

# Muslims in Europe

Jan and Mohammad share cold drinks and snacks after a football game enjoyed in the welcome early spring sunshine on a Sunday afternoon in the Netherlands. They are part of a community team of young men who meet up regularly to play football. The team consists of players from diverse ethnic backgrounds, all from the same neighbourhood in Amsterdam, all sharing a passion for the beautiful game. Jan, a Christian, is Dutch, and Mohammad, a Muslim, emigrated to the Netherlands as child, from Morocco.

The two men rarely discuss religion, except to give good wishes to one another on religious holidays. But when asked about the role of Muslims in Dutch society, Jan refers to his friendship with Mohammad as his biggest influence.

“Some people believe Muslims want to take over the country,” he says. “But none of the Muslims I know have any interest in imposing their religion on anyone. Like me, they just want to live their life in peace.”

Studies have shown that personal relationships with Muslims are the main factor for non-Muslims to have positive views of Muslims. In Western Europe, controversies over immigration and the integration of Muslim cultures have become key issues in political campaigns, with worrying rises in nationalism and racist ideology. But followers of Christ who have friends who are Muslim are better informed and less likely to be influenced by stereotypes and rhetoric.

“For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself”*”

GALATIANS 5:14

## *How can we pray?*

**Muslims make up about 6% of the population of western Europe. Pray for them to develop strong friendships in their communities and be a blessing in their homelands.**

**Pray for immigrant families and those with mixed-generations of immigrants adapting to cultural changes in Europe.**

**Pray for Christians in Europe to take a stand against racism and hatred, and be a witness to the love of Jesus.**