

24 hours of Prayer

Sunday is the first day of the school week here in Bangladesh.

Midnight - 1am The beginning of the 24 hour day. The start of *Grace* is our Pre-school; age 3 -5 years. Give thanks for our teachers, Gemma and Claire and for our classroom aids and teaching assistants. We pray for love and wisdom as these young children begin their schooling. *Grace* children are all from such different backgrounds- over 30 nationalities and 6 continents - we are an International School. We give thanks that we have grown in the last 12 months.

1am - 2am Please pray for good sleep for the teachers and children. Dhaka's housing is very compact and often noisy. However, we have comfortable beds! Please pray for the huge number of children in Dhaka who live on the streets. We need wisdom to respond to the never ending demands. Some teachers volunteer in slum schools; *Grace* also raises money for these. Please pray for continued opportunities for us to develop sustainable links.

2am - 3am Health can be a challenge here. We are so thankful for support from some good doctors, and access to safe dentists and hospitals. Many teachers have battled with fever, stomach upsets, aches and pains. 3 teachers have babies: we have 10 teachers' children. Please pray for our health and protection, and the health and safety of our students.

3am - 4am At the moment it can be cold at night. Please pray for our guards who stay on duty at our 3 school campuses and teachers' apartment block. We give thanks for our school buildings. We pray for their smooth running. We do not own the buildings. They are adapted houses. All around there is new development, and property is at a premium. Please pray for favour with the landlords, and continued provision of good buildings for the school.

4am -5am Our first school has children from 5 - 10 years in class 1 - 5. There are about 18 children in a class. We give thanks for small classes. Our teachers are Jessie, Tena, Kim, Esther, Aleta, Sue, Susanna Hannah and Jesse. We also have 3 teaching assistants. We are grateful for good resources including new computers in our ICT room. Children at *Grace* come from nearly 30 nationalities. There are many cultures, languages and abilities represented. Each child is a real individual!

5am - 6am The alarm clocks ring! It is an early start here. Around us we hear the 'call to prayer'. Please pray for our energy and enthusiasm as we have long semesters. Most teachers live in a block of apartments called 'lane 5". Please pray for a close, supportive community amid the reality of working and living together. Home can seem far away with family and friends in different time zones. We are so grateful for the good internet, Skype and phone connections here, however electricity can be erratic at times and it is a challenge to keep computers working well.

6am -7am We have a fleet of 13 school buses. The drivers and bus escorts are up early to travel to work. They leave school around 7a.m. to collect the pupils. Dhaka roads are congested and chaotic. The bus fleet has to be kept in good working order. Please pray that the 'getting up and ready' time for the children is loving and supportive. Many families have ayahs to help with the children. The teachers also travel to school, arriving at 7.00a.m.

7am - 8am Children are being collected from all around the city. Grace serves the Mission and Christian expatriate community, but welcomes families from other backgrounds (about 30% of pupils). Please pray for safety as the children travel, and a happy, caring atmosphere on the buses. We give thanks that we seldom have children being unkind to each other at this school. The teachers are busy planning and preparing for the day. Please pray for wisdom and skill in our teaching, and a confirmation of our calling to this place. (also for teachers for next year; see 8-9 pm.)

8am - 9am Pupils at Grace genuinely like coming to school. The classrooms are filling up around 8am. We give thanks for the good relationships between pupils and teachers. Please pray for the class teachers as they welcome the pupils at the start of the day. Assemblies at Grace are very Bible based. We have fun! The younger children really enjoy the lively songs and action packed talks. We follow a whole school theme: at the moment it is "Our favourite Characters from the Bible".

9am - 10am Lessons are under way in all classes. Please pray for the pupils that they will be self-confident, successful learners, and be able to fully develop their gifts and talents. We thank God for each of the teachers He has brought to Grace and the good facilities we have. We are very grateful that we can use playing fields and swimming pools nearby for sport. Please pray for continued provision for this.

10am - 11am 15 minutes break time. In every playground there are good games and friendships, but some children are socially less confident. Please pray for them. May there be kindness and caring between the children. It can be hard for pupils just learning English to make friends. Please pray for them. Most pupils live in apartments and have little freedom to go outside alone. We only have concrete yards, but this space to run and play is invaluable; may we not lose it!

11am - noon Upper School has pupils from 11 - 16. They study up to IGCSE. Those in Year 11 are starting to prepare for the exams. Please pray for them, and the academic learning at Upper School. Teachers here are Fiona, Ben, Bill, Jamie, Shannon, Corinne, Andrew, Jesse, Susanna, Christine, Mike, Sue, Hannah and Angela. Please pray for all the students that they will reach their full potential, and have satisfaction in seeing their progress. Thanks for all the fun that goes on at Upper School alongside the learning. Pre-School children go home at 11.30; may they go with God's blessing.

