

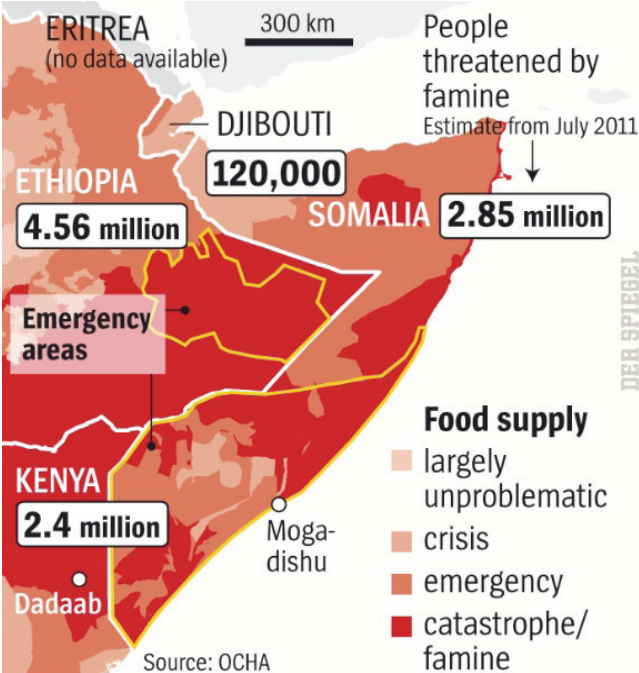
PRAYER GUIDE

for the

EAST AFRICA

FAMINE RELIEF TRIP

September 10–17 2011



The Context

East Africa is experiencing a devastating famine, some estimate the worst in 60 years, that is causing extreme suffering in the region. Recent news reports suggest that more than 29,000 children under the age of 5 have died in the last 90 days. The U.N. indicates that 640,000 children are acutely malnourished. Rains are not expected for the rest of the month and conditions are expected to worsen. More than 12 million people in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti need aid.

Hollywood Church has partnered with churches in Burundi, Cancun, Texas and Uganda to provide relief. All took offerings to pull together our resources in behalf of those struggling through one of the worst famines in Africa's history. Hollywood church members have also committed to pray and fast as food is delivered to those in need during the week of September 10–17. Two of our members, David and Syd Shook, will be traveling to participate in the relief effort along side partners from other contributing churches.

Our Purposes

- To be a part of God's healing and restoration in the world.
- To extend God's mercy to those in need.
- To stand in solidarity with those who are suffering by offering support through fasting, praying and financial giving.
- To remember God's blessings and provisions in our lives and express our gratitude creatively.
- To reflect on our interconnectedness, or "ubuntu," an African term used in many countries to express the how my well being depends on the well being of others.

Saturday, September 10, 2011

David, Syd and Ben (the videographer) arrive in Kenya, no doubt weary from their long international journey. Claude will be in the process of buying food, packing it for transport, and loading trucks.

Scripture

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns.

Exodus 20:8–10

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.

Psalms 23:1–3a

Reflection

God is the source of true rest. Both physical and spiritual rest have been a part of his plan from the beginning. In our recognition of the Sabbath we acknowledge that God intended for all mankind to enjoy the blessing of his rest.

Pray

Pray for those in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti who have traveled long distances over dangerous terrain seeking out aid and are now weary. They are hungry as they travel, some are sick, some are lonely. Pray that they would find rest for their body and souls. For our relief team, pray for a restful night's sleep after arrival and a renewed sense of strength in the morning. Also pray for clarity and direction as Claude completes the process of securing food and transport.

Sunday, September 11, 2011

International partners Pastor Moses from Worship Harvest Church in Uganda and Pastor Mark from Life Church in Burundi arrive in Nairobi to help prepare for the trek North.

Scripture

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3: 27–28

Reflection

Paul is admonishing the Galatian congregation about their divisions among party lines—ethnic, socio-economic and gender. When we are following Jesus, those designations should fall to the ground and not hinder our common life and worship together.

Pray

Pray for those who are displaced living with people from other cultures or towns, that they would find unity, friends and family. Pray that their drive for survival and security would not override their sense of the common good and that God's peace would be among them. For the relief team, pray for cooperation and unity among its international members. Even though this is a joyous time of reuniting with old friends, the trip will be long, there might be some moments of feeling overwhelmed and even a bit anxious with the task of distribution, so pray that we are 'one in the spirit.'

Monday, September 12, 2011

The relief team drives hours north to the town of Lodwar, leaving at first light and arriving at nightfall.

Scripture

Remember, O Lord, what has befallen us; look, and see our disgrace! We have become orphans, fatherless; our mothers are like widows... Why have you forgotten us completely? Why have you forsaken us these many days? Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old. Lamentations 5:1,2,20,21

Reflection

In Lamentations we hear the true grief of a people who have lost everything in exile from their homeland and feel a pain so deep, that they assume God must have literally forgotten that they exist. This is not unlike what many in East Africa must be feeling now—far from home, wondering if and when they will return.

