



Who is my neighbor?

Prayer Week
21-27 september 2025



bidden
voor de
buren



Who is my neighbor?

As humans, we're connected to our surroundings in many ways: through friendships, family, sports teams, our jobs, and our church. I hope these are places where you feel at home where you truly belong and are recognized.

Praying for our neighbors can help us gain a new perspective. There is a well-known story that Jesus tells in Luke 10, where He's asked the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

This week, we'll carry this question with us as we travel through Rotterdam — praying, observing, sharing, and serving. Especially on our neighbors with a migration background.

Will you join us in looking for your neighbor?



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Bidden voor de buren is a collaboration between:

- WEC Reaching Rotterdam
- 24-7 Prayer Rotterdam
- Geloven Dichtbij
- Evangelie & Moslims





Sunday 21 September

Who is my neighbor?

Let me begin by making the question very practical. Who lives next door to you? Do you know your neighbors? A survey conducted last year showed that Rotterdam scores lowest of all municipalities in the Netherlands when it comes to having contact with neighbors and helping each other. When we still lived in Rotterdam Zuid, my wife came up with the great idea to organize a balcony bingo with another couple. It was great to get to know new people this way and to, afterwards, speak to some of them more often.

The religious scholar who asked Jesus this question ± 1995 years ago had a different intention with it. He wanted to know who all fell under the commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Because as we all know, to love is hard work:)

I wonder how Jesus would answer the question now. What would the Rotterdam version of the Good Samaritan sound like? What group from the city would he use in his story? How would he teach us in Rotterdam to turn the question around: For whom may I be a neighbor?
If you have such a story yourself, please let us know!

Prayer

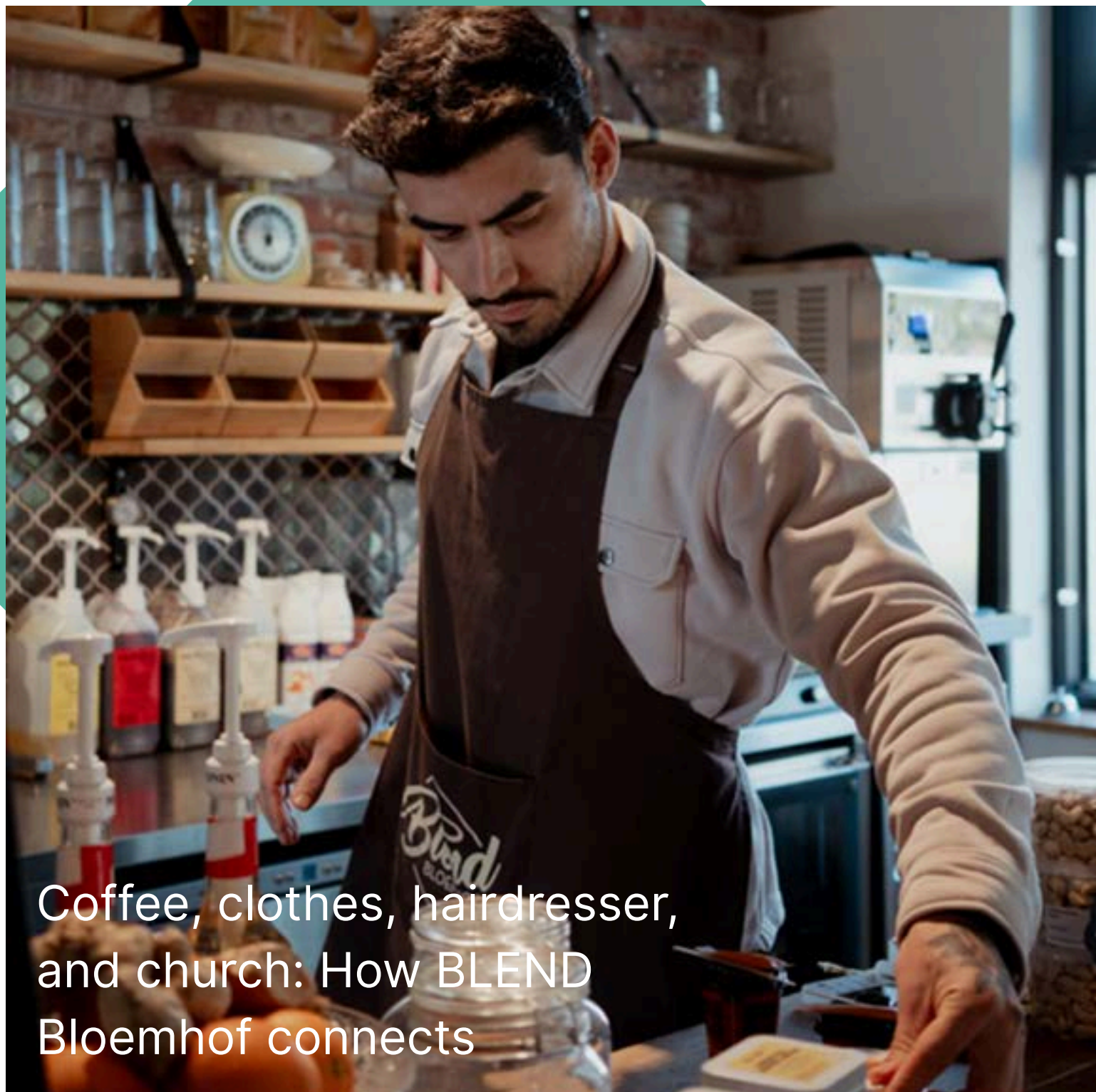
To be a neighbor, there must be space in your life. Openness to start seeing the other, willingness to get to know the other and a desire to mean something to them. It means an open heart, open eyes and open hands. One by one we want to pay attention to this in this moment of prayer:

