



THE HAYNES

MISSIONARIES TO IRAQI KURDISTAN

"God could not love you more no matter how much you do for him and he will not love you less no matter how often you disappoint him."

Baptist Preacher

Dear Pastor,

January - February 2022

Kurdistan, Iraq

We were blessed by a visit from Bro. Irfan Abdullatif (Light of Life Baptist Ministries). Bro. Irfan extended his stay while he was here and that additional fellowship and ministry time was a great help to both Apryl and to myself. God has used Bro. Irfan as both an edifier and encourager during our time in the Middle East. During this trip we were able to quantify and define a vision for moving forward in church planting efforts here in Iraqi Kurdistan. It is our privilege to be part of what God is doing through Light of Life.

By the grace of God we were able to begin a Bible study in our home city of Duhok! This is the result of a number of factors, not the least of which are contacts made through Light of Life. God took several situations that should have been complete disasters and worked them out according to his own plan. It sounds like a cliché, but I could not be more serious. This meeting should not have happened. It was not humanly possible. There were too many things up against it and it looked impossible. Yet, here we are talking about the impossible as reality. The goodness of God is on full display in Iraqi Kurdistan. Yes - it is a small number of people but they are coming! Yes - it is dangerous but God never promised safety - only his presence. Yes - it could implode but it could also explode the Gospel across the Middle East!

We ask that you earnestly pray on our behalf that God would use us to effectively teach, train and exhort the existing believers. We ask for your prayers on behalf of those believers who are coming to the meeting as well as the local brother who preaches each week. Most of all, we ask prayer that this Bible study would, in God's time, organize into a church.

Cairo, Egypt

Apryl and I had a tremendous time in Cairo! We were in two churches and taught on Baptist Distinctives. More on this in the next letter!

As always, we ask for your prayers that God would make us effective in the ministry of the Gospel.

Matt & Apryl Haynes

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SENDING CHURCH

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Time is the Love Language of Kurds

In my letters, I often enjoy highlighting some of the characteristics of Kurdish culture. One of the many things I have had to learn living amongst Kurds is that nothing communicates love more to them than time spent together. As Americans, we think we understand the value of time. We know that our families need to see us on holidays and that our mothers need for us to call so they know we miss them and that we are thinking about them. We are professional time managers in the West. We allocate time for what is important to us around the other things that need to be done.

With Kurds (for the most part) time is not processed this way, particularly for visits. Now quite often this is simply unavoidable. Matt and I have essential relationship-building obligations, but we also have Bible studies, English classes and other appointments, but making sure our Kurdish contacts understand that we have time for them still remains incredibly key to our relationships.

When you visit a Kurdish home, you should go with the mindset that this is your one event for the day. What you thought was lunch might turn into 8 hours. What you understood to be meeting up for coffee may become a string of events. If your Kurdish host gets the sense that you are rushing off to something more important (or especially to another family's house) this could be deeply offensive.

We often portray Middle Easterners as extremely hospitable (and they are), but do they ever get tired of guests? YES. Though hospitality is tightly woven into their tribal and Islamic culture, of course they get tired of guests. There are strings of memes made about it online. I am positive they sometimes invite us out of obligation, but this is what we have learned: even if they don't want you to come, they still want you to come. The annoyance at having to serve another guest is much overshadowed by an offense that the guest did not want to spend the time to begin with.

Some of you living in the States will have very few opportunities to even see a Muslim, but some of you live in areas where Muslims have communities. If you have a chance, the single best thing you can do to start moving toward the Gospel is spend time with them. Visit their home, have a tea with them, or take them a halal dish from your own kitchen. I think you'll enjoy their time-centered hospitality.

Apryl Haynes