



A WORSHIP GUIDE

FOR REFLECTING AND PRAYING FOR THE DISPLACED



SCRIPTURES

EXODUS 23:9

"You shall not oppress a stranger, you know the heart of a stranger, for you were stranger in the land of Egypt."

LEVITICUS 19:33-34

"When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt."

PSALM 146:9

"The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked."

MATTHEW 25:35

"For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

JOB 31:32

"But no stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveler."

PSALMS 60.2—62.6

- 634
- 635
- 2 Thou hast made the land to tremble; thou hast rent it: Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.
- 3 Thou hast showed thy people hard things: Thou hast made us to drink the wine of staggering.
- 4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee. That it may be displayed because of the truth. [Sē'lāh]
- 5 That thy beloved may be delivered, Save with thy right hand, and answer us.
- 6 God hath spoken in his holiness: I will exult; I will divide Shē'chem, and mete out the valley of Sūc'cōth.
- 7 Āl'ē-ād is mine, and Mā-nās'-sēh is mine; Ē'phrā-im also is the defence of my head; Jū'dāh is my sceptre.
- 8 Mō'āb is my washpot; Upon Ē'dōm will I cast my shoe: Phi-lis'ti-ā, shout thou because of me.
- 9 Who will bring me into the strong city? Who hath led me unto Ē'dōm? Hast not thou, O God, cast us off? And thou goest not forth, O God, with our hosts.
- 11 Give us help against the adversary; For vain is the help of man.
- 12 Through God we shall do valiantly; For he it is that will tread down our adversaries.

Confidence in God's Protection.

For the Chief Musician; on a stringed instrument. A Psalm of David.

- 61 Hear my cry, O God; Attend unto my prayer.
- 2 From the end of the earth will I call unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed:

¹ Another reading is, *me*. ² Or, *lawgiver*. ³ Or, *unto*. ⁴ Or, *who will lead me &c.* ⁵ Or, *will not thou, O God, who hast cast us off, and goest . . . hosts?* ⁶ Heb. *salvation* ⁷ Or, *faintest*

- Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
- 3 For thou hast been a refuge for me, A strong tower from the enemy.
- 4 I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever: I will take refuge in the covert of thy wings. [Sē'lāh]
- 5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.
- 6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life; His years shall be as many generations.
- 7 He shall abide before God for ever: Oh prepare lovingkindness and truth, that they may preserve him.
- 8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, That I may daily perform my vows.

God alone a Refuge from Treachery and Oppression. For the Chief Musician; after the manner of Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

- 62 My soul waiteth in silence for God only: From him cometh my salvation.
- 2 He only is my rock and my salvation: He is my high tower; I shall not be greatly moved.
- 3 How long will ye set upon a man, That ye may slay him, all of you, Like a leaning wall, like a tottering fence?
- 4 They only consult to thrust him down from his dignity; They delight in lies; They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. [Sē'lāh]
- 5 My soul, wait thou in silence for God only; For my expectation is from him.
- 6 He only is my rock and my salvation:

⁸ Or, *a rock that is too high for me*. ⁹ Heb. *tent*. ¹⁰ Or, *given a heritage unto those &c.* ¹¹ Heb. *is silent unto God*. ¹² Or, *as otherwise read, Ye shall be slain &c.* ¹³ Heb. *be thou silent unto God*

SERMON STARTERS

GENESIS 18:1-15, 21:1-7 | THE BIRTH OF ISAAC

Abraham and Sarah had everything stacked against them in order to have a son. How do we react in difficult circumstances? We can keep believing and having faith, when everything seems to be stacked against us? How might a refugee relate to the story?

GENESIS 21:8-21 | HAGAR AND ISHMAEL ARE SENT AWAY

What do we do and feel when we cry to God for mercy? What might have it been like for the Israelites singing the song when they were refugees? What might it be like for refugees today?

MATTHEW 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them. When Jesus felt compassion, he felt it personally and deeply. The Greek in the text refers to his stomach, his guts (fun fact: the word spleen is derived from this Greek term). Jesus' compassion was not simply intellectual – it wasn't sympathy, but deeply felt empathy. How would we respond to the refugee crisis differently if we thought compassion in the same way as Jesus?