Put a hand on your heart. Pray for initiative, courage and openness to build new relationships in your neighborhood. Even with people who are different from you. Take space to express any resistances and fears you might have.

Put a hand on your eyes. Pray for open eyes to see who the neighbors living around you are. Stay still for a moment to listen if God is bringing specific people to mind.

Open both of your hands. Pray for opportunities today and the rest of this week to specifically be a neighbor to someone near you. To whom can you give a smile or offer a listening ear/practical help? Pray for concrete (creative) ways to connect with your neighbors, such as a balcony bingo. Stay still for a moment to give space for the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

Bible Reading: Luke 10: 25-37



Coffee, clothes, hairdresser,
and church: How BLEND
Bloemhof connects

In a diverse neighborhood down South, Hans and Carolien Euser are building connections. BLEND serves as a coffee shop, hair salon, and church – a dream that literally began with a dream. Alongside neighbors and someone like Alpaslan from Northern Cyprus, they're bringing faith and hospitality into practice.

In 2017, Hans and Carolien Euser made the move to the Bloemhof op Zuid neighborhood in Rotterdam. While their work took them across the country, they also felt a strong pull to engage with the local community. But how do you build connections in a neighborhood where eighty percent of the residents come from diverse migration backgrounds?

They began praying, chatting, and strolling around. After nearly a year and a half, a remarkable answer arrived. God communicated through a dream they both experienced, sharing the same vision on the same night about a building further down their street. They noticed yellow awnings, a table filled with locals, and a hairdresser giving haircuts at Lange Hilleweg 220A.

Hans and Carolien have been running BLEND for four years now. They've built a community with their neighbors, all focused on making Bloemhof thrive. Besides being a coffee shop that also sells clothes and has a hair salon, they serve as a church in the area. Daily prayers take place from 7:30 to 8:00. Every Tuesday evening, they host 'table conversations,' and on Sundays, the Bloemhof Neighbourhood Church gathers.

The connections are made in a friendly way, thanks to BLEND's intercultural team. One of the team members is Alpaslan, from Northern Cyprus (the Turkish side of Cyprus). He used to work as a barista at a Christian drop-in café there, and that's where he found his faith. His newfound beliefs led to some challenges with those around him, which is why he and his wife ultimately chose to move to the Netherlands. Alpaslan now works at BLEND one day a week, first from Groningen and then from Arnhem.

