

Prayers are Not Just Words

Sometimes it feels like we are stuck on a broken record. (For those of you too young to know; sound is conveyed from grooves cut in a vinyl record. If a record gets scratched, the needle can get trapped in the same groove and keep playing the same bit of a song over and over until you manually moved the needle.) We do not seem to be making any progress. So many of the things on our prayer lists are always the same. That is not entirely a bad thing. We are to be in constant prayer. Each day brings new challenges and the need for decisions, so a daily request for help with the day is a good thing. Family and friends should always be in our prayers. Nurturing those relationships is never a 'done deal'. Regular prayers for them reminds us to keep God in the mix. Loving our enemies is a daily challenge with which we will always need help. Also, do not forget to be thankful each day for those things it is easy to take for granted – health, food, shelter, safety – all of which may seem routine until the day they are not. . .

The 'broken record' parts are the things we know should be different; that we should help make different but do not. Things like the treatment of refugees; the epidemic of gun violence; the scourge of racism, people going hungry in a country where food waste is epidemic. Pray about these things certainly, but also do something. Support Child Disaster Services in their work. Do not remain silent in the face of racism, look for ways to build bridges not walls between communities. Make a start to end violence. Think about your choice of words and your attitudes about differences of opinion. Do you need to learn new nonviolent strategies for dealing with conflict? Reduce your food waste and support a community garden in a food desert (a place where there is no grocery store at all or no fresh produce available). Give your prayers hands and feet where ever you can!

This week, remember in prayer:

Pray for the people of the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda** affected by the eruption of the Mount Nyiragongo volcano on May 22 and the ensuing weeks of earthquakes & tremors. The volcano is in the DRC but people across the nearby border with Rwanda are also impacted. The Brethren Disaster Ministries staff has sent help from the Church of the Brethren's Emergency Disaster Fund to the Rwanda Church of the Brethren which has churches in the affected area & is providing aid to victims. More than 420,000 people have had to flee their homes.

Pray for **refugees, especially children**. Child Disaster Services (CDS) continues to work with children & families at the U.S. Mexico border. A third team is now at work. Since starting their work in early May, more than 1,300 children have been served. The current team is serving an average of 80 children a day. Give thanks that the government has acknowledged the need & given Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitian refugees who are here. Among other things, this should allow 150,000 people eligible to work, the opportunity to do so & support themselves (just now, there is a worker shortage in the U.S., especially in jobs that are hard to fill).

Pray for **people dealing with COVID-19** worldwide. In the U.S. as the vaccination rate goes up, the number of cases of COVID has gone down. However, areas with low vaccination rates are seeing an increase in cases with a growing rate of serious illness requiring hospitalization. The experts warn that without a high vaccination rate everywhere, COVID will not disappear & more serious variants will develop.



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