MATTHEW 10: 9-10

When the disciples were present, they relied on people's hospitality. They would not have been able to do their work without hospitality from others. What is the cost of offering hospitality to refugees, and are we prepared to offer this?



PRAYERS

FOR THE GLOBALLY UPROOTED

PERU: God our promise land; Christ, our way, Our journey has become long and hard Because we wander about like nomads Not knowing where to go. We are strangers in our own land, without bread, a roof, a future But you came to find us with your life-giving bread. You, who are also displaced, have become an exile with us. You offer us anew the promised land. Your spirit urges us toward that joyous homecoming.

NEW ZEALAND: Lord, clear my eyes that I may see the suffering of the refugee. Unstop my ears that I may hear the cries of those in despair. Release my unfettered feet to tread paths where I may some comfort spread... Lord, fill my heart that I might be your servant to the refugee

CENTRAL AFRICA: Jesus, you lived in exile in Egypt: Be with all migrant workers and protect their families.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of compassion, you hear the cries of all people. In your kindness, watch over refugees and victims of war, those who have lost family members, families who have been left homeless, and children who have lost the joy of simply being kids. Lord God, comfort all those who suffer. Console all those who mourn. May the hearts of warring people be turned towards peace. May they seek reconciliation with their enemies, and a future built on justice. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the prince of peace and light of the world. Amen.



PRAYERS CONTINUED

Wise and compassionate God, help us to be willing to respond to the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, not to see them as burdens, and shift our care unto others. Help our leaders act with generosity and compassion. We pray for people living in fear of detention and removal, and for those in detention currently, facing an uncertain future. We ask that they know your love, and presence, and are filled with your peace. Open our eyes, that we may see injustice; open our ears that we may hear a stranger's cry. Open our mouths that we may speak words of welcome. Bless the work of our hands so that together we may act. Amen.

GRACE BEFORE A MEAL

Bless us, oh Lord, as we join together and remember refugees suffering around the world. We thank you for all that you provide for us. For the food that we can eat, when others are starving. For the water we can drink when others are thirsty. For our friends and family, when others are alone. We pray for those who have fled their homes, who are still in search of safety. May our hearts be filled with compassion; may we act to help bring about your peace. Watch over these people and bring them your comfort, oh Lord. Amen

PRAYER AFTER A MEAL

Living God, thank you for the food and time we have shared, and for the glimpses into the lives of refugees around the world. Stir in us, give us the courage to act, to combat injustice in all its forms and to commit to helping refugees around the world. Remember the people serving refugees, who worked tirelessly to provide food, medicine and other resources. May their work demonstrate your care. Lord God, give courage to refugees wherever they are around the world. Give them hope as they seek freedom from oppression, give them strength as they seek to survive, may they find true refuge. Amen



PRAYERS CONTINUED

PRAYER BEFORE A SPECIAL COLLECTION

Loving God, we know we have the means to give, and we know there are people seeking refuge around the world, who need our love and support. God of grace, stir within us. Give us the courage to act, to be generous, and to be part of your work, bringing hope to refugees fleeing violence around the world.. We pray this in your name, Amen.

DEDICATION OF GIFTS

We offer these gifts oh God, for the services of your kingdom and the hope that they will alleviate suffering and bring hope to refugees around the world. Thank you for all the blessings you have given us, we pray that our gifts will be a blessing to others. Amen.

Receive these gifts of love and care, oh God, as a sign of your love and care for us. May our service to those who are suffering and in need, reflect your commitment all people. Amen.





LITANY PRAYER

In the pain of lost lives, and shattered hope, Have mercy on us
In our anguish at the violence that we can see in the world,
Have mercy on us

In our despair at the escalating violence and the plight of
refugees around the world, Have mercy on us

In our compassion for all who are suffering, Have mercy on us
From the greed and injustice that divides the world into rich
and poor, oh Lord, deliver us.

From being quick to blame and slow to respond, oh Lord,
deliver us.

From the desire for revenge that adds to the cycle of violence,
oh Lord, deliver us.

For those who bring healing and peace, Lord hear our prayer.

For those who respond in crisis, Lord hear our prayer.

For wisdom to choose paths of peace, Lord hear our prayer.