It's awesome that Alpaslan can easily chat with the Turkish-speaking folks in the neighborhood. About 22 percent of the people in Bloemhof have a Turkish background. Now, the locals are talking to him in Turkish, asking questions like, "What are Hans and Carolien like?" Since he's in the shop every week, he's connecting with people who might be harder to reach otherwise. These are opportunities that God has created. He's at work in this neighborhood, and the BLEND team gets to be a part of it. What a fantastic privilege!

How do you connect with a neighborhood where eighty percent of the people have a migrant background?

Monday 22 September

Learning from Amazigh Hospitality

A large proportion of Moroccans in Rotterdam are of Amazigh descent, known in the Netherlands more by the name “Berber” (“barbarian”) but they have been calling themselves Amazigh (“free people”) for much longer. For an Amazighe, hospitality is an ancient tradition and value. In the Rif Mountains, the guest is seen as a blessing or a test from God. A well-known Amazigh proverb reads, “The guest is king for three days.” Another saying reads, “A guest brings a blessing or a lesson.”

Once, a stranger was passing through an Amazigh village in the Rif Mountains. He knocked on the door of a small house and asked only for water. The family immediately invited him to stay for dinner and offered him a bed for the night. The next morning, he was given a full breakfast, and he was invited to stay and rest for another day. When he wanted to move on after three days, the hosts gave him bread and figs for the journey.

Amazigh hospitality is not only a tradition but has also saved lives. During World War II, Amazigh provided shelter to Jewish refugees.

During the Algerian Civil War, they gave protection to people on the run. \Even in the vast desert, villagers rescued stranded tourists by offering them water and shelter.

In the Bible, hospitality to strangers is described as a way of receiving Jesus Himself. How holy is hospitality to you. Only through hospitality can we discover what blessing and lesson the newcomers to our city have to offer us.

“For the first time, I felt true love.”

Her faith—which she had acquired in Morocco—felt like an obligation. Until Assiya* took the Alpha course in Rotterdam and got to know Jesus.

Real name known to the editors.

Bible Reading: Matthew 25: 35-40

Read Assiya's story:



Prayer

Consider what lessons you have learned from newcomers and people from other cultures. Write down three of them. What do you recognize in them about God and His Kingdom? Talk to Him as you would to a friend and ask that these lessons may become (even more) part of your life.

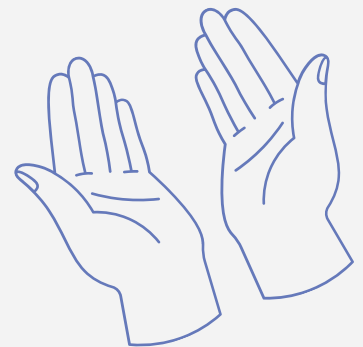
Then pray specifically around the value of hospitality in your life:

- That our hearts may be welcoming
- That God help us to set up our homes and lives for others
- That we will not judge, but learn from the diversity of cultures
- That the stories of the other may bless us, and we may learn
- That we may come to recognize that in every encounter, God's hand and presence can be hidden
- That we may see hospitality not only as a tradition, but as a holy calling

Finally, pray for the Amazigh in the city. There are about 55,000 to 60,000 Moroccans in Rotterdam, which is about 8% of the population. A large portion of them have Amazigh roots. The rest are Arab. There are only a few among them who follow Jesus. Pray for this least-reached group in the city to be reached with the gospel in deeds and words.

Take action:

Who could you invite for a simple meal or a cup of coffee, perhaps someone from a different culture?





Fatima: "One prayer changed my life."

In the heart of Feyenoord, Fatima runs a social café with strength and compassion. What no one sees: behind her smile lies a story of pain, resilience, and new life that arose after a prayer.

