

**Monday 2nd December**

**Istanbul                  Pop: 15 million                  Muslim: 98%**

This is a city where East meets West. The Bosphorus Strait, a narrow waterway, divides the city in two: half is on the continent of Europe and half on the continent of Asia. With a population of 15 million, Istanbul is the largest city in Europe and the fourth largest city in the world. It has a mixture



of different people groups living there, including thousands of people from the Middle East, displaced by wars who call this city 'home'.

Istanbul is the economic, industrial, educational, religious and cultural centre of Turkey. It has been the capital of both Christian and Muslim empires. It was founded as Byzantium by the Greeks in 660 BC and became the capital of the Greek Christian Byzantine Empire.

The Emperor Constantine made the city the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire in 330 AD and it was renamed Constantinople after him. After its fall to the Turkish Ottoman forces in 1453, its name changed again to Istanbul. It was the seat of the Ottoman Empire for nearly six centuries. At the empire's height, the Turks ruled much of southern Europe, North Africa, and West Asia. Istanbul remained the capital of the Ottoman Empire until the creation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, when the capital was moved to Ankara.

Istanbul is a bustling, cosmopolitan city where the mix of European and Asian influences can be seen. The 500-year-old, covered Grand Bazaar is a labyrinth of thousands of shops where you can buy anything from spices, rugs and pottery, to mobile phones and computers. There is also a modern shopping district with international brand-name stores, expensive boutiques, coffee shops and pedestrian streets rivalling those of Paris, London and Rome.

A small evangelical seminary in Istanbul trains lay people and pastors across the country. A few evangelical churches of Turkish believers have been officially registered. More than 500,000 of the 3.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey are in Istanbul. This presents new ministry opportunities since Syrian Muslim refugees are often open to the gospel.

Watch a Prayercast video about Istanbul [here](#)

- Pray for the city's small body of believers to courageously share the love of Jesus.
- Pray for an unprecedented movement of Turks to Christ in Istanbul that spreads to the whole nation.
- Pray for Syrian Muslim refugees to meet followers of Jesus and to have a spiritual hunger, for the gospel message. Let's pray to see new believers among them meeting to study the Word and praying together in their homes.

Sources: <https://www.prayercast.com/istanbul.html>

**Tuesday 3rd December**

## **Turks in Turkey**

The Turks are one of Frontiers' priority groups for prayer this year and are also one of the Frontier People Groups; those large people groups who have less than 0.1% Christians living among them and no evidence of a self-sustaining gospel movement.



Turkey is the home country to the majority of Turks. About 60% of them live in major cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Adana. Some, both men and women in professional occupations can live a secularised, modern urban life, with all the materialistic advantages and

temptations that go with it.

About 40% of Turks are employed in the agricultural sector living in villages and using natural resources to earn a living. Some peasants live as nomads, moving their sheep from place to place in search of greener pastures, dwelling in tents or huts. Turk men work outside, while the women spin yarn, dry fruits and vegetables for winter and look after the home and family. They also sometimes help with the men with their work. Children help their parents with the outside duties if there isn't a school nearby. They may ride in ox-drawn grain carts or help make colourful knots in rugs.

Relaxation is of the utmost importance to the Turk. Coffee houses are places where men meet to visit and talk politics or business. In general, the Turks are courteous, gentle people who readily show hospitality to strangers. They are also very patriotic and have a deep sense of nationalistic pride and love for their country.

Turks are predominantly Sunni Muslim. They have Christian resources, including the Bible and the Jesus film which have been translated into Turkish. Although believers work among them, they remain strongly Muslim.

- Pray that Turks will have eyes to see and ears to hear the Good News about Jesus.
- Ask God to increase Turks' curiosity to read the Bible in their language and be drawn to learn about Jesus.
- Ask the Lord to save key leaders among the Turks who will boldly declare the gospel.

- Pray for local believers in Turkey to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit as they face persecution on many fronts.

Source: [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/18274/TU](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/18274/TU)

### **Wednesday 4th December**

#### **News from a Frontiers couple in Turkey**

“We've started up our house fellowship meetings after a long break. We have adopted the Disciple Making Movement (DMM) approach, but have yet to see any reproducing study groups arising out of our efforts. However, a local lady has had some women she knows show interest in the Word and one has started to pray in Jesus' name. Also, a young man and his young bride have recently become part our fellowship group after coming to faith in another city. He was an atheist but is now eager to serve the Lord. He has an online Bible study group which usually meets in the early hours of the morning. We long to see more people who are seeking God forming into groups to study his Word.

Disappointment is part of the work here. One lady showed a lot of interest at first and wanted to learn more about Jesus through the New Testament and a DVD of his life. However, family illness and a bereavement, as well as pressure from her family not to continue her interest, have meant that she has found it difficult to meet up again with the field worker.

An encouraging development for outreach and DMM is the launch of the Discover App in Turkish. The App is a verbal and written guide to discovering the Bible using a simple set of readings and stories. It is helpful for workers to use as part of discipling locals. It is now available on Google Play and on the App store.”

