

DISASTER PRAYER STATIONS

For the Paris, France Terror Attack 11/13/2015

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INTRO

Oftentimes, we hear about disasters and tragedies somewhere else, we have a moment or two of sadness, and then we change the channel or move on. But this is not what we are called to do as Christians, people of faith, we are called to respond in prayer, love, grace and hope.

Tonight, we will experience prayer stations which will help us spend some time thinking and praying for those involved in the terror attacks in Paris, France.

Let all of it sink in, don't try to quickly push it away.

Take this time now, and pray for them...

Hall of Prayer set up:

Print out 20-30 different pictures of the tragedy; include some of people, pictures of rescue teams organizing and helping, officials, etc. Make sure these images are family-friendly.

Tape the image print outs up in a hallway or on one wall. (If on a wall, make sure you re-title to "Wall of Prayer") Place pillows or chairs on the ground around the pictures. Post the sign explaining this station where participants will see it as they first walk up to it.

For Part 2, have a basket of pens and a stack of note cards, and have an empty box or basket for them to place their cards when they are finished. Use the questions as leaders to help continued discussion after the stations are experienced or maybe even at a later date.

Hall of Prayer

Part 1 – Start Here

Take time to look deeply at what happened in Paris, France. Look at all the pictures. See the pain, damage, and hurt. Put yourself in their shoes.

What do you think this experience feels like?

What emotions do you have? Do you feel afraid? Confused? Scared?

Take a moment to let it sink in.

When you are finished reflecting, continue to all of the other stations and then return back to this station for Part 2 when you are done.

Hall of Prayer

Part 2 – End Here

Now that you have looked at all of these pictures, and prayed in many ways for the situation; take time now to write down your own questions.

Write down the questions that come to mind when you think on these events and as you see them in pictures and on the news. What struggles do you have with what has happened? What doubts come to mind about justice? What questions are raised about God? What are the things that deep within you cry out when you hear of this? What can you do to help?

Take as many note cards as you need. Write each question on its own note card. When you are finished, place the questions in the box provided.

Prayer for those who are suffering set up:

Print out several small maps or have on large map of the France with location of disaster marked. It would also be good to have one world map so participants can see where France is in relation to them. Have a basket of pens and stack of "post-it notes" for them. Use pillows, chairs or couches for participants to be able to sit and think on these things.

Make sure you post the sign that explains the station.

Prayer for those who are suffering

Touch the map. Look at where Paris, France is located in relation to us. Take post-it notes. Write prayers for those who are there hurting right now. Pray for those who have been injured, those who have lost loved ones, those who are scared and traumatized. Write your prayers on the post-it notes and stick them to the map.

Prayer for those who have been lost set up:

Set up an altar, table, or anything else that will hold dozens of candles (the number of candles depends on the number of people who will go through the stations, if the candles all become lit simply quietly go over and blow out a few so that everyone can light one.) It would be good to have a cross or another Christian symbol as part of this station.

Once again, post the station sign that explains it.

Prayer for those who have been lost

It is hard when we hear of anyone being killed. It is especially hard when innocent ones are hurt or killed through an act of terrorism, it saddens us deeply.

It is an ancient Christian practice to light candles in memory of loved ones and those on our hearts.

Light a candle in memory of those who were killed or injured, think of their families and those who love them, and pray for them. Watch the flame of your candle while you pray.

Prayer for those who help

Set Up:

Set up a large canvas or sheet of butcher paper on the ground. (You will probably want a tarp under it) Have a variety of markers, colored pencils, and paints available. Write "Paris, France" very large and in the middle.

Post the sign describing the station in a place where participants can see it.

Prayer for those who help

“When I was a boy and I would see scary things on the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”

– Fred Rogers

As soon as the first bomb went off and the calls came in, police, EMTs, firefighters, pastors, counselors and others ran to the scene only to find disaster, pain, and tragedy. Take time now to pray for those who were the first responders, those who came to serve; “the helpers”. Thank God for those who are willing to be Christ in the midst of pain.

Use your creativity to add a prayer of thanks to God for the helpers. Use symbols, pictures, words, letters. And as you create, continue to pray for support and help for those going and those who continue to go to help.

Prayer through Scripture

Set Up:

Set up a place with chairs or on the floor with several Bibles. Different translations are good too. Give participants a space where they can have their own little spot to reflect on the scripture.

Post the sign explaining the station where participants can see.

Prayer through Scripture

Scripture is often used in times of teaching and for rejoicing, but it also has purpose in times of pain. Reflect and meditate on the scripture verses below.

Read Psalm 10:

- What do you make of this scripture?
- Does it truly reflect the character of God or does it reflect the feelings of the writer? Or Both? Maybe it is how you feel?

Read:

Psalm 16

Psalm 23

Psalm 143

Prayer for our anger

Set Up:

Set up a space with pillows and sheets of paper, preferably away from the other stations as it might be a bit louder than others.

Prayer for our Anger

It is easy and understandable to be angry.

We have so many questions:

“WHY?!” “Who could be so evil!?” “Where was God?”

God is big enough for our doubts, questions, and anger.

Take a few minutes, either write your questions down and angrily rip up the paper, or if you have no words, take a pillow, and hold it over your face to deaden the sound, and yell your pain!

After you have finished, continue to part 2.

Prayer for our Anger

PART 2 –

It is easy for us to blame God in the midst of pain, we wonder where God was. Even Christ wonders this on the cross “Why have you forsaken me?”

But we have been promised that even in the midst of great pain, mourning and sorrow that God is with us, Emmanuel. God offers us hope in the midst of pain. God walks with us, especially in times of suffering.

Take a few minutes to sit in that Hope.

Do Not Fear SET-UP

Have a station with Bibles, also have a large sheet of paper with “I trust in God.” written on it. Provide pens for participants to sign the paper with.

Do Not Fear

Terrorism is named that for a reason: its whole goal is to create terror and fear in people. It is truly an evil, selfish act.

Did you know that in some translations of the bible the phrase “Do Not Fear” or “Fear Not” can be found over 300 times?! Here is just one:

“Don’t fear, because I am with you; don’t be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will surely help you; I will hold you with my righteous strong hand.” –Isaiah 41:10

Sign your name to the “I trust in God” poster as an act of faith in our God who is bigger than our fears.

While we may still have times of fear, we know ultimately God is bigger than any fear.