Pray

Pray that the people we find in Lodwar would feel remembered by God through our prayers, gifts and fasting. Pray for protection for the relief team as we drive along perilous roads, pray for no breakdowns or delays. We anticipate cold, rainy weather, so pray for healthy travelers as well.

Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Food distribution in Lodwar begins. We've been told that it's the town in the northern region of Kenya that has been hit hardest by the drought.

Scripture

*In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?'** For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. **Exodus 16:13–15**

Reflection

As the nation of Israel left the foot of Mount Sinai they headed into the desert. As they became hungry they began to complain. God responded graciously to the community and provided manna and quail – the sustenance they needed. In verse 11 God tells Moses that once the people had eaten their fill, then they would know he was the Lord their God.

We hope that the food and water are delivered to the people at Lodwar, they will feel the provision and goodness of God.

Pray

Pray that God's presence would be felt among the team and the people of Lodwar as food and water are distributed. Pray for calm and harmony during that process and a spirit of celebration. Pray that the team would experience the joy of new and meaningful relationships. Pray that Ben would find the most appropriate stories to film and bring back for us to share. Take time to thank God for your provisions and ask him to show you how you can continue to use those provisions creatively for his kingdom.

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

The second day of food distribution in Lodwar begins.

Scripture:

... The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Exodus 2:23

The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. Isaiah 41:17

Reflection

The Israelites cried out under oppression. Their cry of suffering caught God's attention and even though it wasn't addressed to him directly it was as if he was attracted to it. As God's people we must listen intently for the cries of the oppressed and be ready to answer.

Pray

Pray for God to continue answering the cries of suffering going up from East Africa now. Pray that he would fine-tune the ears of his people to hear the cries of the needy and to give them creativity as they respond to those cries. Pray for continued efficiency and effectiveness in the second day of food distribution. Pray for continued strength for the relief team.

Thursday, September 15, 2011

The relief team travels to Ngoron for more food distribution.

Scripture

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." Genesis 1:28

Reflection

As we travel again on dry roads, we are forced to examine how these roads became so dry to begin with. Some scientists believe that the process of global warming has changed rain patterns in the region. Deforestation has also been mentioned as possible cause.

In the garden, God gave Adam and Eve the responsibility of caring for the earth. To align ourselves with this calling placed on humanity, we must examine anew our relationship with the earth around us. How can "subdue" our lifestyles, communities and spaces so that they are life-giving and reflect the goodness of God's original creation?

Pray

Pray for the governments of the countries in East Africa, that they could determine the root causes of famine and create long term solutions. Pray that life-giving water would return to the region and that once again, people would have enough to sustain themselves and their families. Pray for continued safety for the relief team as they travel to new areas.

Friday, September 16, 2011

The team travels to Kangoletia and distributes the remaining food and water.

Scripture

“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. “Bring them here to me,” he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. Matthew 14:17–21

Reflection

Jesus used only five loaves and two fish to feed a multitude. When we are willing to give of our time, money or talents—even when we feel we don’t have enough—God is faithful in multiplying those elements to bless others. The food and water we’ve purchased has now been distributed to hungry people in three areas of Northern Kenya where the need and suffering has been the greatest. God took what we were willing to give and used it to bless the people of Northern Kenya.

Pray

Pray God would continue to use the prayers that were offered, the time spent fasting, the financial gifts and the new relationships to bless those affected by the famine. Pray that this week of commitments at Hollywood Church would also have a lasting impact on our hearts and would inspire us to continue to support those locally and globally who are suffering. Pray for the relief team as they start the journey back to Nairobi.

Saturday, September 17, 2011

We've come full circle—the team arrives back in Nairobi. We will debrief and the team members will head their separate ways. We've forged new friendships and are ready to bring you news of our journey.

Scripture

Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. Psalm 96:2–3

Reflection

When we have seen and tasted the goodness of the Lord, the Psalmist invites us to praise. The good news of God's love, compassion and concern for mankind is worth spreading. We know that when we shared your gifts of food and water in Kenya, that it was one way of declaring God's glory among the nations. And so we praise God for his continued salvation.

We will bring back our stories of God's goodness from Kenya as a testament to his "marvelous deeds." May we continue to be a community in Hollywood that grows in our ability to spot God's goodness and to participate in it. As we celebrate his glory, may his goodness reach "among all people."

Pray

Praise God for his goodness, for his continued salvation physically and spiritually. Pray that we will develop more and more each day in our ability to spot and celebrate God's goodness. Continue in the coming weeks and months to pray that God's goodness and mercy would be among the people of East Africa and that they would continue to find the relief that they need. Pray for the relief team as they travel back to their home countries.

