



Kingdom Mosaics from Spain



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Eating out as a ministry of prayer



*Merry Christmas
from our family to yours!*

Laurie & Billy (Spain)

Ryan and Sara Jane (Colorado)

Miles and Lily (Texas)

and Sarah (Germany)

We love good Indian food. Sadly, there aren't any Indian restaurants in our town. They are easily found in the large cities, but not in the small Spanish villages. However, there is an exception. About 30 minutes away from us, there is another small village that has an amazing Indian restaurant. Over the years, we have gone many times and have built a sweet relationship with *Baashir. Baashir is from Pakistan. He immigrated to England several years ago and worked in London until he decided to come to Spain and start his own restaurant. He and a few friends opened the Mughal Indian restaurant in a tiny village with the whooping population of 5500.



We have always been intrigued (and a little astounded) by Baashir and his restaurant. How on earth are they staying open? How could they possibly have enough business, especially in a tiny pueblo in rural Spain? Spanish culture is not known for accepting new things or new people, and Spaniards are particularly traditional when it comes to food. In the large metropolitan areas, variety is more readily available due to globalization and a more diverse population. But Spanish pueblos and villages are notorious for ostracizing outsiders and shutting out new businesses or ideas. Not only that, but this little band of entrepreneurs are immigrants (a very tough situation in rural Spain), they don't look like the locals, they don't speak Spanish well, AND they don't serve traditional local foods?! So many things stacked against them.

As immigrants ourselves and as people who train others in living cross-culturally, we know the hardships and difficulties these guys are facing. We have often thought of Baashir and his friends and lifted silent prayers that God would give them favor. "Please, God, let them find friends and community. Let the local population treat them with kindness. And please let them feel loved as they seek to live and work in this tiny town. May the work of their hands prosper."

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Over the years, Baashir has opened up to us as we eat at the restaurant. He has shared struggles with us about loneliness, especially as it relates to his wife. His wife was left behind in Pakistan, and he has been desperately trying to bring her to Spain. Every time we go to the restaurant, we ask how he is doing and how things are progressing with the paperwork to bring his wife over. He always smiles, folds his hands in the way of his culture, and thanks us for remembering his family and for asking about them. Finally, in the Spring of this year, he responded with great joy. “My wife is coming! She will be here soon! I am so excited to finally have her at my side.”

In June, we went to eat at Mughal’s. We were heading into a very busy season with a hectic schedule, and we knew that this would be our last chance to drive over to Baashir’s place and relax and eat great Indian food for a couple of months. While sitting at our table and chatting with Baashir, we asked how his wife was doing. With a look of desperation and concern, he said “She is finally here, and I am finally complete and happy to be with her. But she is having a very hard time. She knows no one. She cannot speak Spanish or English, only Urdu. Because of our culture and religion, she cannot be around other men, but there are no women here who can speak her language or who understand our culture. In our country, all the women do things together and have each other. But here, she has no one and I am at the restaurant all day and night. She is very lonely.”

Baashir was obviously hurting for his wife, *Asali. We talked a bit about how hard it is to learn to live in another culture, and how hard it is when you do not have community or understand anything around you. In that moment, we were treading on common ground. Each of us has experienced the struggles and challenges of being the outsiders and trying to find footing in a new place. This conversation felt like a divine appointment and holy ground. Just then, Baashir said something that made it apparent that God was orchestrating this moment. Before Baashir left our table to go tend to other customers and the kitchen, he said, “Friends, I know you are praying people. Would you please pray for my wife and her happiness?”

We were so honored at this request, but also astonished. How did Baashir know that we are praying people? We are just customers in his restaurant who make it a point to talk to him and listen well. But we have never prayed with him or talked about specific spiritual things. How does he know? Of course, we agreed to pray for Asali.

A bit later in the evening, he swooped by the table in his rush to tend to customers in the busy restaurant and said to me, “My wife is in the car just outside. She rides with me to make deliveries so we can be together. Would you be willing to come meet her?” Biliby was forbidden by their culture to see her, but I got up from the table and followed as Baashir led me to his car. His wife got out of the passenger side. She was dressed in her traditional *shalwar kameez* clothing and was fully covered, including head scarf and face covering. All I could see were her eyes. She was obviously terrified and confused. *Why was her husband bringing this strange woman to the car to meet her?* She could not understand my words, nor could I understand her. But the look on Baashir’s face as he presented his bride to me was priceless. He loves this woman! He was so proud to present her to me.

After a few awkward words, Asali and I said our goodbyes and then Baashir hit me with a parting request. “Would you please pray for us to have a child? We are ready and want to have the blessing of a baby to start our family. Please pray that God would bless us.” Again, I was honored by this request, and surprised that Baashir could see and know that we are praying people.

