

BEFRIENDING A REFUGEE FAMILY

Experience of Refugees

- There are 82.4 million forcibly displaced people, 24 million are refugees.
- Most refugee families are experiencing Post Traumatic Stress from war and grief over loss: loss of family members and friends, jobs, homes, and even country.
- Couples are navigating the highs and lows of marriage while under the stress of an unknown environment.
- Another stress refugee families have is learning to raise their children in a new culture.
- New schools can be intimidating and confusing to refugee parents also.
 - Sometimes the refugee parents are looked down on because of their limited English and inability to communicate.
 - Friends can be a help by assisting with filling out school forms and even going with refugee parents to meet with teachers.
 - We can also help connect families with preschool screening agencies.

Befriending the Family

- One of the greatest losses for the refugees is their family and friends. So the need is great for someone to walk alongside them through this difficult transition time.
- We depend on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, to help us bring comfort and healing.
- Learning where they are from, how long they have been in their new country and genuinely showing interest in their life is a good place to start.
- When English is minimal, Google Translate is an app that can help.
- Stopping by to visit with them, asking if they need help with something they don't understand, even reading time sensitive mail; all are ways to help them.
- Hospitality is a core value of many cultures. This is an opportunity for all of us to accept invitations from them to share a meal.

Sharing about Christ

- Wanting to share Jesus always begins with prayer. We are asking God to bring revelation of who Jesus is, also asking God to give them dreams and visions of Jesus.
 - We are sensitive to their beliefs and respectful of their religion, so we always ask them if we can pray and ask Jesus to help them and bless them.
 - It is the consistent love, friendship and our Christian witness with the refugee families that opens their hearts to Jesus.
 - Holidays in many cultures have spiritual significance. Being interested in a refugee family's holidays is important
 - Local families can invite refugee children to attend Christian kids camps or Vacation Bible Schools with their children.
 - After all their trauma and loss, restoring value and dignity to them brings about healing in their lives.
 - Not everyone wants a handout all the time. It is humbling to continually have to ask for things, so we want to make sure we allow them to teach, and we listen.
 - Learning how to cook a traditional meal, trying to speak their language and using their greetings when we meet them shows that we have a genuine interest in them.
 - When we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit and when the time is right, asking them about their beliefs and religious traditions is important in your friendship.
 - It's important to let them know about your faith early in your relationship.
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