- Please pray for the wide distribution of the Discover app and that many people will be drawn to these stories for God's glory.
- Please pray for guidance for the future as our workers try to establish DMMs. Pray against any discouragement and attacks of the enemy and that the seeds they have sown will find good soil and bring fruit in time.
- Pray for many more groups to meet together to study God's Word.

### **Thursday 5th December**

#### **Outreach to Persians from Iran**

Persians from Iran travel across the border into Turkey and never more so than when they celebrate their New Year. They enjoy the comparative freedom there; they can literally let their hair down instead of wearing the mandatory headscarves for ladies. They are an Iranian ethnic group that make up over half the population of Iran. Virtually all are Muslims.

Since ancient times, springtime heralds the start of their New Year. They have many interesting traditions, like jumping over bonfires, while saying:

"Give me your redness (energy) and take away my yellowness (sickness)"

This time of year particularly is a fantastic opportunity for sharing the Good News with them. During these weeks, the shopping centres and streets are filled with thousands of Iranians. When greeted by someone who speaks their language and wants to share about Jesus, many are willing to listen, take a New Testament and agree to read it and pray for God to reveal Himself to them.

Let's worship and sing Spirit Move by Kalley Heiligenthal [here](#). As you sing this song, ask for a greater measure of His Spirit to be poured out in the hearts of Persians who visit Turkey.

- Pray for the thousands of Persians who hear the gospel message and receive tracts or New Testaments; that the Father will reveal Himself powerfully to each of them and they will share this message with their local communities.
- Instead of asking for the fire's redness, pray for Persians to experience the fire of the Holy Spirit at work in their hearts, leading them to call on the red blood of Jesus that was shed for them!
- Pray like Jesus did when he was choosing who to pour his life into, that these Muslims would have open hearts and be ready to receive to the Word like the seed that fell on fertile soil.

## **Friday 6th December**

### **Short-term trip to Turkey**

A couple of Frontiers workers from the UK recently went on a week's short-term trip to Turkey to meet and encourage local believers and to prayer-walk in various towns and villages. They shared the following story about a family of local believers in Turkey:

"A couple and their children live in a remote village on a farm in the middle of Turkey. The wife and mother is a strong believer and although her husband is a believer, he is less devout in his faith. For the last 20 years she has been boldly sharing about Jesus in her Muslim community and the surrounding villages, but has seen little fruit. She believes there is a harvest waiting in these villages, but is unable to visit to start fellowships as she does not have any suitable transport and cannot afford to buy a car.

Her heart is to see churches planted in the villages around her. God has blessed her family with an apartment in a larger neighbouring town, which she travels to by tractor. They use this to study the word with local seekers. They are doing this in the midst of persecution and threats from people in the town. Our Frontiers workers went through a Discovery Bible Study with her, as a way of teaching other seekers and believers, who could then take the gospel message to others in their own villages. Shortly after they left, she contacted our Frontiers workers to say she had followed the Bible study in a meeting with local people and they were greatly blessed.

She continues to pray for all those in her community and the surrounding villages. She walks by faith and not by sight. She has a vision in the spiritual, while not yet seeing it in the natural."

If you feel God has led you to bless this lady so she can buy a car to travel to other believers to encourage and disciple them, please contact [partners@frontiers.org.uk](mailto:partners@frontiers.org.uk) and mention that your donation is for the 'Y Car Fund'.

- Let's pray for this woman of God, for her faithful prayers and persistence over many years in spite of little obvious fruit, as she labours to see the Kingdom of God come to Turkey and her people.
- Pray that those who attended the Bible Study meeting will catch the vision and bring the gospel message to their own villages and churches will be planted there.
- Pray for protection over this family and all local believers and for the provision of suitable transport so they can visit and start fellowships in the surrounding villages.

## **Saturday 7th December**

### **Recent Prayer gathering in Turkey**

A recent prayer gathering in Turkey in October was one that was believed to be highly significant in the spiritual history of Turkey.

It was called 'Meeting Point Gathering' and brought together leaders from the local and global church and local cross-cultural workers. The Church in Turkey is maturing, leadership is shifting from being more foreigner-led to more Turkish-led and local pastors want to share the vision the Lord has given them for their own nation. They sensed that this gathering would not only be a meeting point but a turning point in the spiritual history of the church there.

This gathering was a time to allow the Lord to speak to those who serve there or desired to partner/serve there, and create space for partnerships that the Lord wanted to establish for his kingdom advancement in this nation.

If you sense the Lord has put a burden on your heart to pray for Turkey, there are different websites you can visit to give you fuel for prayer. These include: <https://www.pray4turkey.net/>; <http://www.the1881project.org/> and <https://besbin.net/>

- Pray that they all those who attended the Meeting Point Gathering would know that that God has already equipped them to step out in fearless obedience.
- Pray that those partnerships that were established and sent out have vision and clarity and they will walk closely with the Lord in unity. Pray for all involved to be refreshed, emboldened, strengthened, protected and encouraged.
- Pray they will perform miracles such that those who are wavering between two opinions see the power of God demonstrated and choose to believe that "The Lord – he is God."
- Let's ask that this gathering would be a turning point in the spiritual history of Turkey.