

QUICK FACTS

People Name: Afar
People Cluster: Afar
Language: Afar
Trade Language: Arabic
Population: 415,000

PRAYER POINTS

Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth additional laborers into Eritrea.

Pray that God will reveal Himself to the people through dreams and visions.

Pray for the small number of Afar believers, and ask God to give them opportunities to share Christ with their own people.

Pray with authority against the spiritual darkness that has kept the people blinded.

Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will faithfully intercede for these precious people.



ABOUT THE PEOPLE

The Afar live in East Africa (mainly Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea) and claim to descend from Noah.

They are a fierce and brave people, placing a great deal of importance on strength and bravery, and prestige is earned within the culture by the killing of enemies.

There are two smaller groups that make up the Afar: the Asaemara, who live in the coastal areas and are of higher status and prestige; and the Adaemara, who live in the mountains of the Danakil Desert and are of a more common status.

The desert-dwelling Afar live in one of the harshest places on the planet. One region of the desert is covered by a vast area of salt pans and active volcanoes. It is known as the Danakil Depression, and the daily temperature climbs as high as 125 degrees. The area also receives less than seven inches of rain a year.

Most Afar are nomadic shepherds, keeping livestock such as sheep, cattle, goats and camels, and they have recently suffered a great deal as a result of drought and famines. In Afar society, the men take care of the camels and donkeys and are responsible for taking down the camps when the people move from one area to another. The women take care of the sheep, cattle, and goats, and are responsible for taking care of the camp when they are settled.

While most of the Afar are herdsman, some are fishermen, and some mine salt in the Danakil Depression area.

Because of their mostly-nomadic lifestyle, the people must live in homes that are easily transported. The structures, called *ari*, are oval-shaped huts made of palm mats. They surround their camps with thorns in order to protect themselves from wild animals and enemy attacks.





The Afar diet consists mainly of meat and milk. Milk also has significant importance within the culture. When an Afar host offers a guest fresh, warm milk, it means that the guest is under the immediate protection of the host. If a guest is killed while under Afar protection, his death must be avenged as if he were a full member of the tribe.

Most Afar marriages are monogamous, though polygamy is allowed (according to Islam, a man may have up to four wives). Marriages between first cousins are highly favored, specifically between

a man and his father's sister's daughter. Girls are given in marriage as early as age ten, and in marriage ceremonies, someone who is able to read the Qur'an must be present.

The Afar have been a Muslim people since very early in their history. They practice Islamic traditions and customs, such as refraining from pork and alcohol, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca if they can afford it.

Though they adhere to Islam, however, many also practice a form of folk Islam, mixing other beliefs and practices with those of Islam. For example, they believe in the spiritual powers of certain trees, present offerings to the sea, and wear amulets for protection. They also believe that the spirits of the dead are very powerful, and they hold a feast of the dead every year.



WAYS TO HELP

There is a great need for pure water sources for the Afar and their herds. In recent years, they have suffered because of famines and drought in the region. Some households are trekking up to 12 hours for water. Those with skills in water treatment and purification could provide invaluable relief.

The animals of the Afar that produce the daily staple and much-needed milk of the Afar diet often starve in times of drought. Those skilled in agriculture or animal husbandry could help out these people to allow them to push through these times with less sickness and death.

Would you be willing to be among the FIRST to engage these people with the hope of the Gospel? Would you be willing to lead a team? Contact us today to find out more - we need people to visit the Afar of Eritrea and find other great ways to bring new teams to live among them for the sake of the Kingdom.

CONTACT

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