Fatima is a true Rotterdammer: roll up your sleeves, get to work and don't complain. When you get to know Fatima and see her at work, you see a strong woman, a go-getter. Someone who knows what she stands for. Fatima now leads the Boeijend! project in the social café "onder de Oranjeboom" in the Feyenoord district. An area with many challenges. When people come in for a chat or to bring something to eat, Fatima is there for them. She is calm and keeps the reins in her hands despite the hustle and bustle of the walk-in café. She has compassion for the people and knows what they are going through. How did a Moroccan woman with an Islamic upbringing end up in this role?

When she shares her story honestly and openly with me, I am left speechless. Fatima's story is heartbreaking. She can tell her story calmly, but it is almost incomprehensible what she had to go through as a girl and young woman.

At the age of 15, Fatima ran away from home, looking for freedom and a better life. In her search for recognition, security and love, she ended up with the wrong men. Her first husband was active in the drug world and treated her badly. He was shot dead during a drug deal. Her second husband treated her even worse; he also died unexpectedly during a trip.

Fatima was left alone with no money and four children to take care of. Fatima says: "At one point I stopped reading my mail, it was all bad news anyway. One day a woman I didn't know spoke to me. She said: 'Did you know that your home will be evicted soon?' I had reached a point where I accepted all the help that was offered to me. I was supposed to have a meeting at House of Hope to talk about my debts, but it turned out that I hadn't come at the right time. When I came in, there was a group talking about faith and I was invited to join them. They asked me if they could pray for me and I said yes. While praying, something changed in me. I felt love and peace flowing through my body. From that time on, my life started to change. I started learning more and more about faith. My life gradually got back on track. The most important thing for me was that I would one day be alone more, me and Jesus, we can do it together."

Fatima is open about her faith and how prayer has changed her life and she wants everyone in the neighborhood to experience that. She says she wants to give something back to people who are struggling. She is happy and proud of her work; it suits her and she belongs here now. Precisely because of what she has experienced, she gives more than just coffee and a smile in the social café.

Tuesday 23 September

Enriching friendships

It is not obvious that people from different cultures really get to know each other. Yet it happens and throughout Rotterdam valuable friendships develop. When you get to know someone's story and come to understand better how they think and what they believe in, you are amazed - and it also holds up a mirror to you. Deeper cross-cultural friendships, where you can find each other, laugh about each other, and talk through different topics, are immensely valuable and enlightening. I believe we can see something of God's richness in every culture. We also need it to be challenged in our thinking.

Jozef has become a good friend. Now I see him a less often, but we used to walk together regularly. He told special stories about the miracles God did for him in both his native land and here as well.

He gave me an insight into his life, his suffering, his culture and his relationship with God. We are so different, but we get to inspire and pray for each other.

Jozef told "I should be among the poorest Rotterdammers, but I feel rich, that's because of these friendships. People offer me a vacation, a day out, a bicycle, a meal in a restaurant. If I wanted, I could go on vacation four times a year - but I don't choose to, I'm busy with different kinds of volunteer work."

While walking, he meets an acquaintance on the street, whom he immediately encourages to come back to church. Typical Joseph - a special friend.

'I should be among the poorest Rotterdammers, but I feel rich.
That's because of friendships. '

Prayer

Grab two tea lights. Place one in front of you and light it, thinking of someone from another culture who lives on your street, in your neighborhood or town. Someone who has touched your heart. Say a short prayer of thanks for him/her. What have you been amazed by in your contact with this person? Speak it out to God.

Perhaps in your own life you recognize fewer of these fascinating cross-cultural friendships in which you can see something of God's richness. Friendships that also challenge you in your thinking and actions. Perhaps you would like to enter more of these friendships. Then light a second candle to pray for specific neighbors in whom you hope this may grow. Mention them by name, if possible.

And ask God what you may do in connecting with them. If you don't immediately have to think of specific neighbors but have this desire, leave the lit candle, reflect your desire and pray for open doors and courage to enter into contact!



Take action:

If you pray together with several people, share with each other where you have been challenged in your thinking and doing by cross-cultural friendships.



Wednesday: 24 September

Language of Your Heart: Urdu

It can sometimes be very frustrating when you have a special meeting and you don't speak each other's language. You're both excited, you want to share something, but you can't get anywhere. A deep conversation goes best in your native language, the language of your heart.

