



Jerusalem October 2011

Dear supporters,

Succot is right around the corner, and as believers we celebrate not only how the people of Israel was freed from slavery in Egypt, but also how God has freed us from the slavery of sin through Yeshua. He is still the same God, who wants freedom in our lives, and in the lives of people we meet. We praise Him for this gift. Although it may sometimes be a difficult and challenging process, it is still a process towards freedom and light. We want to share with you about our work with Ethiopian single mothers and children, who are experiencing this in a very clear way.

Program for Ethiopian single mothers

Ethiopian immigrants face huge challenges in the Israeli society. The differences between the society they left and Israel are big, and has made the integration process difficult. In many ways the Ethiopian culture is being looked down upon by society, communicating to the Ethiopian children that their parents' culture and language is less valuable. This creates a gap between the generations. Job opportunities are few, and many are forced to accept poor work agreements and conditions in order to care for their family. The situation is placing a lot of stress on families, causing feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness, loss of parental authority, and feelings of being rejected by society. Although many Ethiopians manage to pull themselves out of hardships, poverty among Ethiopian Jewish immigrants is still high and so is the unemployment rate. Also among believing families the hardships are being felt. Some experience that the father and husband leaves the family, and some experience abuse in different ways. The spiritual life of both mothers and children is deeply impacted by their situation. And as the mothers are forced to work very long hours to be able to take economical responsibility for the family, they are left with less time to spend with and care for their children.

Machaseh has during the last year started a program for believing Ethiopian single parent families. By arranging groups for mothers and children we want to support and empower them, and help them develop tools to deal with their difficult life situation. The groups provide the mothers with a place where they can share their experiences, where someone listens without judgment, where they experience fellowship with other believing women, and also have the opportunity to spend time with their children. It strengthens their faith and gives them hope for the future, by creating a belief that something good *can* happen to them, and that God's thoughts for them are good. For the women, who have often been lonely before coming to the group, the contacts they have gotten with other women have grown into lasting friendships, and several of them now keep in touch by phone and meet to talk and pray together.

This spring a believing counsellor from Ethiopia was part of several meetings with both the mothers and the children. Both women and children were greatly blessed by his teaching, and in particular by prayer. They have grown in faith, and are learning to give all their lives, both strengths and weaknesses, good experiences and difficult ones to the Lord.

For the children their family situation has often been something they could not talk about with their surroundings. By using creative expression like music, play, drawing and painting they have been able to discover and express the emotions and experiences they have. Building a faith in God as the perfect and good Father, and the one who sets them free has been a central part of the group. We see that the children have changed through these groups, and pray that it will be a continuing process that helps them grow, and always leads them closer to their heavenly Father. Both the mothers and the children are experiencing a new freedom in their lives.

Thank you for your prayers for these and coming groups for single parent families!

We wish you all a blessed Succot and a very happy New Year!

Because of the sensitivity of these groups we do not share any pictures with you this time. As always our sharing of someone's story is always done with their permission.