



EXPERIENCING GOD

Week of October 31 - Experiencing God through a Refugee Response¹

Overview:

Over the next few months, we will consider what it means to know and do the will of God through the study of *Experiencing God*. One of the core tenants of the study is “Watch to see where God is working and join him.” This week, we have the opportunity to see this principal in action. Afghan refugees, who have recently entered the United States, will soon be sent to 46 cities across the country, including Omaha. CCC is preparing to welcome these families by meeting tangible needs and offering community to those separated from their homes. But what does God think of this? What is his heart for the displaced? How should kingdom citizens treat the refugee?

Group Objectives:

- Reflect on this past Sunday’s message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- For each person to consider how they can best model God’s love for the refugee.

DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We are outrageously generous.* We are most like God when we are generous to those God loves.

Conversation Starters:

- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?
- Tell about a time you felt out of place or experienced a culture completely different from your own. What surprised you most about that experience?

Read and Reflect: Bible Study Discussion

God has a special love for the sojourner and alien—terms the Bible uses to describe anyone displaced from their native land. His command to care for them is clear and without condition. Often in the same category as orphans and widows, Deuteronomy lists several instances where the sojourner was to receive special consideration: as recipient of a special offering alongside the Levites (Deut. 14:28-29), as invited guests to feasts (Deut. 16:11, 14), and as people worthy of justice (Deut. 27:19), just to name a few.

As followers of Christ, we are called to love those God loves, not as a means of “winning” their allegiance or to flaunt our own righteousness, but because they are children of God, made in his image and worthy of respect. They should matter to us because they matter to God.

¹ This week’s lesson was written by Rachel Vaughn and edited by Dawn Gentry.

Note: Please refrain from discussing US political policy. It is a conversation about the kingdom of God and what is a biblical response for kingdom citizens.

- **Read Deuteronomy 10:12-19**
 - In this passage, how does Moses describe God? Why do you think he links God's greatness with God's love?
 - According to this passage, what does God require of us?
 - According to verses 17-19, why should we love the alien/sojourner? These commands were given to Israel—to the children of those who fled Egypt. How do they still apply to us today?
- **Read Micah 6:8**
 - How does this verse compare to Deuteronomy 10:12?
 - What does obedience to this verse look like? How does it apply to loving the displaced?
- **Read Romans 12:9-17**
 - There are several commands in this passage. How would you summarize them? What is the overall theme?
 - What consideration should we give ourselves? How are we to consider others?
 - How do these verses tie in with the other passages?

Summarize and Respond:

- What is your greatest barrier to loving the sojourner/alien? Is indifference better than hatred?
- In the coming weeks, CCC will be welcoming Afghan refugees to Omaha. What is one way you can participate? (*Prayer, financial gifts, be in community with a refugee family, physical labor*)
- In order to love these men, women, and children well, CCC will pair each family with a Family Advocate Circle—a team of volunteers led by one individual/couple who will walk alongside the family for 6 to 12 months, helping them adjust to their new surroundings and linking them with resources to help them in their transition. These people have left their entire community support structure just as they need them most. Family Advocates will offer a lifeline and act as a liaison to serve the families through the transition.
- Advocates cannot do this work alone. They will need a team to support them. Community Groups are the perfect example of an existing network you can leverage to serve the kingdom.
- Would your group consider walking alongside a family for the next year? Is there someone in your group who feels a call to champion a refugee? Would the rest of the group commit to helping them in this task?
- If you have any interest in serving the incoming Afghan refugees, whether as Family Advocates or in another capacity, please contact Cait Nelson (contact info below). Even if you do not know what you can do, she will help you find where your passion can meet the need.
- Cait Nelson: email caitnelson21@gmail.com; text 402-707-9624

Prayer Prompts:

- Invite members of the group to share personal prayer requests.
- *Lord, we offer ourselves to you, body and soul and mind and strength. We surrender it all. Tear through our pride, and open our eyes to see the world as you see it. Teach us how to love others as you love us.*