

21/12/2016

To everyone at Anlaby Park,

Namaste from here in Delhi, India! I hope that you are all well. I'd like to start off this letter by just saying a massive thank you to everyone whose supported me on this amazing adventure - I would not be here without you all, so a massive thank you. And thanks for everyone's continued support and prayer, it means so much to me that I have so many people praying for me.

I am doing good so far, there have been some hard days, especially with Christmas approaching, but I am getting through them. I am so grateful for the love and support of my team as they are so fantastic and it would be 100x harder without them here.

I have learnt a lot about God since I have been here, mostly learning to rely on Him and trust in Him, but I have also discovered more about the power of prayer (yey sue!). You can thank Sara, our spiritual co-ordinator for that one (and Jesus, of course). I have been doing things such as leading devotions and praying out loud in front of people that I never thought I would be able to do before. God is good ☺

Church is always interesting as we are currently attending a hindi-speaking church. It's good in a way, as going there has improved my hindi-reading skills by following along with the songs that are in hindi script, but it also means that we can't understand a lot of what is going on, which can be

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frustrating sometimes. The pastor does know a bit of English, so we can normally get at least the main point of the sermon. As I am learning more Hindi it is getting easier to understand more of what he is saying, which is good. The people there are so welcoming and friendly to us. We have been given cake on someone's birthday on more than one occasion and we have even been to a Bible study held at one of the women's houses, which Kirsty ended up leading. It was quite amazing as the word was spread around that we were having a prayer group, about 4 or 5 neighbours turned up to join in. It was amazing to see how much people want to pray. Even at Anusaram, if someone has a headache or is just not feeling very good they will ask that we pray about it, it's nice how they pray for all the little things here. At church they are very keen to get us involved, especially with Christmas activities. Tonight we are going to an outreach event at Delhi Haat, tomorrow we are going carol singing, (don't know if that means the same as it does in the UK but I guess I will find out soon) and we are helping to organise and run the Christmas Eve service.

I love going to Anusaram, our main project. It is great to see all the women and children who attend there. In the mornings we work with the women, helping run classes such as English, computer and even traditional dance (which has been a lot of fun). They are amazing, really inspiring as a lot of them have to go out of their way even to be able to come, especially if they are married, but you can see that

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They don't mind the effort because they really want to be there. They have been very patient with us, especially with trying to teach us Hindi. Most of them are really keen to learn English, which is good. In the afternoons they normally do embroidery or sewing class whilst we work with the children. We have an assembly time every day, where we do exercises, sing songs (the kids really love singing - especially high energy action songs), say the Lord's prayer and sing the national anthem. After this we split into classes. My class is II<sup>a</sup>, who are aged between 9 and 13. I normally have  $\approx$  30-35 children, but I have had as few as 14 and as many as 46, so it can vary quite a lot. I found it rather daunting at first, being stood in a room full of children, who don't even speak the same language as me, but as I've gotten used to it, it has become easier. It helps that they are all really keen to learn. I have a few cheeky boys, but no-one is really naughty as they don't want to miss out on learning. I have mainly been teaching them basic English; verbs and tenses, nouns and pronouns, adverbs and adjectives etc. A lot of them are very smart and pick things up really quickly. The children who come to Anusaran come from underprivileged backgrounds, so for some of them, Anusaran is the only schooling that they will get! I love the kids so much because they are always so happy and full of joy. Even though they don't have a lot, ~~and~~ and we can't really solve that, just us being there makes them happy. We played musical chairs the other day, the prize was a pack of pens and the kids were so excited to receive it. It makes you

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think about how much we take stuff for granted and appreciate the little things. It makes the hard days a little easier when I think of the people at anusaran. We tell them a bible story every day and explain the moral, but we're not really actively preaching to them. As Sara keeps reminding me it's not always about that though and we are showing God's love to them just by willing to be there and play games with them and teach them (at least attempt to). We pray a lot, which is good. So the kids are hearing about the message a bit. I'm definitely going to miss everyone at anusaran when I come home. We have had the chance to visit some of the women at their homes, which was a humbling experience. They are so excited that we want to go and spend time with them and they are so welcoming and generous, even with the little that they have. It's awesome.

On our days off we have been slowly exploring different touristy parts of Delhi, which has been fun. Unfortunately, due to the money situation, we have had to spend a lot of time queuing in lines at ATMs, but the situation seems to be sorting itself out now, which is good. I have enjoyed getting an opportunity to go out and explore different parts of Delhi.

We get a team holiday, and we have planned to go to Kolkata, stay with the team there overnight and then all go to Darjeeling together. We will be in Darjeeling for New Year and then we are separating as Team Delhi is going to Jaipur before heading back to the capital. I am really

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excited about this because it is going to be awesome to see them again. Also, I am excited to get the opportunity to explore different parts of India.

So the answer to the question, is carolling the same in India as in the UK is no. It is quite different.

Firstly, most of the songs we sang were in Hindi, and Hindi carols are very different to British ones.

They are really energetic and upbeat. We stood outside people's houses and sang (accompanied by a drum and a guitar) before being invited in for coffee or tea and a variety of snacks, some places even gave us almost entire meals of curries! We ate a lot of good! We drove to the houses as well, so we hardly walked anywhere. People would clap and dance along to the songs, it was great fun - I really enjoyed it.

On Christmas Eve we attended a service at the church that we've been going to. It was a lot busier than normal, as lots of people invited their friends to come. We sang songs, had a message and we did a sketch and two songs, which was interesting. It was good though and we got samosas (which are so much nicer here) after the service.

Christmas Day was strange, but we still managed to have a good time. We arrived at church at 10am, the time the service was supposed to start, to find hardly anyone there - not even the pastor! But by 10:30, most people were there. It was a combined service of four different congregations, so there was a lot of people there. The service was long, we didn't get home

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until about 2 o'clock, but I still really enjoyed it. The worship was amazing - God was really present. It was great. Then all the Sunday schools did a performance each; a song, dance or sketch. The service was really just a big party, I guess it is Jesus birthday after all. It was really fun though - overall a great experience. When we got home we opened our presents. John told us that he would call us when lunch was ready. We finally ate 'lunch' at 5pm, but punctuality isn't really something people think about. It was a nice lunch, we had soup and rice with broccoli and papaya. We played videos with Arnold and Christie, which was fun. And in the evening we went to the internet cafe to speak to our family. It was a ~~miss~~ nice day but not really something that I would want to do again.

Hope that you all are well and had an amazing Christmas. I am really excited to see everyone when I get back, and I can't wait for tour so that you can meet my team.

lots of love and best wishes for  
the new year (although this will  
probably arrive later).

Grace  
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