

Lights in the darkness

Each Thursday, along with two American friends, I meet with a group of Nepali women who are drawn from a variety of different churches. In leading the group we are helped by Sita who is a mature and well read Christian. Sita and her husband Bhim lead a church and do prison ministry. She's a busy lady and doesn't want to lead our group but we find her a fantastic resource when there are tricky issues and complex cultural situations. She also helps women to understand us when our Nepali language skills let us down!

Each week the group of around 30 women meet to study the Bible and to pray for each other. Many in the group are illiterate or barely literate. I'd like to share a little of some of their lives with you so that you can pray for them.

Maya is a rubbish collector who walks the streets of Kathmandu each day gathering discarded plastic bags and bottles. For each kilo she collects she earns 5 rupees (less than 5p). She is poor and low caste – in society here, the lowest of the low. Originally from India she speaks Nepali poorly and is very difficult for me to understand. I have been very pleased with the way the group has welcomed her in and treat her as an equal. She has been baptised and since that time 6 members of her family have become Christians, some of whom are also baptised. Four more members of the family have started coming

Light a Candle

*Light a candle in the darkness
Light a candle in the night
Let the love of Jesus light us
Light a candle in the night*

*Like a flicker in the darkness
Comes a mother's desperate cry
And a baby's voice in answer
Brings the coming of the light*

*He didn't come in wealth and grandeur
He didn't stand with men of power
He had no status to commend him
He was homeless he was poor*

to church too. Sita teaches at a fellowship group that Maya hosts in her home each week.

Before becoming a Christian Maya used to beg from foreigners. It is a lifestyle she finds hard to turn away from which is a challenge for the three of us who lead the group. However, when we look at her life and all that has changed since she came to faith we find more energy to keep on encouraging her to look to God to provide for her needs.

Please join in praising God for this family and pray for the light they shine in the poor community they live amongst.

*But he came to heal the wounded
And he came to heal the scars
Of a world that's bruised and broken
Where the image has been marred*

*And we see him in the hungry
And the homeless refugee
In the sick and dying children
His arms reach out to you and me*

Sanu has recently joined the group. On her first visit she shared with the group that her husband is in jail awaiting trial. He was arrested nearly nine months ago after a kidnapping attempt in which as a driver he was caught up. She believes he is innocent but the case has still not come to trial.

Her husband is a Christian and has been baptised in jail

through the ministry of Sita and Bhim. Sanu gave birth to a baby boy last Friday (May 16th). Her in-laws are not helping her at all so she plans to return to her own village for the next few months hoping she'll find more support there.

Please pray for a trial and for justice to be done. Sanu has no income at present and with a newborn baby would find it very hard to take a job. Pray for this mother who needs the father of her baby to be home again.

Anjana became a Christian while her husband was working in the Middle East. It is very common here for men to go to work abroad for two or three year periods leaving their family here. The money they send home is a major input into Nepal's economy. Soon before her husband was due to return home Anjana asked us to pray, she was fearful as to how he would respond to her faith. He was very angry and prevented her from coming to the fellowship group and attending church. Incredibly, two months later, he is now a Christian. I don't know what she said or did but I can only praise God that he saw the light in her and wanted it for himself.

Renu also had a difficult time when her husband would not accept the decision she had made. She became pregnant for a third time shortly after her husband found a job having been unemployed for 6 years. Money was still tight and he wanted her to abort the baby. She asked advice from a Christian friend and prayerfully she decided that she would not do it. Not long before the baby was born her husband came to her and said he understood her pain and they prepared for the birth together. She loves her little girl and has no regrets about the decision she made.

She is, however, finding it hard at church at the moment as some women are making comments about why someone as poor as Renu has so many children. She has stopped going to the church Bible Study and has started coming regularly on Thursdays. Some weeks she struggles to afford the bus fare to get to the group and walks carrying the 18 month old with her. She is glad to have found a place where she feels no criticism. In the group this week she shared how

her faith has grown through these difficult times.

Please pray for us as we try to encourage and support her.

*And I feel his breath upon me
And he whispers "Follow me"
And he grants his fire within me
Says let it shine for all to see*

*Garth Hewitt
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