After a couple of busy months, we visited the restaurant again, so excited to finally be back and to have some amazing food and see Baashir. We had thought of him and Asali often and had worried for her transition to Spain. We prayed that she had not suffered too terribly as an immigrant and a woman with no language skills and no community, but we feared that she had not fared well. Imagine our surprise when Baashir came bounding to our table and brought Asali out with him! She was visibly transformed – no head to toe covering, no fearful look in her eyes, and SMILING! Baashir said, “Look at my beautiful wife, how well she is! I have had to learn to relax my cultural ideas about women so that she can thrive. I have to be okay with her coming out in public, with other men being able to see her face and talk to her, with her being at the restaurant and working with us. It has been a very big change for me, but look at the change in her! And, Friends, we have big news. We are going to have a baby!”



Please pray with us for Baashir. Pray for his wife, Asali, and this new addition to their family. Pray for their continued transition to a different culture and all that it entails. Pray that the work of their hands will prosper and that the transformation God is doing in their hearts will continue to grow. And please join us in thanking God for this sweet relationship, and that His countenance and light is somehow visible to others through us – even as we eat in a restaurant and listen as people share their life stories with us. Thank God for Baashir’s ability to see that we are “praying people” and for his vulnerability in asking us to pray for him and his concerns.

(out of respect for Baasir and Asali and their privacy as they continue to adapt to new customs, we have chosen not to share their photos today.)

Is your faith waterproof?



It was pretty chilly out and drizzling off and on. The building was full of people for mid-day prayer - too full. So these guys just took it outside. They claimed their spot on the sidewalk and joined in mid-day prayer - in the cold and drizzle, on the ground, a couple spilled out into the street. No one was looking around to see who might be watching. This mosque is 100s of years old and tiny. We had just been inside an hour before this photo was taken. It was no surprise to any of these men that there was no room. It's probably this way every day. But they showed up anyway.

To be honest, if I arrived at my church and there wasn't any room for me in the building, I

don't know that I would take up a spot outside in the cold and wet. To be honest, I have a lot of days when my faith is not very waterproof. A little rain, a little cold, a little cramped or inconvenienced... "I can talk to God anywhere", I'd probably say.

Heck, to be 100% honest, it really only takes one puffed up, pushy, know-it-all old man to keep me out of the pews lately!

And that's where I heard from God this week. During a time of prayer, God gently pointed out to me that I really need community, even if it's messy. I really need the community and family of the church, no matter how imperfect it is most days. And, He tenderly pointed out that I was choosing to not have that all because of one old man who continually gets under my skin. One man was keeping me away from a community that I need.

A little drizzle, a little cold, a little inconvenience.

Is my faith big enough to stay? To set up my mat amidst the imperfections and worship anyway? (even when the old man makes me crazy?)

How about you? I'd love to hear. What has pushed you away lately? What are the things that are causing you to question? What would make you return? I really do want to hear where you're struggling with the church, because I have really struggled, too.

Let's don't set up our mats in isolation. I'd rather set up beside you - in the rain, in the cold, on the street - beside you.



Please join us in prayer and praises:

- Praise - We traveled to Turkey for a global gathering of all TMS Global cross-cultural workers. With nearly 200 workers, families, and international partners in attendance, it was a wonderful time. Billy lead a session on processing grief and gratitude from the pandemic years. Laurie lead a session on Rhythms of Rest and the importance of Sabbath in our lives and work.
- Prayers for our continued efforts to support Ukrainian refugee work.
- Pray for the continuous concerns and fallout from the war in Ukraine. Europe is facing terrible inflation, supply shortages, and cuts in gas pipelines.
- Prayers and Praises— 2023 will usher in a new team for Spain! We will have two families joining us as well as a long-time CCW friend who will be switching fields.
 - Prayers and Praises- We are finishing out an extremely busy season of ministry and training work. After 15 years of service overseas, we have been granted some sabbatical time for rest and renewal. Pray that this will be a time of restoration for us.

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- Our greatest desire is to see people become who God created them to be and to live into their purpose. We believe that everyone has value. Everyone has talents, skills, and unique abilities. We want to see that come alive!
- Nurturing and developing people to be healthy spiritually, physically, emotionally, and relationally - because "care" is not just an emotional feeling word, "care" is a verb - an action. That's what we're about - developing and caring for people so they can live into their unique design and God-given purpose.

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Become a Partner! We would love to have you on our team!

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Dear Billy and Laurie,

I will pray for you.

As God provides, I plan to partner with you by giving
\$ _____ Per month / year.

Special note: _____

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

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