

THE SYKES MISSIONARY TIMES

MISSIONARIES TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Greetings from a very hot Dominican Republic.

Summer is in full swing down here, and as they say in Spanish — se nota — it shows. We have been hovering around 90 degrees every day, and our electric bill has been a steady reminder that air conditioning is not a luxury in the Caribbean. But despite the heat, we have had so much to be grateful for as we watch God quietly and faithfully work in the lives of people around us.

MARIA AND NATASHA

Many of you have been praying for Maria and Natasha since they gave their lives to Christ a few months back. We want to give you an honest update, because you deserve to know how to keep praying well.

It has not been a smooth road for either of them. Maria is navigating some difficult situations at home that have made it hard for her to grow the way we had hoped. We have tried to come alongside her as much as we can, and she knows she is loved. She simply needs a lot of prayer right now — the kind that holds someone steady when their circumstances are working against them.

Natasha is in a different season. She has not faced the same kinds of hardships, but she jumped quickly into serving and ministry activity before her roots had really gone down deep. She still has a lot of growing to do spiritually, and we are praying for that to happen from the inside out. The encouraging thing with both girls is that we have open, honest communication with them. That matters more than it might seem. We are not at arm's length — we are still in the room with them, and we are trusting God to work.

One of the sweetest moments recently was watching Sarah take her class to a local nursing home where Natasha has started a small foundation to minister to the residents. It was beautiful. The residents were encouraged, and Natasha was visibly moved to see people receive what she had been quietly building. Watching someone discover that their investment in others actually matters — that is a gift to witness.

THE DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

This is an area where we have been genuinely encouraged. Miguel, who I have been walking with now for about three years, recently started bringing a friend named Gregory — a young man working in the medical field. Gregory has been an absolute treasure. He brings a real hunger for the Word and contributes to our discussions at a depth that lifts the whole group. Angel, Miguel, and Nicolas continue to grow as well, and I find myself leaving our time together grateful every single week.

This past Sunday we brought the university small group to the new church plant, and Miguel had the opportunity to preach. He did a wonderful job. Watching him stand up and share his heart with that kind of passion — after three years of slow, steady discipleship — was one of those moments that makes you remember why you do this work.

We have also been working through a book I wrote called Reclaiming Biblical Masculinity together. Many of the guys in our group come from broken homes, and the book was written with them in mind — to help them think carefully and biblically about who they want to be as they begin building their own families one day. The conversations it has opened up have been rich.

SARAH

Today was Sarah's last day of teaching school for the year — and yes, that deserves a celebration. Sarah has poured herself into her girls this year in ways that go far beyond a classroom. It is not unusual for a girl to quietly slip away from the group, find her way into the kitchen, and just talk to Miss Sarah. If you know Sarah, you know this is completely on brand. She has an extraordinary gift for making people feel seen and at home, and she uses it constantly.

THE BASEBALL BIBLE STUDY

The baseball Bible study keeps growing. I will be honest — I am not a numbers person — but I have had to keep printing more copies each week, and I am now running about 25 per week, so something is happening. The boys are engaging more, asking better questions, and we have started involving them directly in reading the Scripture at the start of each study. We have extended an invitation for deeper discipleship, and while no one has stepped forward quite yet, we are making small, real moves forward. A few of the boys have even started showing up for the regular worship service at the chapel. Discipleship is slow work. But we are seeing fruit, and we are not in a hurry.

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

We want to say a genuine thank you to everyone who has given toward our car fund. We still have a ways to go, but we are trusting God to provide through the right people at the right time — and we have seen Him do exactly that before.

Thank you for praying for us. Thank you for giving. The work being done here in the Dominican Republic is happening because you are in it with us. The spiritual fruit being reaped here is just as much to your account as it is to ours.

With love from the island, Jason & Sarah