

Christian Ethics and Social Action  
**Values study - Refugee Crisis**

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## Introduction

This material has been produced to support us as church leaders to think through the current Refugee Crisis. It is hoped we can take these ideas to guide us in discussions, Bible studies and sermons on this important subject. We need to help our congregations to play an active part in praying, contributing to conversations (with neighbours, in the staff room etc.) and getting involved ourselves.

## Included

- 1) Passages to study and consider as a Church
- 2) Refugee Crisis: 5 ways to get engaged

## Passages to study and consider as a Church

**Adam and Eve** - Consider how we as an entire human race were exiled from Eden - the greatest and most just civilisation our world has ever known. The world which the entire human race craves every day of their life. Consider how Jesus is the desire of the nations, and is the only answer to this exile.

**Abram** - Consider how Abram (The father of our faith) and his family lived. Consider the promise he was given from God in Genesis 12:1-5. Consider his travelling and the challenges he met along his way.

**Jacob and Family move to Egypt** - Try focusing more on the story of the family than on Joseph. Consider the living conditions that drove them to Egypt to ask for food. How hostile was Egypt to them as a family and others? What did they do once they settled in Egypt? How long did they stay there? How were they treated?

**Ruth** - Naomi and family leave Bethlehem because of a famine and move to Moab, for them a possibly hostile country. While away from home Naomi loses her husband and two sons. Consider how Naomi and Ruth reintegrate into the culture and society of the now prosperous Bethlehem. How are they received and treated? What boundaries, if any, are placed on Ruth (a Moabitess) becoming part of the society of Israel? Where does this lead? (See Matthew 1)

**The Exile** - For this you could look at

- Daniel - Living and working in foreign land
- Ezekiel - Imprisoned in a foreign land
- Esther - Mediating and defending her people

**Returning from the Exile** - For this you could look at

- Ezra - rebuilding the temple
- Nehemiah - rebuilding the city walls

**Jesus in Egypt** - Consider the situation and conditions of the flight to Egypt. How long did they live there?

**Citizens of Heaven** - Consider the following verses, and their context. Do we as Christians, feel like strangers passing through a foreign land, being citizens of heaven? How should this help us to relate and respond to those displaced from their families, careers, culture, communities and countries?



## What the Bible says about us and refugees

### Please read Genesis 3

Consider how we, as members of the human race, are refugees, exiled from the Garden of Eden

### Please read the verses below and consider how as Christians we are refugees in this world

*Q) Where do you consider your national identity to be? Is it where you live? Where you were born? England, Scotland, Wales, British or European? Or is it your parents/Grandparents nationality? Do all of these together give you a sense of national identity? What bearing does this verse play on the priority you place on your national identity?*

**Philippians 3:20** "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;"

*Q) Have you lived in other cities or countries? Have you ever thought of retiring to another country? How much has the area you live in changed over the past 40 years? Try and understand the temporary nature and uncertainty of refugees, as they live in refugee camps and move from country to country?*

**Hebrews 13:** "For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come."

*Q) What pictures does Jesus use to describe heaven? (Prompt - Father, Kingdom, Banquet, Authority)*

**Luke 22:29-30** "and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

*Q) When you travel, how important is it to you to know you have somewhere to stay? The room will be ready, warm, and clean, with towels? How do you think the refugees feel regarding the uncertainty of their destination?*

**John 14:2** "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."

*Q) Have you ever inherited anything, a building, business, furniture etc.? What responsibility do you feel towards the upkeep and improvement of these? Compare this to our inheritance mentioned by Peter.*

**1 Peter 1:4** "to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,"

*Q) Is the city mentioned here, a city of buildings or people? Compare the empty cities in China that have recently built, to the refugees moving across Europe. Who is this bride, and who will make her ready? Who is she made ready for?*

**Revelation 21:2** "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband."

**Revelation 21:27** "and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life".

**Revelation 22:3-5** "There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever."

*Q) Do you feel, as a Christian, to be a stranger and alien in a foreign land? How can this help you to understand something of the plight of the refugees as they travel? How important must hope be for them?*

**Ephesians 2:19** "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,"



# Refugee Crisis: 5 ways to get engaged

Based on a blog by *SANCTIFIED RANT* // Dai Hankey's Blog <http://sanctifiedrant.com/>

## 1. Get clued up

The greater understanding we have of the ever changing situation, the better equipped we will be to respond in action and in prayer. As Church leaders we need to set an example on how to pray and respond to the situation and the signals our politicians and media are giving. I would suggest

