personal network I know people making their way into Europe.”

“I try and help them as best as I can, because I know how it feels like myself to be a refugee. Sometimes we visit people or invite them in our house just to encourage them and pray with them. Other times we help them get the right information or contacts or give them a little material support.”

Question. How did your difficult journey as a refugee affect you?

Answer. My personal experience is that as a refugee you don’t always feel like a human being. My journey was so terrible and heavy. My freedom was taken away, but also my confidence.

From the moment I left my country everything was new and strange for me. Both physically and mentally it was very heavy. The way was not easy and I walked for days through the desert. My story is very long and complicated but after a long time I arrived in Europe and I was so happy to be in a safe and peaceful environment.

Q. What role did your faith play in all the situations you went through?

A. Jesus is the one who gave me hope and happiness. Even when life was very difficult and my heart was crying, Jesus was always with me. Every day I was listening to worship music in my language. It made me feel peaceful.

Now when I look back I had a lot of good times being with God in that period. I am happy my life is stable now. I think that whatever happens, God will always take care of me.

Q. Are there specific struggles that women refugees like you face?

A. I think women are more vulnerable than men. We are more sensitive and lose our confidence.

We have to be careful for physical and sexual abuse. Actually as a lady you can't trust anyone. You have to be strong and fight for yourself.

Another practical thing is health care. Women have their period each month and need the right materials and privacy to take care of themselves. Unfortunately that is not always available.

I'm a mother now and I also think about a lot of pregnant ladies who are on the way. They need extra care but the reality is they often don't get it.

Q. What are the main dangers women face in their journey?

A. Abuse. Human smugglers are trying to make their benefits and not all of them care about the way they do it.

Some help you crossing border, others force you into jobs you don't want to do and enslave you. Not only on the road to Europe. This is also taking place inside of Europe!

Q. Are there some things Europeans should know about women who come to Europe as refugees?

A. They experience lots of dangers and stress. Therefore, they might react strange to the many questions you ask, but they didn't come here to share how bad their journey was. They came here to start a new life!

It is important not to stamp them as 'refugee', but really see them as women. Before they left their country they had their home, their family, their work, their qualities. Cooking delicious meals and making themselves look beautiful, go shopping and having fun with friends.

Q. What can churches do better?

A. For Christians reaching out to refugee women it is important to show your love but at the same time respect their privacy.

Very often we went through things that you only have seen in the movies. Don't ask too many detailed questions about the problems from the past but rather focus on the future. What are their dreams? And how can your church help them realise those dreams?

Sometimes creating a place where women can just relax means a lot. Have a room for some tea or coffee. Do a baking party or play some games. It helps to feel part of a bigger community and helps to grow their confidence in their new place.

The most important thing: give them hope. Maybe we can't always find a solution for their situation, but tell them about Jesus! With Jesus in our lives we have a perspective that goes beyond this life!

Source: Joel Forster, Evangelical Focus