

3/22/23

Police Escort to Pray?

Two weekends ago, a “caravan” of four of us believing families drove south...along the sea, then through the smaller dustier towns, towards the well guarded border of what we affectionately call “The Beloved Country”. Why? To pray.

As our cars neared “no man’s land”, we were stopped at a checkpoint by the friendliest guards you’ve ever seen. They flipped through our passports, seeing we had no entry visas for ‘nextdoor’ and our leader and his wife boldly decided to be honest about our plans. We want to go and pray. At first they said we had to turn around, but after some phone calls, we were told a national guard escort would go before and behind us so they could enable us to do what we had come to do — Bless the nation in Jesus’ name. This is nooooooot normal here! We waited an hour, then were driven to a spot under a sprawling tree, overlooking a camel herder shepherding a massive group of the brown animals over the equally brown landscape.

We knelt.

Some lifted hands.

And interceded for the lost.

The sheep (or camels) without a shepherd — yet.

The great Shepherd was guiding us through the desert that day, as He does faithfully every day. Praise Him for this special opportunity.

This little snapshot feels like it encompasses 3 themes from our last several months here:

1. An increased focus on The Beloved Country

- We are still invested here where we are learning language, but our gaze is increasingly on the lost from next door (where we are heading).
- Our team — who is next door in a new city from the minority people group — has now successfully established a new English language school that will provide visas for us to join them physically — hopefully by the end of this year.
- We are also under a second team who lives here where we currently are but whose sole focus is next door. We go meet people from the Beloved Country who have come here for short term medical treatments, ask to pray over them and seek for opportunities to share. Many are hearing bits of His truth and bringing that back over the border with them!

2. Emphasizing Prayer:

- John watches the kids, while Anna is a part of a two month prayer course where we were reminded of how central a focus on prayer is on how God moves. We believe language learning is key (John is at the school 4 days a week studying Arabic faithfully)...but the good news conveyed in perfect language is not enough without God Himself opening the eyes of our friends’ hearts.
- We are involved in prayer with our teams both next door and here and we are seeing Him answer MANY specific requests. Its so exciting!
- As Ramadan starts tomorrow, we have decided to ask for your involvement with us as we pray. We will send out ONE SHORT PRAYER REQUEST PER DAY OVER THE MONTH OF RAMADAN. These will be just a couple of sentences, but if you have a few minutes to pray we’d love that! He is moving in mighty ways in this part of the world. Would you join us?

3. The Good (Camel?) Shepherd:

- As always, when we look back, what strikes us the most is just how amazing our God is. He has been so sweet to us over these last months — we got to spend over a month back in South Africa with our family and “body” there and see the many ways he keeps caring for us. Anna felt the Spirit nudging her to take a break from language to focus on our kids more for a season as we were seeing some real struggles in Johnny in particular. He knows what we need — what a gift it has been! Please pray with us as we disciple our kids and ask for wisdom with how to do life here with them well. John is busy wearing many hats these days— a few of which are supporting the business next door with his tech skills, studying language here, as well as how we are still

pursuing friendships here with friends who don't know Him. Pray we keep following our good shepherd and hearing His voice and obeying!

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It's day 1 of Ramadan...and today we were hit with sickness, anger, frustration...I felt surprising darkness. So on day 1 we'd like to be selfish and ask for you to pray for us and other believers we know here