For leaders trying to forgive, Lord hear our prayer.

For solidarity with those experiencing loss or hunger, Lord
hear our prayer.

For generosity to share fairly the world's resources, Lord hear
our prayer.

For steadfast disciples, responding generously, to the needs of
suffering people, Lord hear our prayer.

For mothers and children who are traumatized from witnessing
acts of violence, Lord hear our prayer.

For families who have lost all they own and who want to return
home, Lord hear our prayer.

For those hoping to hear from their family members, Lord hear
our prayer.

For aid agencies and workers, Lord hear our prayer.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for the 82.4 million people worldwide who have been displaced. Pray for the family struggling to get enough to eat, who have no possessions and are trying to survive in a strange country.
- Pray for peace in the region and for safety and security for all.
- Ask for God's blessing on our interfaith partners distributing much needed food, medical supplies and training.
- Pray for traumatized children whose education has been disrupted by war and from fleeing their homeland.
- Pray for the churches and communities of faith in the region.
- Pray for the leaders and members, that they can bring about reconciliation in their community.



PRAYERS CONTINUED

CALL TO WORSHIP ADAPTED FROM WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES WORSHIP RESOURCES

L: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

P: Be with those who must flee the injustice of others.

L: Lord Jesus, who had to flee Herod and had nowhere to lay your head.

P: Be with those who have no land to call their own. Our hospitality both reflects and participates in God's hospitality

L: For the refugees from Burma, Iraq and Afghanistan.

P: Lord, hear our prayer.

L: For people uprooted in Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Liberia.

P: Lord, hear our prayer.

L: For refugees and displaced persons who have fled from or are still living in Bosnia and Kosovo.

P: Lord, hear our prayer.

L: For all refugees who have fled oppression in their own countries and are seeking new lives in new lands.

P: Lord, hear our prayer.

All: Help us, Lord, who are the privileged inn-keepers of our day, to find room for those who have been driven from their homelands because of political, racial, or religious reasons. Amen.



PRAYERS CONTINUED

OPENING PRAYER FROM EPISCOPALCHURCH.ORG

O God, our great strength, help us to fix our eyes on you, trusting in your mercy. Help us to look into the world and discover that you are there. Strengthen us as we hold out open hearts and hands to the stranger, to the homeless, to the lonely, to the broken in mind and spirit. Stir us with your presence, your strength, and your love. All this we ask in the name of your Son, our Lord, Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION BY UNITED METHODIST HYMNAL

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

GATHER US IN

Composer: Marty Haugen

Meter: 10.9.10.10 D

Key: D Major

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THIS IS MY SONG, O GOD OF ALL THE NATIONS

Author (st. 3): Georgia Elma Harkness (ca. 1939)

Author (st. 1, 2): Lloyd Stone (1934)

Meter: 11.10.11.10.11.10

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St. 3 © 1964, Lorenz Publishing Co



REFLECTIONS : WINDS OF CHANGE

A REFUGEE EDUCATION SIMULATION (15 MINUTES)

This activity explores the emotional consequences of becoming a refugee.

LEADING THE ACTIVITY

Ask participants to list the five things they value most. The list can include people, material items such as a home, health, etc. If time is limited, this exercise can be done mentally, but it is more effective to make a tangible list. Invite them to share some of the items they've listed.

Now, ask them if they had to give one of those things up, what would it be? Cross it off the list. If they had to give up something else, what would it be? Cross that off the list. Repeat the question/action one more time.

Ask them to share what they eliminated. How did it feel to do that? If time allows, ask when they have had to give up something precious in their lives. Where did they find support in that process?

REFLECTION

You can either read this or paraphrase: As human beings sharing this world, we all seek our own ways of creating a secure environment. Due to circumstances beyond our control, some of us find ourselves facing situations that we could never have imagined. This is especially true for the Afghan families who have been uprooted from their homes because of war and persecution. All are struggling to make a new life in an unfamiliar place. All have had to give up much of what is most precious to them simply to survive. It can be hard for those of us accustomed to our peaceful lives to imagine what it must be like to be a refugee. And yet as the UN High Commission on Refugees said, "Refugees are just like you and me, except they have nothing." What would it be like to be a refugee?