

East Asia: Answered prayers all along the way

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In the month leading up to my departure for two weeks in East Asia with Go Now Missions, I prayed most urgently for patience. When you pray for patience, expect God to give you circumstances where you will need to practice patience.

Christ began answering my prayers, starting at the airport. My luggage was lost somewhere along the way and didn't make it to our last stop in the United States. By the power of the Holy Spirit, I did not feel frustration, but instead was reminded of Luke 10:3-4, which says: "Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road." I saw this as an opportunity to simply go—even if it wasn't in the comfort of my fuzzy socks and favorite scarf. Besides that, in East Asia, the culture is to wear the same outfit 3 or 4 days in a row, so I fit right in.

In our daily devotion time, my team talked a lot about unity among believers. What a difficult and challenging responsibility. Despite my best intentions, I was having difficulty connecting and being unified with my team and the people I met. Thankfully, the Lord went before me. He knew ahead of time how the enemy would try to wedge himself between my teammates and me. Our supervisor stressed daily how necessary it was to strive for unity and the importance of praying for this. Ephesians 4:3 says, "Make every effort keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." This verse is a reminder of the spiritual battle we are fighting daily. The Lord showed me in East Asia what seeking unity looks like. God showed me how I must lose myself and seek him above all things.



Student missionaries develop relationships with young people in East Asia over a shared meal. My team went on campus of a few universities and colleges during the two weeks, and it was amazing to see how quickly we were able to find friends—and then friends of friends—to eat with and connect with. God had been preparing hearts of people since before I even thought to pray for them. On campus, we were able to dance together, play ultimate Frisbee with a football, snack on sweet potato from a street vendor, eat meals and even share Jesus.



Student missionaries decorate for a Christmas party. Some of the girls we met even invited us into their dorms, and the team was able to sing praises to our King freely when the girls asked us to sing. The best part of being able to connect was being able to share the Gospel. Every time we met someone, we invited them to the parties we threw on Christmas Eve and Christmas day. At the parties, we shared the truth and love of Jesus to students who had never heard before.

When we asked if they knew why we celebrate Christmas, it was heartbreaking to hear that they had not heard of Jesus. But because they didn't know the reason for Christmas, it opened a door every time. And it was incredible sharing the Christmas story—a wretch like me being able to tell of the birth and the death and the resurrection of Christ to people who have no idea the true life offered to them freely.

Sharing our faith on campus was as easy as getting some food and asking to eat with people. It's crazy what God can do with obedience. Almost every conversation turned into a presentation of the gospel! When the enemy could have given me reason to feel guilt for not initiating, I found joy in hearing my team share the Good News. When the enemy tried to bring about difficulty in the language barrier, the Spirit brought understanding. In a place that is not open like America, we shared in a way I have ever shared in America, where there is no risk. It truly was incredible.

Something really awesome about the culture is that the Christmas celebration—meaning Santa decorations and a Christmas tree outside a few major malls or squares—doesn't end immediately after Dec. 25. Thanks to the culture, we were able to throw an additional Christmas party on New Year's Eve. I am incredibly thankful for the Spirit's guidance before, during and even after our time. My heart is full of joy because at that last party, two girls came to accept Christ. So I guess you could say that for Christmas, we received two new sisters in Christ! How awesome our God is!

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