



February/March 2024

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you. (2 Thessalonians 3:1).

All of our prayer requests could be wrapped up in this one, given by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy nearly 2000 years ago, but after giving a brief report of the happenings of the last couple months, I'll elaborate on some specific things you can pray for in the coming days and weeks.

As I look back at our life and ministry since Christmas, it all seems a bit of a blur. Seasonal sicknesses have cycled through our family since that time, disrupting plans for visits and fellowship along the way. At the same time, ministry continued on different fronts with the regular teaching and preaching in our services. We opened the year with a baptism service on the first Sunday of January and have seen other new people begin attending our church. It is exciting to see young believers working through challenges, growing, and becoming faithful in their walk with Christ. Despite some of the interruptions in planned fellowship due to illness, we have enjoyed time around the table in recent weeks with a new family in our church who is soaking up the teaching and fellowship, a couple who will soon be married, a couple who has asked us for marriage counselling, and another couple who has been growing in the Lord and wanted to take us out to show their appreciation for our involvement in their lives. We have also seen a church member who has been absent for a couple years begin to return and make some big steps to renew her fellowship with the Lord and the church. Erica and I will be walking alongside her to help her work through the spiritual challenges she is facing. Our children and teen ministries are going well and we have had good attendance. One of our neighbours came to the teen group last Thursday and to church on Sunday. Pray for the Lord's work in her and her family's life. Her father dropped her off at church Sunday and indicated they may visit as a family sometime. There are lots of other pastoral things going on as well, and we are encouraged to see the Lord at work in people's lives.

Looking Ahead

This week marks the beginning of a few weeks of additional ministry and fellowship opportunities that we would like you to pray for.

Feb 23-25 Marriage/Family Seminar in Malta

Nearly two years ago, we had Tim and Sandy Fink (Bibles International), and their sending church pastor from Indiana, Pete Jones, come for a weekend marriage/family seminar. They covered about half of the seminar material on that trip. This weekend, I will join them in reviewing that material and teaching the second half of the seminar. We are expecting 40-50 people from our church to attend. Not all of them are believers and one of our newly baptized ladies is excited that her husband, who has never attended the church, has agreed to come to a couple sessions.

Feb 26-Mar 1 Principles of Spiritual Growth Seminar in Turkey

Sunday evening, our teaching team will fly to Turkey to teach a Monday-Friday seminar at our former church in Istanbul. Pastor Antuan is expecting 20-30 people to attend during the week. Pray that we will have a good attendance and that the teaching will be effective in helping people understand the Bible's teaching on sanctification. This will be our third class in Turkey and we will be planning possible dates for the next class in Autumn.

Mar 2-8 Visit From a Supporting Church

As the other teachers return to the US, I'll arrive back in Malta the same day a group of eight people from a supporting church in eastern Canada arrive to serve with us and see our context of ministry. Pray that our fellowship will be mutually enriching and that the Lord stirs up the group's passion for seeing the Word of God speed ahead. It will be nice to see people from "home"!

Mar 10 Church Building Celebration Service

Since we arrived in Malta over six years ago, we have seen a large amount of renovation and refurbishment take place on our church property. (Thank you for all who were involved in praying and financially helping with this!) We still have some odd jobs to do, and the Lord is providing for those, but the project is largely finished. We are planning a special service to pause and thank the Lord for His goodness to us and to take the opportunity to invite all the contractors involved to attend. We just sent out invitations yesterday, so pray that we have a good response.

Life and ministry will continue after these events as other BMM colleagues in Europe come to visit and we continue Bible studies, teaching, preaching, counselling, and family life. Continue to pray for our family. As Rowan finishes his last year of school, he continues to make plans for the next steps of his life involving a return to Canada in a few months. Kian is writing a number of exams now and over the next months as he finishes his last year of secondary school. We plan to use a home school curriculum with him the next two years. Selah is doing well at school and is quite involved in an upcoming Spring musical. Naya has a busy social life with friends after school and is finishing her last year of primary school. Pray for our children's spiritual growth and that the Word of the Lord will be glorified in their lives. Erica assists me in ministry details and counselling, continues her ladies' Bible study, coordinates the children's church, and does A LOT at home to keep us all going. I am quite well recovered from my surgery, but my Chrone's has flared up, leaving me low on energy and needing some intervention to get my iron levels up. Pray for those appointments to all be coordinated with everything going on the next few weeks and that I would have grace to meet each day's responsibilities. I am really looking forward to these extra opportunities for service and fellowship, but I am not as strong as I would like to be. And let me add that you would please pray for *us* (Josh and Erica), that *we* would grow spiritually and that the Word of the Lord would be gloried in our lives. Missionaries are as much in need of further sanctification as anyone else!

Recently, while reading the accounts of Esther and Ezra, I have noticed the repeated phrase of the Lord's hand being with his people for specific tasks. We have seen the Lord's hand in our lives this last while, confirming His presence with us for ministry in Malta. This has included some new supporters joining our team and others who are considering joining our support team, as well as God's guidance as we have sought clarity over family and ministry decisions. What a blessing to have a God who is near to us!

Many of you may be facing the weariness that comes from winter going on and on. I trust that you will be drawing near to the Lord and experiencing His nearness to you. It isn't too long until we will be celebrating Resurrection Sunday....and not too long until we see our Saviour face to face. May we all be faithful!

In Christ,
Josh, Erica, Rowan, Kian, Selah, and Naya Burrill