

MOUNT VERNON *on* MISSION

Diwali Prayer Guide

Diwali, the “Festival of Lights,” is possibly the most popular festival in India and Nepal. Diwali is the Hindu New Year, a five-day festival that celebrates the triumph of good over evil. During Diwali in South Asia, people hang lights around the city and light candles as a sign of that triumph. People stay up late into the night, playing music and lighting fireworks. In the Hindu religion, Diwali celebrates the return of Rama, a Hindu god, after his 14-year exile (when he was greeted at night with a beautiful display of lights) and the victory of the god Krishna over a demon. Diwali is not only a Hindu festival, though, as Jains, Sikhs and some Buddhists celebrate it too.

Much like Christmas in the Western world, Diwali is an opportunity for South Asians to buy gifts and candy for their friends, family and neighbors. In the US, it is often celebrated on one day. South Asians may decorate their homes with strings of lights similar to Christmas decorations.

This year Diwali is celebrated October 20; it changes every year because the dates depend on the progression of the moon. Christians in South Asia may participate in some activities with their Hindu friends and neighbors as they celebrate Diwali and look for opportunities to share about how Jesus is the true Light of the World!

Jesus said in John 8:12 “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” This Diwali, pray that your Hindu neighbors and coworkers would be introduced to the Light of the World, Jesus.

Pray

- John 6:44 tells us that no one comes to the Father unless the Father draws them. Pray that the Spirit of God would come in power this Diwali, turning the hearts of Hindus away from their false gods and unto the Father who loves them.
- Even during the Festival of Lights, spiritual darkness permeates South Asians. Pray that the power of the enemy over the hearts, minds and souls of Hindus would be broken and banished, and that Christ would reveal Himself to them as the King of kings and Lord of Lords.
- For many Hindus, the meaning behind the customs and traditions of festival season has been diluted or even entirely forgotten. Pray that they would become disillusioned and discontent with empty ritualism and instead turn to the powerful and saving faith found in Christ Jesus.
- Many Hindus hesitate to follow Jesus because they fear losing the love and fellowship of their families. Pray that the family of God would welcome Hindu background believers with open arms, and that God would replace everything they give up for Him with His infinite blessings.
- Pray that believers may be bold in engaging Hindus in spiritual conversations looking for opportunities to share the gospel and how the One True God gives victory over the power of evil.

How you can connect with Hindus during this Diwali season:

- Ask if they celebrate Diwali and have them explain what it means.
- Compliment any light or festive decorations they may have.
- Compliment their attire, usually it's new, specially bought or stitched for Diwali.
- Ask why it's called festival of lights.
- Look for similarities in their customs with Christmas and share why we celebrate Jesus' birth.