



May 2021

Dear Praying Friends,

God is so kind and gracious to us! There are times when our efforts in serving our Father, and sharing His Gospel seem to be producing little, if any, fruit. At least from our perspective. And yet, in ways that are beyond our immediate scope of vision, our Father transforms our meager efforts to display His magnificent glory! And one day, we get to see HIS fruit produced through us, that has far surpassed our hope or expectation!

### **ROUND ... FOUR!**

In our last letter, we were just about to finish our third COVID state of emergency in Tokyo that had started in the end of December. After three months, in mid-March we were able to gather together once again as a church family. Boy was it good to get back together! As our church family gradually started coming back to the services, after about a month, we were really enjoying seeing our auditorium full of people again. The heartfelt congregational singing was glorious!

Just as our church was once again getting into the rhythm and flow of being together again... you guessed it. State of emergency. So far this year, we've enjoyed being together for five Sundays. This emergency status was only supposed to last for two weeks during a week of national holidays, but after the two weeks, the government of Tokyo decided to extend it until the end of May. Each Sunday we get to be together is becoming more and more precious!

We are allowed to gather with a few people at a time, so our Bible study groups have been consistently growing. One of the things we do as a church family is read the same passage of scripture each day, and then gather in different groups every week or two to talk about the things we learned. Those gatherings are becoming critical to us as we try to stay connected with each other through this season.

### **AN UNUSUAL, BUT CRITICAL MINISTRY TO MISSIONARIES.**

Japan has been notoriously difficult for people who are trying to get back into the country. For anyone flying into Japan through Tokyo (one of the main international airport hubs in Japan), one of the requirements is that they quarantine for two weeks in Tokyo, without using public transportation. For missionaries who are outside of Tokyo, this can be an incredibly expensive requirement. During this time, God has allowed us to host several missionaries so far to meet that requirement, and we're scheduling more in the near future. This has allowed them to get back to their ministries without that added financial burden. Praise God for giving us a unique opportunity to serve our co-laborers this way!

There are a few requests for prayer that we have.

Many churches here who have Japanese pastors are struggling financially with the continued state of emergencies. Many pastors also hold part-time jobs in order to keep the bills paid. Please pray that their financial needs will be met, and that the believers here in Japan will continue to be faithful in a time when it is increasingly easier to drift away from church.

Also, please pray for new missionaries who are trying to get into Japan. Missionaries who are already in Japan are able to get back in (by meeting the quarantine requirements), but for people who are trying to get new visas to come into Japan, it's currently impossible to get into the country. Please pray for those new missionaries as they patiently wait for Japan to open up again.

Thank you all so much for your faithfully being a part of serving and praying for your brothers and sisters here in Japan. We are deeply grateful!

Serving Him,  
The Carters to Japan