

World Refugee Day 2020 Community Prayer Walk

What is a prayer walk and why is it a good thing to do? A prayer walk is exactly what it sounds like: a walk filled with prayer. Prayer walking simply involves walking around your community (either alone or with a friend or family member) and stopping at specific locations to pray. Pray out loud, pray quietly, or pray in your heart. While it is very low-key, your prayers can have a very powerful effect.

We ask you to stop and pray at 5 different places along your route. At each stop there is something for you to read, a specific need to pray about, and a question to reflect on. You can do them in any order. We suggest you read this prayer guide through before you set out so you know what kind of places you are looking for along your walking route.

Listen to what God might be saying to you as you walk and pray. In-between the places you stop we encourage you to quietly pray and speak God's blessing over the homes and other places you are passing.

HOUSING: stop to read & pray in front of a group of homes or an apartment building

Learning Point: In Hamilton, there continues to be a housing crisis of intense proportions. It is incredibly difficult for newly arrived refugees to find a safe, affordable place to live. They face additional challenges of not having any rental history or credit history in Canada. Newcomers may also encounter biases of landlords due to their skin colour or their accent, or because they are receiving social assistance.



Prayer Points:

- *that all newly arrived refugees in our city will be able to find suitable housing opportunities*
- *that more & more landlords would be open to giving newcomers the opportunity to rent their first apartment*

Question:

The average rental price for a 1 bedroom apartment in Hamilton is \$1,429. How much does a single person receiving social assistance get for their shelter allowance each month?

A) \$300 b) \$390 c) \$550 d) \$1,000

EMPLOYMENT: stop to read and pray as you pass by a place of business

Learning Point: People who come to Canada as refugees are eager to work. They arrive here with training, education, and skills that we desperately need. In fact, many on the front-lines in the fight against COVID-19 are newcomers (eg. in meat-packing plants or working as PSWs in long-term care homes) Yet there are many barriers preventing them from finding work and contributing. They may need to strengthen their English or re-train as their education & experience from their home country is often not recognized in Canada. Refugee claimants have to apply and wait for their work permit before they can be employed which can often take several months.

Prayer Points:

- *for changes in our hiring systems that would remove some of the barriers to newcomers*
- *that newcomers would be able to find jobs that use their skills and training. This benefits all of us*

Question: TRUE or FALSE

50% of newcomers (those who have been in Canada for less than 5 years) in our Hamilton workforce have a university degree compared to 25% of Canadian-born residents in our workforce

FAITH: stop to read and pray as you pass a place of worship (church, synagogue, or mosque)



Learning Point: Many refugees arriving in Hamilton are followers of Jesus. In fact, that might be the reason they had to flee their home country. They long to belong to a local church where they can worship and serve. While most churches welcome newcomers to attend their services, we often neglect to find ways for them to share their gifts and their faith. We often neglect to invite them to serve and contribute.

Prayer Points:

- *that our churches will increasingly become places where newcomers find a place of belonging. Pray that all refugees arriving in Hamilton will have the opportunity to use their spiritual gifts and contribute to the Body of Christ*
- *that newly arrived refugees from all faith backgrounds would be drawn to Jesus and respond to His invitation to follow Him*

Question: What is one meaningful way a newcomer could use their gifts to contribute to the life of your church community?

CHILDREN: stop to read & pray as you pass by a school, day care, or playground

Learning Point: Kids often adapt quicker than their parents when they arrive in a new country. Children sometimes become the language and cultural interpreters for their parents. This creates stress, role confusion, and potential for family conflict as parents try to find ways to integrate their home cultural values with their new environment.

Prayer Points:

- *for healthy family relationships between children and their parents as they all adjust to the challenges of their new realities*
- *for emotional & spiritual healing for children who have experienced severe trauma*
- *for families to be reunited quickly. Many are waiting for their spouses, children, or parents to join them here in Canada*

Question: How could you coach your children - or children you know- on ways to befriend newcomer children in their neighbourhood?

BELONGING: stop at one of your favourite places. Somewhere that you particularly enjoy spending time

Learning Point: Newcomers want to feel like they belong here in Hamilton- their new home. They don't want to be treated only as someone in need. They want to have meaningful relationships with Canadians from many different backgrounds. They are eager to contribute and to be included in all areas of life in our city.



Prayer Points:

- *that the people of Hamilton will respond with kindness, generosity and hospitality. That long-time Canadians and newcomers will become friends*
- *that those of us who have lived in Hamilton for a long time will be intentional about creating space in our churches, in our social groups, and in our workplaces for newcomers to fully participate. That newly arrived refugees will quickly feel that they belong here and this is their new home*

Question: What is one specific thing you will do to help create a place of belonging for a newly arrived refugee?

When you get back home, end your prayer walk by reading and praying this prayer for refugees who are arriving here in Hamilton and all around the world.

A Prayer for Refugees

Loving God,
We pray for the world's refugees,
They have experienced trauma beyond our imagining.
God of healing, bring them healing.
They endure the most trying of circumstances.
God of strength, bring them strength.
They face an uncertain future.
God of hope, bring them hope.

We pray for the countries from which refugees come,
They are experiencing conflict.
God of healing, bring them healing.
Their people are torn apart by violence & other types of persecution.
God of strength, bring them strength.
They face a difficult future.
God of hope, bring them hope.

We pray for refugees who have resettled in Canada.
They have experienced great loss.
God of healing, bring them healing.
They are building new lives in a foreign land.
God of strength, bring them strength.
They are courageously carving out a future.
God of hope, bring them hope.

We pray for refugee claimants living in Canada.
They have experienced great loss.
God of healing, bring them healing.
They may never see their families again.
God of strength, bring them strength.
They have no certainty about their future.
God of hope, bring them hope.

We pray for refugee claimants detained in Canada.
They are experiencing great pain
God of healing, bring them healing.
They live in harsh and difficult conditions
God of strength, bring them strength.
They are losing hope.
God of hope, bring them hope.

We pray for our nation
We have hardened our hearts against refugees
God of healing, bring us healing
We have grown weary of caring
God of strength, give us strength
We need to find a better way forward,
God of hope, bring us hope.

In Jesus name we pray,
Amen

Prayer Adapted from A Just Cause ajustcause.com.au

Please email your answers to the questions by 10 pm on June 21st:
info@openhomeshamilton.ca

We will put ALL the completed entries into a draw. There will be 2 winners!

Prizes include:

- a gift certificate for Tomah restaurant - a wonderful new Syrian restaurant in downtown Hamilton <https://www.facebook.com/Tomahrestaurant/>
- a gift certificate to Brothers Barbershop - a barber shop on Ottawa St. run by 3 brothers who are newcomers to Hamilton <https://www.facebook.com/brothers-barber-shop-576312919483972/>

Want to know more?

If you want to learn more about refugees, or want to get involved in supporting refugees locally please contact one of the groups below. We would love to help you, and your church, discover the best ways you can engage with refugees.

Open Homes Hamilton (a project of IAFR Canada)

Website: [Open Homes Hamilton](http://openhomeshamilton.ca)

Facebook page: [Open Homes Hamilton - Home](https://www.facebook.com/OpenHomesHamilton-Home)

Phone: 289-426-2612

Micah House Refugee Reception Services

Website: [Micah House | A ministry to newly arrived refugee claimants in Hamilton.](http://micahhouse.ca)

Facebook page: [Micah House - Home](https://www.facebook.com/MicahHouse-Home)

Phone: 905-296-4387

The foreigner who resides with you must be to you like a native citizen among you; so you must love him as yourself, because you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 19:34