Something similar happens when you come to live in another culture. The culture you come from is so different that you often do not feel understood in the new culture, even if you have learned the language.

For about 5,000 people in Rotterdam, Urdu is the mother tongue. Most of them are Pakistanis. Our image of Pakistan is usually shaped by news reports of violence and oppression. And without downplaying that, I also want to look at the beauty of Pakistani culture. When I speak to people who have been to Pakistan, I hear them speak enthusiastically about the people, the hospitality, the culture, and the language.

The Urdu language contains a world of poetry, music, stories, and traditions. Some say it is the most beautifully written language in the world. There is a world to discover.

A poem in and about the Urdu language:

میری زبان

میری پہچان، میری جان ہے یہ
میرے جذبات کی ترجمان ہے یہ
لفظ اس کے دل میں اتر جاتے ہیں
روح میں جیسے سُر بجا دیتے ہیں
میری مٹی کی خوشبو آتی ہے
جب بھی اردو میں بات ہو جاتی ہے

My Language

My identity, my soul is this,
The interpreter of my feelings is this.
Her words penetrate the heart,
As if they bring music to the soul.
The scent of my earth I smell again,
Whenever I speak in Urdu.



'Prayer is my lifeline'

He learned to pray from his grandmother in Pakistan. Now Julius lives in Rotterdam, rooted in that faith – and longing to be a blessing.

Read Julius' story:



Bible Reading: Acts 2: 1-12

Prayer

Communicating with God in prayer comes most naturally in your native language. Like Urdu, today we want to look for the language of our hearts and use poetry as a tool. The form we chose today is to write an “Elfje”. It is a Dutch, compact form of poetry that consists of eleven words on five lines of poetry that you divide as follows:

- The first line of poetry: one word
- The second line: two words
- The third line: three words
- The fourth line: four words
- The fifth line: one word, summarizing the poem

Lines one through four may form a full sentence. Because the poem has only eleven words, you are forced to think about the text. I would not call myself a poet, yet I am often surprised by the eleven I write. With that, it can be a short and powerful prayer from your heart!

Today I invite you to write a prayer in the form of an eleven about your neighbors in the street, neighborhood or city. Perhaps a specific neighbor or ethnic group. Perhaps the Urdu!

An example:

Neighbors
Known, loved
By You, Father
Teach me more love
Everyday



Thursday 25 september

Neighbors from Warzones

For many people, the Netherlands is a refuge. From all kinds of countries where unsafe situations and wars are the order of the day, people flee to Europe and the Netherlands in search of a safer life.

In the 1990s, large groups of refugees from former Yugoslavia came to Rotterdam, such as Bosnians and ethnic Albanians from Kosovo. Early in the 21st century, the city welcomed Afghans and Iraqis. Later, Syrians. More recently, Ukrainians.

Every year, Rotterdam houses some 1,300 new status holders. At the same time, some 1,500 status holders are temporarily housed on a large ship in the Merwehaven. In addition, the city houses about 500 asylum seekers scattered throughout, especially on four river cruise ships, in the Park and Schiehaven. There are also some 1800 Ukrainian refugees in the city, fleeing from the war.

Rotterdam has always been a city where people from all cultures found a place and sought their way as “newcomers.” Refugees, too. These are all new neighbors. Seeking refuge does not stop at arriving in the country. How can we as Christian communities help these people find a new home?

Prayer

In the Bible, Psalm 46 testifies that God is a refuge, a beacon of calm in the ever-changing world around us. It speaks of roaring waters and trembling mountains, of wars and destruction. But it ends with God saying, “Be still and know that I am God.” Be still.

Places where people are fighting are filled with the sounds of war. Because of tanks, bombs and guns, and people shouting. Close your eyes and try to sit still, without moving. Try that for a whole minute (which is longer than you often think...). After a minute, pray a silent prayer for peace in these countries. And for peace in the hearts, feelings and thoughts of neighbors who have fled and are living in Rotterdam, seeking peace.

