

Dear Prayer Intercessors,

Almost every table was full! We had 170 people show up for this year's Postgraduate Student Welcome dinner, the majority being new graduate students arriving in Oxford to pursue their hopes and dreams, others being students who had arrived in 2020 and still had not found community here. We had overcome post-COVID curveball after curveball, and then my colleague whispered these dreaded words, "**We've run out of food!**". Friends, this was our biggest welcome event of the week - a free dinner - and to run out of food seemed unthinkable! How could this be? Even after having several conversations with the restaurant (they had suggested scaling back our food order and I went with my gut and instead increased it!), and double checking the order with several experienced team members who had led this event in the past? **In the midst of getting this news, due to your diligent prayers, I remembered clearly and calmly that the Lord could and would provide, especially in the way we chose to respond.**

One team member calmly approached the five tables that had not yet been served asking them if they wanted to wait or if they would like plain rice and nan while more curry was being prepared. They agreed to wait. I called the restaurant that provided the meal to secure additional portions, while also organizing a team of four servers to walk to our local grocery store to see if we could find a replacement curry to help fill the gap. Miraculously, we problem-solved until every single person, even our volunteer team, was served a full meal, and we felt the peace of the Lord the whole time. **I genuinely felt like I had witnessed Jesus "multiplying the loaves and fishes" but he wasn't necessarily multiplying the food, he was multiplying the generosity of heart and the patience of those being served and of those serving.**

Friends, the reports we got from attendees from our free welcome dinner and our other events have been **so encouraging**. We had some individuals say that they **could feel the community** in the room. Others, specifically some Indian students, said that the **food was wonderful** which was such a relief. And what's more there were **several individuals who heard about Alpha through the dinner and have come along to learn more about Christianity**. We're so grateful to each of you and for your sustaining prayers! The term is off to a wonderful start, and here are a few other requests for the coming weeks:

Excellent Follow Up: There have been so many exciting invitations that have been extended over the past few weeks since term started. **Please pray that there would be consistent, spirit-led follow-up** as we seek to build relationships with those who are new to faith and, or, seeking to go deeper.

Socratic Happy Hour on Monday: David will be leading our next Socratic Happy Hour this coming Monday evening. These facilitated conversations have historically been an amazing opportunity for those from other faith perspectives who are seeking answers to big questions to be in dialogue with Christians and to hear Christ-centered perspectives in a neutral environment. **Please pray for good attendance, especially from those who are seeking, for meaningful conversations and connections, and for good weather (which oddly always seems to help with better turnout)!**

David's Academic Writing: David had a really encouraging meeting with one of his supervisors at the beginning of the term who gave him some good feedback and has assured him that he's on the right track with the current chapter he's working on. Praise God for this affirmation, and please continue to **pray sustaining prayers over his research and writing** as he moves forward with working on his dissertation this term.

Prayer Partner in Hospital with COVID: Please join us in praying for a friend who has been a faithful intercessor for both our work with Nomi Network and our work with graduate students and faculty here in the UK. He has recently been in the hospital with COVID and has had to be intubated because of low oxygen levels. **We would covet prayers for his healing and protection, and for the Lord's comfort for his wife and family in this challenging time.**

Thank you again for your wonderful and powerful prayers!

All our love,
Alissa, David, & Charlie





Photos:

- 1) Free Welcome Dinner:** 170 incoming and returning postgraduate students gathered for our free welcome dinner! (To respect those who were vulnerable we reduced numbers at each table, asked folks to mask while entering/exiting, and requested volunteers/table hosts to test beforehand.)
- 2) David Leading Bible Study:** David had the honor of leading our church's graduate student group of about 50 students in an inductive Bible Study last week.
- 3) David & Alissa at David's MPhil graduation:** Standing in front of the Sheldonian Theatre after David's (long awaited) official graduation ceremony where we celebrated his successful completion of his MPhil (masters). This degree, which is the basis of his DPhil (phd) research, was completed over a year ago, but because of COVID all ceremonies were previously put on hold.