

Further we are told to “*leave gleanings*” for the sojourner, the widow and the orphan. (cf. Deut. 14:17-22).



“*Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless and the widow*” (Jeremiah 22:3).

“*Open your mouth for....the rights of all who are left desolate*” (Prov.31:8).

Thus says the Lord: “*I will be a swift witness against....those who oppress the hireling in his wages....against those who thrust aside the sojourner*”. (Malachi: 3:5).

“*He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy honours him*” (Prov.14:31).

The best known passages in the New Testament “*on meeting human needs*” include:

The Good Samaritan helping the man on the side of the road (cf. Luke 10:25-37). The Jews did not normally deal with people from Samaria. Indeed, the Samaritans were considered to be uncouth, unlearned and even hated by them.



In the course of the parable, we are gently led by Jesus to see that the one who really and truly possesses the secret of eternal life turns out to be this stranger. Without concern for security and status, he is moved by compassion. His love is disinterested, kindly, personal and effective.

The standards by which we will be judged are set out in what has been described as the “**core of the moral teaching of Jesus**” better known as “*The Last Judgement*” (Matthew 25: 31-46). Ministry to the basic needs of one’s fellow human being is the only canon of judgement mentioned here.

Further, Jesus identifies himself with those to whom service is given or refused. In a word, a person’s behaviour towards another human being is one’s behaviour towards God Himself. “*I say, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me*” (Matt.25: 40).

“***Faith, by itself, if it has no works, is dead***”  
(James 2:17).

## Society of African Missions (SMA)



# The Sojourners

## Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers



### Part One: Scripture

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## DEFINITIONS



**Immigrant:** Is someone from a foreign country, who relocates to live in another country. He/she is subject to the laws of their adopted country.

**Refugee:** Is a person with a well-founded fear of being persecuted due to their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. This status is granted by the receiving (host) country.

**Asylum Seeker:** is a person seeking protection in a country other than their own. In international law, asylum is the protection granted by a state to a foreign citizen against his/her own state.

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

### Wanderings and Sojourns

In the Old Testament, we see that the story of Israel is one of “*wanderings and sojourns*” in many places:

Adam and Eve were uprooted and had to leave the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24). Abraham was called to leave his home and go to a new land (Gen. 12:1). He even had to look for a burial place for his wife Sarah in a “*foreign*” land (Gen. 23:4).

Joseph was sold into slavery in “*a strange land*” (Genesis 37: 18-36), while Moses was a guest in Midian (Exodus 2:15-22).

The “*chosen people*” were reminded that they were once sojourners (Duet. 6: 10-12) and that each one should always remember that “*a wandering Aramaean was my father*” (Duet. 26:5). David, like refugees, hid in the wilderness to escape death (1.Samuel 23-24). Psalm 105 is a brief history of the migration of God’s people.

In the New Testament, we again read of God’s presence among those who have been uprooted and “*on the move*” – the Wanderers and Sojourners.

Starting off with “*no room in the inn*” (Luke 2:7), then, Jesus and his parents had to flee to Egypt to escape persecution (Matthew 2:19-21).

The Son of Man had “*nowhere to lay his head*” (Luke 9:58). The history of the wandering of Abraham, Joseph & Moses is recalled for the early Christians (Acts 7) while a review of the experience of the “*chosen people*” - affirming them as “*strangers and exiles*” on earth - is carried out in Hebrews 11:1-40. The Acts of the Apostles also recounts the story of God’s missionaries to foreigners.



### Hospitality & Receiving Strangers

The Old Testament is a history of hospitality and receiving strangers:

Abraham showed himself as the perfect host at Mamre, providing water for the three strangers to wash, a cooked calf to eat and a place to rest (Genesis 18: 1-8).

At Sodom, Lot offered a place “*to spend the night*” to his two visitors and “*made them a feast*”. Lot was certainly well rewarded! (cf. Genesis: Chap 19)

The Lord told Moses to set up six “*Cities of refuge*” which shall be for “*refuge for the people of Israel, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, that anyone who kills any person without intent may flee there*”. (Numbers:35 and Joshua 20:1-3, 21:13-38).

Job declares: “*The sojourner has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the wayfarer*” (Job:31: 32), while the Book of Ruth is a story of hospitality and graciousness to a stranger. *The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself.*” (Leviticus:19:33 – 34)

In the New Testament, there is also an emphasis on hospitality and on receiving the stranger.

For example: Jesus is the guest of many people and receives hospitality: from Zacchaeus (Luke 19: 1-9); from Martha and Mary (Luke 10: 38-42); from the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:28-31). John takes Mary home with him after the crucifixion of Jesus (cf. John 19: 25-27).

Saint Paul reminds us that we are “*no longer strangers and sojourners*” (cf. Ephesians 2:11-22) and he urges us to “*practice hospitality*” (Romans 12:13).

The writer to the Hebrews states: “*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares*” (Heb.13:2).

Meeting Human Needs In many places, the Old Testament speaks about meeting the human needs of the migrant or sojourner:

The General Rules for Justice to our neighbour are found in Leviticus: 19:9-17.