Pray for:

- A softening of the pain and loss they experience by leaving their homeland and family behind
- For opportunities to connect with each other. What can and will you do?
- That these neighbors may come to know Jesus as the Prince of Peace, who is peace and has come to bring peace

Bible Reading: Psalm 46

Maryam* shares everything with her family, every day, down to the smallest details. Except for one thing: her faith in Jesus. Since she has been living in the Netherlands, something has changed—something she doesn't dare say out loud, but which deeply affects her life.

For Maryam, family has always been everything, and still is. “Maybe you can't imagine it, but I always share every moment and everything I do with my family, even now that I'm in the Netherlands. There's not a single detail that I don't share with my mother; we talk on the phone and chat a lot.” But now that she is growing closer to the Christian faith, it has become complicated. She can no longer share everything with her family.

“If they knew that I believed in Jesus, it would turn everything upside down. The control, the pressure—it would be intense, even from the people around me here. It could even become dangerous.” Yet faith has always been important to her. “I was already thinking about God as a child,” Maryam says. “I asked myself a lot of questions. I was searching for truth, for peace, for something that was real. But in my environment, I couldn't express that search. Asking questions was not appreciated. Faith was experienced as something you had to do—without being allowed to search, doubt, or desire.”

Maryam had the opportunity to come to the Netherlands to study and now has a great job. “During my studies, I often felt lonely—until God intervened. From that point on, the miracles began,” she says, her eyes glowing.

An accident brought her life to a standstill; the doctor told her she would probably never walk again. Even after the accident, Maryam was left to cope on her own. She had to wait for the operation, but there was nothing she could do. She was home alone, had no one to help her, and didn't want to worry her family. It was at that time that God came into her life; she experienced peace. She heard an inner voice. All her life, she had silenced the voice that spoke within her. She decided to give that voice space and listen to it from now on. She now sees the accident and the recovery period that followed as the best thing God has ever done for her.

She tells me how God brought all kinds of people into her life in different ways, so unexpectedly and “coincidentally” that she can only see God's hand in it. She is beginning to understand and discover more and more about God and Jesus and what it means to be a Christian. Maryam also goes to church, but she shares her whole story with as few people as possible. She still talks to her family every day, but she cannot yet share the most beautiful thing in her life with them. One day, she hopes to welcome her family to the Netherlands and share this with them too.

* Real name known to the editors

Friday 26 september

Surinamese

When Joany Muskiet became part of the intercultural church where I was active, a personality came in. She shone with her strong voice, through her gospel singing on stage.

She did sometimes embarrass us by her challenging texts when she was on stage : “If you really love Jesus, just stand up. Dance with us!” She did not hide her enthusiasm about Jesus.

During one of our meetings, she said the following: “You want to be an intercultural church and you want all kinds of people to be part of your church, but what do you really know about Suriname?” Then we were given a history lesson about Suriname. About the relationship with the Netherlands, about how it was to grow up in the Netherlands, about her thoughts on discrimination, about how many different Surinamese there are.

I visited her home several times. People were always walking in and out, and everyone was welcome. Joany meant a lot to young people in Rotterdam-Zuid, she organized spoken word events, and she sang in prisons and much more. At the time of writing, it has been about a year since Joany passed away. Although I knew her only briefly, she made a big impression on me.

What do you know about Suriname? Don't look on the Internet for some statistics and facts. Talk to a Surinamese in your neighborhood or church!

Bible Reading: Romans 12: 9-21

Prayer

There are plenty of Surinamese toko's (supermarkets) and (take-away) restaurants in Rotterdam. Look up where such a store is located near you and decide to visit them today. Try roti (a type of flat bread, often served with chicken, potatoes and vegetables) or pom (a casserole of meat and vegetables). And try – while ordering or paying – to make contact by asking about the origin of roti or pom, for example. A great conversation starter to discover more about Surinamese people and their diversity of backgrounds, languages and religions!

Turn your walk to the toko or take-away restaurant into a prayer walk. Pray for the Surinamese people you know on the way there. Pray for the Surinamese people you just met on the way back.



