

Ministry Feeds Jerusalem's Poor, Both Jews and Arabs

A New York-based ministry that co-organizes the annual Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem is coupling its intercession with action by raising funds to help the poor in Israel.

Eagles' Wings ministry hopes to feed at least 1,000 impoverished families in Jerusalem and other Israeli cities this year as part of its ongoing mission to bless the people of Israel through prayer.

The ministry provided some meals this summer through a partnership with an Israel-based aid organization. But it hopes to raise more funding for the outreach through donations made at its website and during services held on the global prayer day Oct. 3. Each meal costs \$18, according to the Eagles' Wings website, with a week's worth of food provided for \$189.

"I feel like it's time for us to really pray prayers that we are willing to become the answer to," said Eagles' Wings founder Robert Stearns, who launched the Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem eight years ago in partnership with Foursquare Church leader Jack Hayford. "Yes prayer is vital, yes prayer is urgent, but [we want to do something] from a social justice aspect that also brings a sense of relief and a sense of genuine comfort to the people living there."

More than 20 percent of Israeli families, or roughly 1.6 million people, live in poverty, according to Israel's National Insurance Institute. And while many Christians have focused their aid efforts on the nation's Jewish community, Stearns said the outreach would target both Arabs and Jews.

"The Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem from its very beginning has been totally committed to proclaiming a God of

love for all people," he said. "God's unique relationship with the Jewish people does not in any way indicate that He loves them any more than He loves all peoples of the earth. We just feel that any Christian who is going to be involved in issues in the Middle East has to really maintain a kingdom perspective and not get drawn into a political perspective."

College students who visited Israel this summer as part of Eagles' Wings Israel Experience study-abroad program launched the outreach by helping prepare food at a Jerusalem restaurant that feeds 300 to 500 people daily for free. The youth also distributed food vouchers to the homes of needy Israelis.

Michael Onifer, director of the Israel Experience, said many of the residents were surprised to learn Christians were the ones offering assistance. "Their response was very positive, very heartfelt, but I don't think they anticipated Christians [would] be walking into their living room and giving them food cards," he said.

Onifer said the students met with Israeli government leaders and diplomats during the summer tour but were most moved by their experience serving the poor. "To really meet the practical needs of the everyday people of Jerusalem was one of the clearest and strongest demonstrations of the love of Jesus for the people of Israel," he said. "And when you look over the history of Jews and Christians, it was an opportunity to do something that more closely represents the life and the reality of Jesus."

Roughly 300,000 churches in 175 nations are expected to participate in the Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem. The prayer day began in 2002 and now has support from more than 1,000 Christian leaders, including Christians United for Israel founder John Hagee, Bible teacher Kay Arthur, author Joel Rosenberg, Aglow International President Jane Hansen Hoyt, and Gospel for Asia President K.P. Yohanan. Jewish leaders and representatives from the Israeli government also

have participated the event.

Prayer gatherings will be held across the globe, including on university campuses, and an event Stearns is leading in Jerusalem will be broadcast live on God TV. Intercessors can also participate through a 24-hour international telephone prayer room.

To support Eagles' Wings' feeding outreach in Israel, visit .