

# 10 Ways to Pray for Refugees

Global forced displacement is forcing people to flee their homes, and their countries, at a scale we have not seen since the end of the Second World War. At the same time, tens of millions of people are stuck in refugee camps - where some have been for more than 20 years- with no end in sight.

Governments, the Church and civil society all have important and unique roles to play in creating better solutions. As followers of Jesus one of the most significant ways we can respond is to pray. Recognizing that prayer is powerful, effective, and desperately needed we invite you to pray with us for refugees in our world.

This prayer guide is designed to work in conjunction with IAFR Canada's Recovery Continuum which describes the experience of displacement and the types of responses that are needed at different phases of a refugee journey.

## 1. Peacemakers and peace

Take time before God to lament the evils in our world that are at the root of the refugee crisis.

Pray that God would raise up peacemakers and bring peace to countries where wars, violence and persecution are forcing people from their homes. Pray especially for peace and safety in countries where the number of refugees and displaced people are extraordinarily high. You can learn which countries those are in the [UNHCR's annual global report](#).

Ask God to give wisdom and integrity to world leaders so that they will work for the good of the people they govern and serve.

We pray that citizens everywhere will have their rights preserved and be able to live in peace.

***But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. James 3:17-18***

## 2. People on the move

Picture planet Earth. Now imagine the well-worn paths refugees have traveled, from country to country, across rivers, oceans, jungles, deserts and cities, trying to find safety. We call this the refugee highway. Ask the Holy Spirit for eyes to see and a heart to respond as you pray for those who are journeying along the refugee highway right now. Many are unsure of where they will sleep tonight, where they will find food, when their journey will end, or who they can trust as they travel.

Pray for God's provision and presence for the millions of people journeying along the refugee highway, looking for a safe place where they can live. Pray that God will lead them to "people of peace" who will give them compassionate assistance and trustworthy information. Pray that those who are seeking to take advantage of or harm people travelling the refugee highway will be stopped.

***Some wandered in desert wastelands,  
finding no way to a city where they could settle.  
They were hungry and thirsty,  
and their lives ebbed away.  
Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress.  
He led them by a straight way  
to a city where they could settle.  
Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind. Psalm 107: 4-8***

### 3. Survival Needs

Pray that God would graciously provide for the essential needs of security, shelter, water, food and medical care for displaced people currently on the move all over the world.

Pray that God would hear their cries and lead them to a place of safety.

***In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.***

***Psalms 18:6***

### 4. UN and other Agencies Serving Refugees

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated to aid and protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people. Along with many other humanitarian agencies, they play a key role in meeting the essential needs of refugees globally. It is an enormous job.

Pray that they would have the funding needed to provide their services.

Pray that they would operate with integrity and in line with God's values for human dignity, compassion and justice.

Pray that they will continue to recognize the important role of faith leaders and faith-based organizations in supporting refugees.

***I urge that requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanks be offered on behalf of all people, even for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. Such prayer for all is good and welcomed before God our Savior***

***1 Timothy 2:1-3***

## 5. Countries where forcibly displaced people are seeking refuge

The responsibility for supporting the millions of forcibly displaced people in our world is not shared equally. Canada, by its very geography, is protected from the large-scale movement of refugees. This leaves other countries, often those with significantly fewer resources, to do the most work.

Thank God for the countries that are hosting the most refugees.

Pray for these countries - for their economic and political stability, for their continued generosity and openness, and that the refugees and national residents will be a source of blessing to each other.

Pray that countries with more resources- including Canada- will find creative ways to share the responsibility with them

***Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator] shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.***  
**Isaiah 58: 6-8**

## 6. People who are stuck

The vast majority of refugees find themselves “stuck” in a neighbouring country, often a country that itself has many social or economic challenges. Only a tiny fraction of the world’s refugee population is ever resettled into a country like Canada - in an average year it is less than 1%.



Pray for the over 99% of refugees living in refugee camps or urban centres around the world who can't return home and will never have the opportunity to be resettled elsewhere. Many of them are children and teenagers who have spent their entire lives in settings of displacement such as refugee camps.

Pray for the youth to have educational opportunities and that they will find their hope in God in the midst of their incredibly challenging situation.

***How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?***

***How long will you hide your face from me?***

***How long must I bear pain in my soul***

***and have sorrow in my heart all day long?***

***How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?***

***Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Psalm 13: 1,2,5***

## 7. The Global Church

The narrative of Scripture urges the people of God all around the world to welcome and extend kinship to those who are displaced. Our God is a God who cares for the vulnerable and the outsider- and he calls us to do the same.

Pray that wherever displaced people flee to, the Church will respond with love and sacrificial welcome.

Pray that communities of Jesus followers all along the refugee highway will include the vulnerable outsider in the life of their community.

***The resident foreigner who lives with you must be to you as a native citizen among you; so you must love the foreigner as yourself, because you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.***

***Leviticus 19:34***

## 8. The Church in Canada

Many of those fleeing for their lives and arriving in Canada are followers of Jesus. As in the book of Acts, when the disciples were forced to flee because of persecution, they come to us as messengers of Jesus' love. Others arrive here still seeking God and curious about what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Pray that the Church in Canada will be ready to receive our sisters and brothers from around the world.

Pray that we will create space and opportunity in our local faith communities for the people God is sending to us.

Pray that the gifts, experiences and influence of newly arrived refugees will be used by God to bring revitalization and spiritual revival to the Church in Canada.

***That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria...Now those who were scattered went from place to place proclaiming the word. Acts 8:1,4***

## 9. Healing from trauma

While the particular circumstances of displacement are unique to each person, all refugees experience some degree of trauma on their journey of being uprooted and starting life over in a new culture.

Pray that God will heal the hearts, minds and bodies of refugees and that they would be keenly aware of God's presence with them in the midst of their struggles.

Pray that they will have hope for a better future.

***The Lord heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.  
Psalm 147:3***

## 10. Belonging

Refugees are more than people in need and like all of us, have gifts, skills and knowledge to offer our world. They are eager to contribute and to be included in all areas of life in their new community. They desire meaningful, mutual relationships with Canadians from many different backgrounds and a better future for their children. They want to belong.

Pray specifically for the community where you live.

Pray that the people in your community will respond with kindness and openness to the newcomers arriving in your hometown.

Pray that those who have lived in your community for a long time will intentionally create space for newcomers to fully participate in their churches, in their social groups, and in their workplaces.

Pray that newcomers will experience belonging in their new home.

***So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us. 1 Thessalonians 2:8***