



Ford Family in PNG

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Praying Through 2011

By Craig

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I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.
(Ephesians 1:18-21 NIV)

Greetings from Alotau, Papua New Guinea!

In 2011 I started keeping a prayer journal. Every time I have a study with someone I ask them what I can be praying for on their behalf. I write down those prayer requests in a journal, and I'm looking forward to seeing how God is working in the lives of the Christians here.

The New Year's resolution tradition is much like it is there. People are full of hopes, dreams, and ideas about what they want to do. I remember praying over a lot of New Years resolutions throughout January.

People rejoiced as God answered prayers. The sick were healed. A single mother was sent some money by a relative. A young girl from church got a job. Christians are reminded that God is working in their lives.

Yet, other prayers were not answered in the ways we wished. We prayed for a young girl in the tenth grade. Two weeks later, she died. We prayed that Wesley, a local evangelist, would have a much need surgery. Four months later, he is still waiting.

This is the ultimate paradox of our faith.

The answers to some of our prayers strengthen our faith in tremendous ways. The negative answers to others shake us to the very core.

This year, I've been reminded that prayer is not something we do, but something we are. In life, just like in prayer, God is sometimes easy to trust. At other times, however, God seems to be hiding in the background.

As we pray over 2011, it is my hope that God will increase our faith. May we all have a faith like Jesus when he said, "Not my will, but your will be done."

Developing Strong Families and Strong Leaders

By Craig



Strong, healthy, and functional families. That's what we're working to help establish here in Alotau.

In an effort to help nurture strong families, the town church hosted a parenting seminar on Feb. 20th, 2011. Our goal was to help each other understand how God wants us to raise our children. We also wanted to reach out to our community so we encouraged members to bring friends.

After a Bible class and sermon that focused on parenting, we went to the Reese's house for a potluck (pictured above). After lunch we had a small group discussion on how to raise obedient children.

Leadership Teaching Training Program

Marcus has taken the lead in helping to develop a leadership training program. Through the two year program, the plan is to fully equip some local Christians to continue the work of evangelism and teaching new Christians.

The classes focus on providing a solid biblical foundation and equipping students with the skills needed for evangelism, leadership, and teaching.

There are two separate class sessions, and each class averages about 10 students. Marcus and I rotate teaching responsibilities each week. Obviously, that will change in May when we leave for furlough.



Family Perspective

By Jeri

During the month of January, much of my time was consumed with visits to the hospital with Elizabeth. She developed an infection that caused painful boils on her bottom. After a couple weeks of unsuccessful treatment, a surgeon had to lance and drain the abscesses. We were very thankful for the great surgical staff that was very informative and helpful. Elizabeth is finally recovered, and we are especially glad that she can sit down again!

The weather has been extremely hot the past couple of months. We sure do a lot of sweating. We try to go to the pool at the International Hotel to cool down periodically. We also enjoyed a day at the beach recently. We're thankful for a beautiful place in which to live, even if it is so hot!

The school year started at the end of January for the locals. Every school here has religious instruction (RI) once a week. I've enjoyed teaching an RI class this year at the Alotau International School on Tuesday mornings. Hannah and Caleb enjoy going with me and seeing what a "real" school is like. We sing lots of Bible songs, and then I tell a Bible story each week.

Home school continues to go well. Hannah is doing great. She says her favorite subject is math, though she is doing great with reading too. Caleb and Elizabeth like to read books with us and often play together while Hannah and I are working. Only nine weeks left of kindergarten!

Below: Joel baptizing Roy. Since my last newsletter (January), there have been a half dozen baptisms in and around Alotau in the last two months.



Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 NIV)



Kids at church



Worship at Sineada



More kids at church

Devotional

By Craig

Life and Peace

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; (Romans 8:6)

Too often we try to find life and peace in all the wrong places.

Sometimes when people say they want to *really* live, they don't realize that their minds are set on something sinful that will end with death.

God is a good God who has good things in store for us. In order to help us live that life of peace, God establishes boundaries. When we live obediently within those boundaries, we will ultimately experience life and peace. However, outside of those boundaries (regardless of the lies we are told) is nothing but death and destruction.

God, we trust in your goodness and in your good will. We trust that you offer us life and peace. Help us, Father God, to submit to your Spirit.



Above: Elizabeth at the beach with Hannah and Caleb in the background.
Below: Caleb with some friends at Bible class.

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