

How the Holy Spirit Is Encountering Syrian Refugees

Sharon* moved to the Near East nine years ago and now leads an outreach team that helps meet the spiritual and physical needs of Syrian refugees. Her team members provide aid and relief, share the gospel, lead Discovery Bible Groups, mentor individuals and start local fellowships of new believers. Amid the poverty and brokenness around her, Sharon also sees God's grace at work.

"God is pursuing people," Sharon said. "He is calling people to be disciples: to 'come follow me' and 'make disciples', [especially] among the Syrians."

Each week Sharon teaches English. She is often invited to visit her students' families, which enables relationships to deepen and opens up conversations about faith.

Sharon met Tara*, the aunt of one of her students, when she visited their home two years ago. A total of 28 relatives lived on a rooftop, including Tara, her husband, Ahmed*, and their four children. Sharon shared the gospel with them and, soon after, two other believers also came to share their faith with the same family.

Tara decided to follow Jesus and attended a Discovery Bible Group. Additionally, she started studying God's Word with Sharon, while Ahmed studied the Bible with another member of the team. The couple joined a local church and, in July this year, they were baptised.

"It's amazing what God has done in the last years," Sharon said. "Before, we were not hearing much of people coming to faith. Now Syrian [Muslims] are getting baptised!"

In the past two years Tara, Ahmed and their children moved

nine times, including temporarily living in a one-room apartment with no windows. Despite struggles of currently living with no regular income, as Ahmed cannot find work, Tara is keen to share the hope she has found in Christ Jesus.

Tara, a Syrian Kurd, wants to lead a Discovery Bible Group in the Kurdish language for her friends and neighbours. Each week Sharon goes to Tara's apartment to mentor and equip her to lead a group on her own. Together, they discuss Bible stories in Arabic until Tara knows them well and can retell the stories in Kurdish. They are praying for neighbours with whom she would like to start a Bible study.

"When I came, I expected two or three people to come to faith," Sharon said. "It has changed my expectations to see so many people come to faith and tell their neighbours. God has done it, and He can do it again."

Increased numbers of individuals coming to faith is evidence of the Lord's grace at work.

"People are praying for Syria," Sharon emphasised. "God's Spirit is moving. God is doing something among the Syrians."

While acknowledging challenges ahead, Sharon exudes excitement at an opportunity to be part of a movement of God in the Near East.

"The harvest is white. We need labourers. If it's not you, ask someone else to come," Sharon shared. "We are only going to reach unreached areas through the people we disciple."

God is transforming lives and communities, as believers respond to God's call to share their story of His grace in their lives and make disciples.

Please pray for God to raise up more Syrian believers to serve their communities and make disciples. Pray for OM Near East Field workers to live out the gospel in neighbourhoods in the

Near East.

*Name changed