

World Refugee Day Prayer Guide

Each year, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) releases an update on the refugee crisis around the world. The numbers are stark. In 2019, over 70 million people were displaced from their homes because of war and persecution. Many of them are prevented from working legally to provide for themselves and their families, they do not have access to clean water or food, they are stuck in tents and makeshift shelters waiting for someone to open up a way out.

The Salvation Army in the Canada and Bermuda Territory supports refugee claimants and resettled refugees through our community services and Immigrant & Refugee Services offices. Clothing and household items to set up new homes. Food when the funds coming in are not enough. Help with English and French only government forms to provide the information which determines if they can stay or have to go. Undertaking year long sponsorships to help bring refugees to Canada through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, walking alongside new friends as they navigate all the new things of living here.

On June 20, World Refugee Day, we pause and pray, knowing our voices are added to countless others around the world, asking God to open our hearts to those who journey towards us, and protect those still on the move around the world.

Prayers for World Refugee Day

Read through the following scriptures in a prayerful manner. Reflect and respond with the prayer prompts.

Psalm 61:1-3a NLT

O God listen to my cry! Hear my prayer!

From the ends of the earth, I cry to you for help when my heart is overwhelmed.

Lead me to the towering rock of safety, for you are my safe refuge.

We have all needed to run to God for protection at some point in our lives. Think about how God has protected and provided for you through the past months of quarantine. Think about other times in your life that God has provided protection to you or your family.

Pray a prayer of thanks to God for providing a safe refuge for you and your family.

Psalm 139: 1-6 NLT

O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.
You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.
You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do.
You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD.
You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!

When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Does your life look the way you thought it would even 5 years ago? Even if your career and personal life seems to have followed the plan you set out, no one was counting on a global pandemic putting a pause on all our plans. No one plans to become a refugee. While we do not know each step we are going to take, God has gone before us and knows the whole way.

Pray a prayer of thanks to God for knowing each step we will take and each challenge we have to face. Ask God for guidance through what comes next for your own life. Ask God to help those who feel stuck to know which way to go next.

Matthew 22:36-40 NLT

“Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?”
Jesus replied, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

What is our response to those in need around us? Do we offer to help someone reaching for a can on the top shelf at the grocery store? Do we volunteer our time or donate money to charities helping our vulnerable neighbours? Are we willing to stand up for our neighbours who are being discriminated against? Our love of God should be evident through our love for others. Refugees come to Canada looking for safety after experiencing horrific things. They sometimes struggle with how to live in a new normal with the effects of trauma from what they went through. Do we judge them because they cannot adapt quickly enough? Do we put unrealistic expectations on them to leave behind all their culture and heritage because it does not seem compatible with the way we do things here?

Pray for an open heart and mind to consider the circumstances of your neighbours. Ask God to show you people who could benefit from your skills and talents. Ask God to make you brave enough to step out of what is comfortable for you to show love to others.

1 Samuel 23: 14 NLT

David now stayed in the strongholds of the wilderness and in the hill country of Ziph. Saul hunted him day after day, but God didn't let Saul find him.

You can read the full story of David running from Saul in 1 Samuel 18 – 31

Many refugees are fleeing the threat of danger from people who hate them because of who they are or what they believe. David was anointed by Samuel as the next king for Israel. It was jealousy which caused Saul to pursue David through the hills and caves, wanting to eliminate his rival. Even after some refugees are able to escape the dangerous situations at home, they are still not safe in their place of asylum. Those who wish to harm them continue to search for them even across international borders.

Pray for refugees hiding from those who wish to harm them. Ask God to confuse their pursuers so they will not find the refugees.

Exodus 13:21-22 NLT

The Lord went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night. And the Lord did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from its place in front of the people.

You can read the full story of the Israelites route to freedom from captivity in the Book of Exodus

After their freedom from Egypt, the Israelites were in the middle of the desert, not quite sure of where to go next. God guided them through the fire and the cloud. The entire time they were in the desert, God was with them in the fire and cloud. When God moved, they moved. When God stayed still, they stayed still. The Refugee Highway Partnership is a network of Christians around the world trying to be God's fire and cloud to refugees travelling from danger to safety. God is using people around the world to love and support refugees, helping show the way when refugees feel lost. You can learn more at: www.refugeehighway.net

Pray for the refugees who are feeling lost, that God will show them the way. Pray for those who are trying to show the way for refugees, that God will bring them together with those who need their help.

Matthew 2:13 NLT

After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

Jesus was a refugee. His life was at risk, so Joseph took him and Mary across an international border to safety in Egypt. We do not always read the Christmas story during the rest of the year or consider what happened after the wise men left. As we think about refugees fleeing at a moment’s notice, it is important to realize Joseph did not have time to prepare the family for migrating to a new place. There was no time to research where they were going, to look for a new home or job there first. They had some resources from the gifts of the wise men, but carrying gold, myrrh, and frankincense would also leave them at risk of robbery on the road. God protected them on the way. Many refugees have to leave quickly and can carry only a few treasured items with them when they flee. Any money or valuables they have are used to pay for travel or essentials along the way. There is always the risk of exploitation or theft. When they arrive in a place of asylum, they have to navigate the complicated procedures of seeking protection, many times in a language they do not understand.

Pray that God would protect refugees on the move. Ask God to provide the things they need. Ask God to keep them physically safe along the dangerous routes. Ask God to give them understanding to receive the help they need.

Revelation 4:8b NLT

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty—
the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come.”

Revelation 19:6-7 NLT

Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a vast crowd or the roar of mighty ocean waves or the crash of loud thunder:

“Praise the Lord! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.
Let us be glad and rejoice and let us give honor to him.”

One day we will all sing praises to God together. We forget sometimes that God doesn’t just speak English. No matter what language we pray in, God is the God of all of us and hears it all. Our praises, in countless languages, is a mighty roar of worship that delights God to hear.

Whatever language you are most comfortable using, offer up a heartfelt praise of God knowing it is part of the roar of worship.

#WhoSoever...

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