- 1) Read widely - if you get a paper every day, change the paper you read so you get to understand the other side of an argument.
- 2) Hold a coffee morning or evening event for your local community to discuss the crisis. Provide a range of newspapers from that day on tables to aid discussion. Maybe invite someone to tell your group their experience of recently moving to this country.
- 3) Visit websites such as
  - a) Tear fund [www.tearfund.org/en/refugeecrisis/](http://www.tearfund.org/en/refugeecrisis/)
  - b) World Vision [www.worldvision.org.uk/ways-give/make-donation/syria-crisis-appeal/](http://www.worldvision.org.uk/ways-give/make-donation/syria-crisis-appeal/)
  - c) Oxfam [donate.oxfam.org.uk](http://donate.oxfam.org.uk)
  - d) Open Doors [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)

## 2. Get on your knees

If you're anything like me you probably look on at the refugee crisis as it unfolds, and feel totally overwhelmed. What difference, if any, can I make? This is actually a healthy place to be as it's when we feel small, weak and incapable that we are perfectly positioned to cry out to the only One who is wise enough to understand the situation in its totality, and strong enough to do what's right. Sometimes prayer can feel like a token gesture that we do when we don't know what else to do. That is the wrong perception of prayer. Prayer is where the power is at:

*"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."* – **James 5 v 16**

Can I encourage you, if you haven't already done it, to take God at His Word and to spend some serious, considered time on your knees on behalf of those who are suffering right now? (If you don't know what to pray, the Evangelical Alliance have written a model prayer you could use).

## 3. Get in touch

One of the simplest yet most practical things you can do, is to write to your MP / AM and express your concern for the current situation. Tell them that you, and your church, are burdened about what's going on. Ask them what they are doing about it, and implore them to press our government for meaningful action. Furthermore, if your church is willing and able to help out practically let them know. There are some helpful pointers on what you could offer here. You'd be surprised how encouraged they will be to know that there are people in their communities who are ready and willing to serve. It also testifies to the life and love of the local church. Finally, you can also put pressure on the government to act by signing this official home office petition.

## 4. Get your wallet out

There will always be opportunities to give financially. Already my inbox is pinging with messages offering opportunities to respond. Tear fund, World Vision, Oxfam and Open Doors, are just a few of the organisations you could give to who have people at work on the ground. However, you might also consider helping to support a local ministry that is serving refugees and asylum seekers, who have already made it to the UK. I guess this is where I'd like to raise one specific opportunity for those of us in South Wales to consider.

My friend Liz Perret-Atkins runs an outreach in Cardiff. Every Thursday she and her team of amazing volunteers at the Rainbow Centre, bag up loads of food and give it out to the scores of asylum seekers who attend. They also faithfully share the Gospel with these guys each week. I have had the privilege of speaking at the Thursday morning outreach, and it is incredible to see how the work is growing as more and more men, women and children from all over the world come to receive food. Apparently they had

75+ there this week and there will be more again next week. I was there last week and the demand was so great that they started to run out of food. Liz shared with me that it is becoming increasingly difficult to finance the work as it is entirely donation based and funds are short. If you have some money that you would like to donate to a Gospel-centred practical outreach to refugees and asylum seekers then I can personally vouch for Liz and the ministry at the Rainbow Centre. If you would like to give then get in touch with me (contact details are here) and I'll put you in touch with her. Alternatively you can text a donation to 70070, citing "Matt 25" plus "£ (amount)".

## 5. Get the red carpet out

Finally, we can get involved by opening our hearts and our homes. If you know of any refugees who have come into your area, why not make every effort to welcome and befriend them. Be the one who chats to them at the bus stop or in the park. **Smile at them. Serve them.** If you don't personally know of anyone who has come to this country under duress, find out what is being done for refugees in your area and volunteer your help. If no one is serving refugees in your area – you and your church should start something up. Serious! A coffee morning. Toddler group. Anything...

Finally, a few crazily radical ideas on how you could roll out the red carpet for refugees and asylum seekers:

1. Could / would you host an individual or family in your own home at your own expense? Could your church building be used as emergency accommodation? If so, tell your local council. Tell your MP. Obviously be wise and realistic, but also be compassionate and courageous. There's more chance that the government will let refugees into the UK if they are persuaded that they will not be alone in having to make provision. How beautiful it would be if the church of Jesus were at the front of the queue to serve in this way!
2. Could / would you be willing to provide emergency, or even long-term, foster care for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children? If so, ""Home for Good"" are collecting names of those who are interested here.