Noon - 1pm The centre of the day. We believe that God, and Jesus are at the centre of Grace. This is His school, and there is a very special caring, nurturing atmosphere here. We give thanks for that. Mike Hawthorne is the school principal. His role is wider than just a head teacher as he supports the students, teaching and non-teaching staff, teaches English, talks to parents about admissions, and ensures that the infrastructure and business aspects of Grace are running smoothly. We give thanks for Sandie who has recently joined the staff, to cover some of these areas and Catherine who does the budget.

1pm - 2pm We seek to help every pupil enjoy school and achieve in their learning. We give thanks that overall our pupils do well. A high proportion have English as a second language. Some of our pupils are gifted and talented, while others have areas of difficulty in their learning. We welcome them all. Please pray that we will have the skills and opportunity to ensure that each pupil is given the support and encouragement they need. We are setting individual learning targets at the moment. May these inspire the pupils to achieve their personal best.

2pm - 3pm The end of the school day for many. The roads are busy at this time of day. Some students stay on for after school activities: sport, crafts, cooking, etc. We are thankful for all those who run these clubs and for all the organisation that goes into them. Sports are very important for some students. Jesse works hard to ensure the school takes part in interschool tournaments and galas. We are having our Sports Days now before the weather gets too hot.

3pm - 4pm Teachers are often still at school. There is planning and preparation for tomorrow, and marking to be done. The Management team meet on a Monday. Mike, Sandie, Fiona, Sue, Bill and Aleta have the responsibility for the everyday running of the school. There is currently a focus on good communication skills to ensure we maintain a strong team across the 3 campuses. Staff and campus meetings are on Tuesdays. We are grateful that we work in a supportive, caring team.

4pm - 5pm The bus takes teachers from school back to the apartments. Dhaka has a large expatriate community and we have a choice of relaxation and leisure activities. The apartments are comfortable, but there are buildings all around. Green spaces are at a premium. Please pray that we will be able to develop a good work/life balance to make life here sustainable and enjoyable and help us to flourish. Meanwhile, at school, the buildings are being cleaned; we so appreciate our hard working, loyal ayahs.

5pm - 6pm Our pupils are all back at home. We have very supportive parents and are grateful for those who volunteer in the library, classroom and with sports. FOG, the parents' association has just been revived. Please pray that there may be encouragement, love and support for all the students as they do homework, meet friends and spend time at home. It can be challenging for teenagers in Dhaka as they are limited in their opportunities for independence. Please pray that there will be a development of good activities for them.

6pm - 7pm In Dhaka we have a choice of good food with fruit, vegetables, rice and fish always available. We can shop in the markets or in western style supermarkets. We are very grateful to the team of helpers we have to support us with shopping, cooking and washing clothes. This all takes much longer here, and having this support frees us up to concentrate on our teaching. Please pray for our teachers' and children's health and well being. (see 2-3am). We really appreciate the School Trustees who meet regularly to support and guide the School.

7pm - 8pm Our administrative and technical team at school is large and very important. To keep everything running smoothly is a challenge in Dhaka. As well as internal paperwork we have accounts, tax, visas, work permits, transport and living accommodation to keep running smoothly. Please pray for Sandie, Mr Napoleon, Ferdous, Suvash, Bablu, Peter, Shilpi, Reena, and Nitu. We have about 70 national staff and 22 Teachers. We have had good times together at whole staff picnics and meals.

8pm - 9pm Teachers come on an initial 2 or 3 year contract. Many choose to extend this. This year some teachers are leaving and we are busy advertising for new teachers to join us in August. You can see this list on our website: www.graceinternationalschool.org. We pray that God will provide the teachers we need. Please pray that God will guide western qualified, Christian teachers to see the adverts or hear about the jobs, and that they will say "Yes!"

9pm - 10 pm The day starts early and finishes early here. This is bed time for many. May we reflect on the good things of the day and give thanks to God. For those still out and about, it can be a risky time to travel. The main choices are rickshaws and CNGs. These are cheap and usually plentiful, but there can be risks travelling in the dark. Teachers had bags snatched last year. Please pray for our safety as we move around Dhaka.

10pm - 11pm Friday is the holy day in Muslim Bangladesh. We give thanks for the choice of good, English medium churches in Dhaka. There are mid week and Friday activities for children and teenagers. There is a 2 day camp at the end of February that many of our pupils go on. We also have students away on field trips during February and March. Please pray for safe travel, health, fun and good sleep!

11pm - midnight We give thanks that Bangladesh has become a more peaceful place to live in recent months. It is a very new country with a huge challenge to meet the needs of its enormous population. Please pray that we will have favour in getting work permits and visas for our teaching staff. Grace is an ever changing community as many families are on short term contracts. There are a lot of 'hellos' and goodbyes! Please pray that God will help our students and staff at times of change. Please pray that Grace may feel a safe and secure place to study and work. Please pray for staff who will be leaving in June, and for the new teachers we need. (see 8pm - 9pm)