



And Jesus was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written,
'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?'"
Mark 11:17



Prayer Update

Newsletter #13 十三

Prayer Update

Dear family and friends,

01-07-2024

Greetings from Kitami. We have just returned from Ichikawa near Tokyo, where we attended a training course on evangelism in Japan at the OMF Japan headquarters. Afterwards we were able to enjoy a week's vacation in warm Ichikawa and even went on a day trip to the Five Lakes area north of Fuji-san, which we had wanted to do for a long time. Unfortunately, all the traveling back and forth delayed our letter a bit. Thank you for your patience!



Der Fuji-san vom Arakurayama Sengen Park aus gesehen

We have also noticed that we talk a lot about the power of prayer and God's wonderful answers to prayer, but at the same time there is less and less room for current prayer requests because of all the reports about God's work. We thank you so much for continuing to pray faithfully for us! We really notice the effects of these prayers every day!

That's why we want to dedicate this letter entirely to our current "spiritual construction sites" and give you plenty of ammunition for prayer.

Still Looking for a New Pastor

About a year before the planned retirement of our pastor, a Pastor Appointment Committee was formed to look for candidates for the successor pastor and ultimately appoint a new pastor. The committee met monthly for over a year, but was unable to find anyone suitable. We wrote to you in our last letter that there is a great shortage of pastors throughout Japan. In March, Julian gave a

sermon in which he pointed out that if we try to build church using human means and systems, we are betraying Jesus and the principles of his kingdom just as much as the disciples who tried to defend him by force of arms before his arrest and, when Jesus refused, abandoned him to save their own skins.

During the sermon, the chairman of the committee, a retired doctor, who is respected throughout the city and the former head of the city's largest hospital, was sitting spellbound on the edge of his chair and his eyes grew bigger and bigger. We later learned that at the next committee meeting he said that although they had tried all sorts of human things so far, they had not yet asked God what He actually wanted. Since then, the committee members have spent a lot of time praying together and listening to God's voice and have also called the whole congregation to an extra time of prayer after the service on several occasions. We still don't know what God wants to do with this matter, but we are very happy about this change of heart.

Please pray that the committee will be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and that God will soon make it clear what kind of church leadership he wants.

Praying Helps, Praying a Lot Helps a Lot

We are most excited about our discipleship group with four sisters from our church. We now meet about twice a week for two hours of prayer and once or twice a month for a full-day Bible study.

For example, last Tuesday Julian talked at length about the sacrifices in the Old Testament—from Cain and Abel through to the tabernacle—and also gave them important literary tools to help them read and understand the Old Testament texts and stories for themselves. They were completely blown away when they realized how all these stories connect and that God, the Father, whom they had previously only ever understood as a strict and scary in the Old Testament, consistently tried everything to lead people back into his fellowship and win back their trust. "God is really only ever concerned with us trusting him!" they exclaimed in amazement afterwards.

Please continue to pray for this group and for the spiritual growth of the sisters. We have found that it is not through teaching or Bible study, but only through

prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit that God's truths reach people's heart.



From left: Mrs. Morinaga, Mrs. Yamada, Mrs. Hoshi, Mrs. Sone

Mrs. Hoshi's Husband

You can also see this very clearly in Mrs. Hoshi's husband, who rejected God all his life because, as a scientist, he said he could not believe in him. Motivated by our prayers together, instead of arguing with him, she simply started praying for and together with him. During one of these prayers, he said in amazement that he could suddenly remember something from his childhood. When he was 12 years old, his mother had told him that when he was a baby, it was not her who bathed him, but his father. That was no easy matter back then with the metal bathtubs, which were still heated with wood and got very hot.

After briefly thinking about it, he said, "Maybe my father loved me after all?", and a while later, "Maybe God loves me too?". What a change! And it shows that in Japan it is often not the superficial atheism people are taught in school, but rather fear or negative experiences with authority figures that is the real reason for rejecting God—something that only the Holy Spirit can heal.

🙏 Please pray for Mrs. Hoshi and her husband. She still has some things from her own past to work through. She has also recently taken over the leadership of a small group in the church. Please pray that she will be able to directly apply the kind of discipleship she is learning in our group and inspire the other people in her group for prayer and spiritual growth.

Multiplication: A House Cell Group at Morinaga's

Mrs. Morinaga from our discipleship group has long wanted to set up her own house cell group together with her husband, who is also a member of the church. However, he seems to be a little reluctant because their apartment is not so presentable for guests and loud talking or singing could disturb the neighbors. We have been inviting him to our discipleship meetings and also personal Bible studies with Julian for some time now, but things are not really moving on with him. At least his wife tells him every time what new things she has learned.

🙏 Please pray that God will give Mr. Morinaga courage and the confidence that his Heavenly Father will take care of everything. Pray also that he and the other men in the church will seek more fellowship with us and also understand for themselves that they need spiritual growth.

Children in Need

Please pray for one of the children who regularly come to church to play. It has made statements to people in the church about family situation, which according to Japanese law must be reported and is a case for the school or even the youth welfare office. Our church has given notice to the local authorities now, but is somewhat overwhelmed with the situation. There is not much we can do humanly speaking. It is a reminder to the whole church that we are completely dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit.

🙏 Please pray for the child, the parents and all involved that the truth will be revealed, injustice averted and above all relationships and hearts be healed.

🙏 Please also pray for our contacts with non-Christians: S. has already understood a lot about God, but has some points where she simply cannot trust Him due to some past trauma. Mr. T. has let the contact fade somewhat. Please pray for opportunities to meet him. Mrs. Su. has big problems with her family and her work situation.

Thank you very much for your interest, your company in prayer, and for your faithful financial support!



Julian & Karolina

Please check out our Telegram channel for more photos, videos and stories. (No Telegram account needed)

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