What if everything you ever believed in suddenly turned out to be empty? For years, Kishan* sought peace in meditation and mantras. A growing emptiness eventually led him to Jesus Christ.

In the fall of 2023, Kishan (not his real name) walked into the church. He searched and looked around awkwardly. In Keizerswaard, an evangelist spoke to him and urged him to visit the church. He has been faithfully attending the services ever since.

From a young age, Kishan knelt down in front of his altar in the morning. He meditated for at least an hour and spoke the necessary mantras, which caused powers to flow into his body. Every now and then a guru stayed with him to perform special rites. For years, Kishan found peace in this way. The last time a guru visited him at home, the visit ended in disappointment. After the guru left, Kishan was left with a feeling of emptiness, disillusioned. Had he dedicated himself to this his whole life? A search for the truth began. Miraculously, sometime later his son returns from the ocean voyage with a special message: he has met Christians on the way and has been baptized. His son encourages Kishan to search for Jesus Christ. He hesitates, until the day he gets into conversation in Keizerswaard. In the spring of 2024, he attends the Alpha course.

During the accompanying weekend there is ample time for prayer. 'What should I pray for?' Kishan has only one desire: 'I want to learn the truth and dedicate myself to that truth.' They pray there and then, but also afterwards. Three months after the Alpha weekend he approaches the pastor of the church: 'I want to give up my altar.' He hesitates about what to do with all his statues. Sometime later he is more decisive: he wants to be baptized and permanently remove his statues from his life. Remarkably, Kishan does not simply give Jesus a place among his other gods but wants to break with the past and dedicate himself completely to Jesus Christ as his Lord.

In December 2024 there is room for 'deliverance ministry'. It will be an intense session. At the end Kishan smashes the statues with an axe. Finally, he takes a book with the Vedic scriptures (approx. 30 x 45 cm). The book has been passed down from father to son, but he still puts the axe in it. In the end he looks relieved. The house is tidy, we clean the house and prayed to be filled with the Holy Spirit. A few days later he goes 'under water' in the water of baptism to rise in a new life with Jesus Christ.

* Real name known to the editors.

"I want to know the truth and commit myself to that truth."



“God taught me how to pray, even without my mother around.”

As a girl in Suriname, she saw in her mother what a source of strength prayer is. Now she experiences that God Himself has taught her about prayer. "God has taught me to trust Him."

I met Sheila at Thuis in West, where she does volunteer work. She wants to make a difference in the neighborhood, also for people who do not go to church, and has also become a member of the neighborhood council.

Sheila is a colorful, enthusiastic woman with a calm, melodious voice. She speaks honestly and passionately about God, her mother and the people around her.

Born in Paramaribo as one of thirteen children, she grew up in a strict Christian family. "We were not allowed to leave the yard." Three sisters died shortly after birth, but her arrival was an answer to prayer, a turning point in her parents' lives: "Now it's over". Her parents were religious and hospitable; their house was open to everyone. Her father died when she was 14. "Where is father?" a neighbor boy asked. She got a little angry: "It's my father".

Her mother spoke little about faith but lived it out; her Bible was always close to her. Sheila remembers a fire breaking out in the neighborhood and her mother praying. She saw the flames shrink before her eyes. "Prayer has power," she realized. Later, she learned to pray herself.

As a young woman, she left for the Netherlands to study economics at Erasmus University. Without her mother, she felt lost, but it was precisely during that time that she learned to pray independently. At university, she met Christians from 'Kom en Zie' and was eventually baptized there.

Searching for words, Sheila talks about her prayer life. God showed her things. At Christmas, at her sister's, she was overcome with sadness about the world. Then suddenly, she heard a voice on the radio say: "But wasn't that why I went to the cross?" It felt as if God spoke directly to her. Later, after attending a beautiful conference, she heard someone walking behind her who spoke the same words. She looked around but saw no one. That is how God taught me to pray and trust in him, even without my mother around.

Sheila's home is open to everyone. She sends me pictures of children making pancakes in her kitchen. We talk more about Suriname, the diversity she grew up in and how different beliefs enriched her view of the world.

