



THE HAYNES

MISSIONARIES TO IRAQI KURDISTAN

"We often see the end and that's what we want without the beginning or the middle."

Allen Domelle, sermon 2020

November - December 2022

Dear Pastor,

Kurdistan, Iraq

Light of Life Baptist Church

We hope that the Christmas season and services were a blessing to each of you. Our own service was both a partial disaster and a huge encouragement! I have never enjoyed the planning of service. Seeking God's direction for a sermon, studying, writing, editing, preparing and delivering that sermon is what I enjoy the most. It is not, however, the majority of what a pastor does and planning a Christmas service falls under my jurisdiction. I spent days planning everything and talking it over with our members. Our attendance had been up the previous week and we were hoping to see that continue through Christmas.

The day of service arrived and we got to the meeting place early. Apryl put out the small pastor/pastor's wife gifts for the attendees and we settled in to wait for everyone else. Some of the young people arrived first and we spent a wonderful time visiting with them. Then the texts begin to come in...my translator and her husband would be late. No problem. Their son was sick....problem. In Middle Eastern culture the sickness of a child is treated with extreme anxiety (I cannot emphasize **extreme** enough) and I felt like I was seeing the service headed down the drain. I told Apryl, "We bathed this thing in prayer and it seemed like it was what God wanted. If God wants something else then he's got to make it happen and we have to accept it." About half an hour later our church members arrived and planted their son (who was, indeed, quite ill) on a couch and got right to the service. We cut out almost everything I had spent days painstakingly planning. The song service was brutally short, the sermon lasted 15 minutes (including translation) and their kid had to be excused to vomit during the sermon...

...and it was one of the best and sweetest services we have ever had! We had our highest attendance since the church's founding in May of 2022, more young people were involved during the service than ever before and the fellowship after the service was some of the best we have ever had. God didn't need a well-designed service. He was already planning to show up.

We cannot wait to see how God will show up in 2023.

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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