

Friends,

Since the last time we wrote about the Soup Night, we've had two of them. And all I can say is, "Wow!" For those who had any doubts, including many Ecuadorians, I believe they can be wiped away completely. Not only have we attracted those who have need but I think also those who have no great need for soup and bread but do have need for community and conversation. Thus far, the project in relation to bringing people in and forming community exceeded our hopes. God is great!

The night of the 13th, we changed the strategy a little and went out an hour beforehand to invite those in the neighborhood to come eat. We focused on the family that came before and just hoped that we could find others in the community that we could serve as well. Well, we did find a few of those people as well as a couple that Michele met during the week and had invited to the Soup Night. In fact, one of the people that came that night left for a moment and brought a friend to join him. In all we had fourteen people there that night that had no connection to the church. It's incredible to think that without a whole lot of effort, we've made that many contacts with the people in our neighborhood. Another side effect that is somewhat of a surprise to me is that when the folks are done eating, they do enjoy staying for a moment and talking and getting to know us. I thought it would be more difficult to cultivate this but it seems to be a natural thing to do here.

As we had predicted, once the word got out, there would be more and more people coming. Although by 6:30 (we start at 6) no one had showed up, that would soon change. Last night we almost doubled with 27 people coming including our new neighbors (due to the encouragement of Michele and Carina) and nearly everyone that came before returned with someone new with them. They may have been friends, neighbors, or kids. We can already see stronger bonds forming with the repeat visitors and conversations getting deeper and more personal. Jim had the opportunity to study with a couple that visited last night and one of the Ecuadorian church members here gave them his bible so that they could continue reading at home. I think perhaps the highlight of the night last night was when one of the visiting children stood up on a bench and sang a song to everyone. We used every last bit of soup and rice that we had and Carina sent home some tamales that we had in the fridge and the rest of the bread home to someone who had to stay home and "watch the house."

The results have just been extremely encouraging. We have been invited to the homes and work of people here and they have come to the house and brought us small gifts. In the midst of writing this, the lady of the couple who Michele invited just dropped by with some lemons to say hello to Michele. Other people leave now saying they'll see us next week. I would've never dreamed that the results would be this significant after a total of four weeks. I hope everyone is as joyful as I am.

There are of course some prayers that need to be offered. Not only that we can begin to transition some of these relationships into deeper, spiritual ones, but also that we can begin to have more help from the local churches. There have been a few dedicated people that come every week and they are an immense blessing. But, as the numbers

begin to grow, we need more people to come and converse and build meaningful relationships. At this point I think we can make a broad plea to the churches for help and we need to go to the local Bible school and ask them to come as well. Another problem that may come up is the lack of space. We need to find a solution to this as it is becoming a little tight with the numbers we have now. We have one other room that we could use, but it is in no shape right now to use. But we may just have to do something with it. Another option may be to spill out to the street, but if we have rain, this will eliminate that possibility. Still, this is a great problem to have and we thank God for it. Surely He will provide the solution.

I truly cannot express the love we have for all of you who support us with the many forms you send your love. I hope that these small victories will encourage you and that they will begin to grow into an expansion of the Kingdom of God not only in our neighborhood, but yours as well. Give everything to Him who is able to do more than we can imagine.

All our love to you,
Nathan