"Prayer has power!" she realized.

Saturday 27 september

Neighbors Day

Allow me to dream for a moment. How good it would be if there was social unity in the neighborhood again. That people would look out for each other, that there would be coziness and positivity in the neighborhood again. That the fences and gates would be lowered a bit. Or maybe the fence could be removed altogether and we would share the garden? Fewer locks: "The door is open, come on in!" That hospitality would become self-evident again. That no one would have to feel different, lonely or afraid in the street. That we would help each other in the neighborhood. One can bake, another garden, a third is good at odd jobs. "How was work, neighbor?" "Shall I prune that plum tree for you on Saturday, neighbor?" How good would that be? Who wouldn't want that?

Perhaps it's all a bit too naive and romantic, and a good lock or gate is sometimes really necessary in Rotterdam. But let's at least start by lowering and removing our proverbial fences, gates and locks and open our hearts to our neighbors. Someone has to take the first step. Maybe you can start on Neighbors Day!

"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility," (Ephesians 2:14)

Bible Reading: Luke 19: 1-10

Prayer

Today we are going to pray more reflectively. After each question, take some time to think about it and talk to God about it. Just like you would with a friend!

- For whom can I let down the proverbial fences and gates today during Neighbors Day and/or in the coming time?
- How can I help myself remember my desires, so that I remain attentive in contact? (think of sticking a post-it with a neighbor's name on the mirror, a pebble in your (coat) pocket that you feel, etc.)
- What (small) initiative can you take, such as giving flowers, putting a card in the mailbox, etc.?
- What did God speak about with regard to your neighbors last week?



When Marieke de Jong came to live in Overschie with her family fifteen years ago, she could not have imagined how much her faith would deepen in this particular place. From the Bethel Church, she gradually developed a desire to be there for the neighborhood - especially for people who do not instantly enter a church.

Together with a group of church members, she started a missionary initiative. What started with a simple neighborhood meal grew into visiting work, conversations and a desire to pray for the neighborhood. This is how a weekly morning prayer came into being.

In collaboration with the PKN church, the Overschie Stroomt pioneering location was launched in early 2023. There are now more activities, such as a coffee house and a mothers' group. People come for the atmosphere, but gradually discover something about faith. "They regularly ask us to pray for them!"

In December 2023, the Bethel Church suffered a huge blow, completely burning down due to arson. There was a lot of dismay. Where would they meet now? How could the work continue? But God did not abandon the congregation; the church and the mission continue. The community took action, a new location for the neighborhood meal was found and people from that same neighborhood offered help.

Through the work and all these events, Marieke's faith grew. She saw how prayer had power, how God gave answers, sometimes unexpectedly, but always at the right time. In the week before Neighborhood Day, she stood together with others praying on the now sandy ground where the church had stood, with hope for a new place of light and encounter.

The plans for a new church building are ready. The new church is not only intended as a place for believers, but also as a home for the neighborhood. Prayer is still the basis of Overschie Stroomt; prayers are said every Tuesday morning. Marieke has become bolder in prayer; she does not have to do it alone. God shows the way.

She saw how prayer had power,
how God answered—sometimes
unexpectedly, but always at the
right moment.



bidden
voor de
buren

Heart for our neighbors

We believe that prayer changes our own lives, our neighbors, and our city.

By praying together, we open our hearts to God and to our neighbors. Prayer brings hope, connection, and movement to our neighborhoods and our own lives. We long for a city where all neighbors, regardless of language or background, can experience the love of God. Together, we want to build bridges and lower barriers so that all neighbors have the opportunity to discover the good news.

Would you like to know more about this project? Or about how prayer can make a difference? Or would you like to reach out to the least reached in the city in a practical way? Then visit www.biddenvoordeburen.nl or contact one of the organizations involved. Together we pray for the flourishing of our city, for all our neighbors, in all languages.

Bidden voor de buren is a collaboration between:



Reaching Rotterdam
reaching further together

geloven
dichtbij



24-7 PRAYER
ROTTERDAM

Evangelie
& Moslims