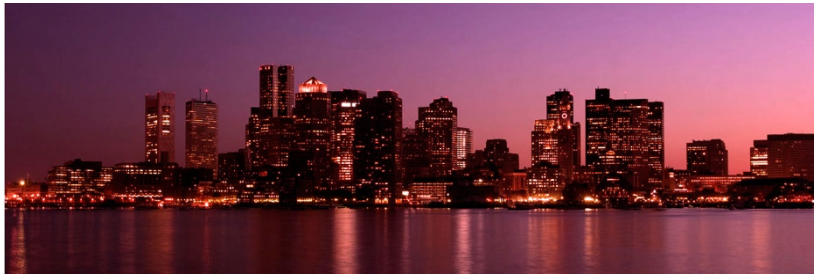


July 22, 2023

Brian & Malisa Ellis – Serving with Cru in Boston

*Change Boston*



## Invited for Tea in the home of a Syrian refugee family

Probably the most significant ministry moment of our summer in the middle east happened sitting on the floor drinking tea with two Syrian refugee women.

**For over three hours, we shared the gospel and talked about the hope we have in Jesus.**

But let me rewind a bit and take you with me on that day. Joelle (a student I got to disciple this summer) and I met with “Leah” (who works with the refugee ministry we partner with) and our translator “Ahmet” to walk to this home. It was a 30-minute journey up and down some of the steepest hills I’ve ever experienced in a city. On the walk, Leah told Joelle and me about the family we were going to be visiting:

**“The mom has been open to spiritual things over the past year.** The dad was working as a cobbler but has just lost his job. He is deaf and mute, and so finding a new job has been hard. They have 2 kids with them: a little daughter who’s friendly and warm... you’ll love her. And they have a son who was also born deaf. We raised money for him to get cochlear implants, which makes the difference between being able to go to school and not.

“Today, we’re doing a home visit to check in on the family. We are bringing batteries for the little boy’s cochlear implants, because they told us that for the last two weeks, the batteries haven’t worked, and he hasn’t been allowed to go to school.”

We also wanted to bring some fresh produce, and a few small treats for the kids since we weren’t sure what the food situation was with the father losing his job. Honestly even as we began to turn the corner after the hot walk onto their street **my heart was already breaking just hearing a small update.**

As we approached the apartment, we were greeted at the door by the sweetest 10-year-old little girl with a bright beaming smile and her precious 6-year-old little brother with the brightest blue eyes ever. They were clearly excited that we had arrived. They ushered us into their living room: simple pillows lining one side of the room to make a floor couch and sparkling clean.

We sat down, were served tea, and the conversation quickly turned to deeper matters. In talking to our Syrian friend, we learned that her husband was currently selling bottles of water on the side of the street to try and make a living; in a culture of shame and honor, this sort of job is very shameful, but better than no job at all. As you can



***One of the joys of ministry is taking others with me, so on this home visit, I invited Joelle to join me. Joelle, on the right in this photo with the girls I disciplined this summer, is a student from Pennsylvania who just finished up her freshmen year. She was a little bit hesitant but up for the challenge. At the end of the summer, Joelle shared that our tea with this Syrian family was the most powerful moment of the summer for her.***



Imagine, this sort of work is not sustainable for a family of four, which is why the little boy had been going without batteries for his implants, and why we came with bags of fresh food.



The conversation quickly turned to Jesus and the mom shared how hopeless she was feeling. We asked where she finds hope. She said, “My kids.”

I replied, “Oh, I love my kids too, but have found that hope is fleeing if I only lean on things that I can see here on earth.” I explained that the only way I have found lasting hope has been in my relationship with God.

**That was the beginning of a three-hour conversation that weaved in and out of explaining the gift of the Gospel over and over.** We of course took some breaks to dance around the living room with the bright eyed 6-year-old and his puppets that had been gifted to him a few months prior.

I am fascinated once again by the power of hospitality. There is something powerful about meeting others in a home to talk about Jesus.

Thank you for partnering with us as we built relationships, shared the gospel, and continued to point both the students we brought with us but also the refugee families and local college students towards Jesus.

Loving our adventurous Lord,

*Brian & Malisa*

**Would you pray:**

- For the Syrian refugee families that we befriended to continue to consider Jesus as their only hope.
- For the 335 middle eastern university students we initiated with and the 41 students who heard the gospel and will be connected with a team of young missionaries heading to the city for a year in September. May the Gospel take root in their heart, mind, and soul.
- Praise: several of the college students we brought with us from the Northeast this summer are strongly considering returning to the middle east for at least a year.



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