

December: Praying for the Unreached in our Community

Week One:

Jesus gives us the perfect example of sacrificial love in the Gospels and as His people we are called to love others as He loves us. Pray that we would be growing in actional, intentional, and sacrificial love for the people we interact with each day. Pray that we would not be focused on how others can serve us, but that we would be growing in selfless love that is a witness to God's work in us.

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.” -1 John 4:7-12

Week Two:

God's people know that this world is not our home and we get a small glimpse of what it means to be sojourners in this life. Pray that we would be compassionate to the refugees in our community and that we would be taking opportunities to serve them and help them feel welcomed into this community. Ask the Lord for opportunities to share the Gospel with them.

An organization that is seeking to serve the refugee community in Des Moines is the Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa (RACI) which helps them resettle in the Des Moines area by helping them find and furnish homes, works on legislation to help refugees like the *Afghan Adjustment Act* which would create a path to help more than 78,000 Afghans pursue permanent residence in the U.S., and by offering a range of services including English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

“For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” - Deuteronomy 10:17-19

Week Three:

Being without a home affects over 10,000 of our neighbors in the Des Moines area each year. Along with this, around 230,000 Iowans face food insecurity each year (info provided by Hope Ministries). There is a clear and pressing need to help our hurting and displaced neighbors and seek to show them the love of Christ.

Pray for those who are homeless and facing food insecurity. Consider how you might be able to help by partnering with organizations like Joppa, the DSM Dream Center, Hope Ministries and the Food Bank of Iowa to bring hope by being the hands and feet of Christ to our hurting neighbors.

“But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and truth.” - 1 John 3:17-18

Week Four:

In Luke 14:12-14 we see Jesus call to his people that we are to love not only those who can repay us, but also those who have little to give in return:

“He said to the man who had invited him, ‘When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.’”

Jesus loved those who struggled with different maladies or who could not offer him anything. In fact, these are the folks who often attracted his attention. Pray that we would be growing in awareness and love for people who are often maligned by society, such as the disabled or poor.

Consider partnering with organizations that seek to serve the deaf, blind, mute, and disabled in our society. Some of these organizations include Grimes Volunteer Support Services (GVSS), the Iowa Deafblind Services Project, Iowa Disability Services, and The Arc of Iowa.