

Week 1: Pray for Hyeun-soo Lim (North Korea)



Arrest and Sentence On 16 December 2015, North Korea's Supreme Court sentenced Hyeun-soo Lim (60) to life in prison with hard labour. A Canadian citizen who emigrated from South Korea in 1986, he was convicted of numerous charges including attempting to overthrow the government. He travelled to North Korea on a humanitarian mission in January 2015, and had been detained since his arrest in February 2015.

Hyeun-soo Lim is a pastor at the 3,000-member Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto. He stepped down from his role as head minister to devote himself to humanitarian work in North Korea, distributing aid to nursing homes, day-care centres and orphanages, and running businesses to raise profits for aid projects. He has made more than 100 visits to North Korea.

On 30 January 2015, Pastor Lim went to North Korea on a routine visit to aid projects established by his church in the northeastern city of Rajin, including an orphanage, nursery and nursing home. His church lost contact with him, and later learned that he had been arrested and charged with trying to overthrow the North Korean government to establish a religious state. In July, he read out a public confession at a press conference – it is common for foreign detainees in North Korea to be forced to make public “confessions”.

Family Pastor Lim is married with a son in his 30s, but his family members are keeping in the background while a church spokeswoman makes statements on their behalf.

In early January, he was allowed to give an interview to CNN, in which he said, “I miss my family. I am longing to see them again... Family is a precious gift from God. I would like to tell my family I love them so much.” He said that he had received two letters from his family and snacks of dried fruit, his favourite.



Latest news from prison Since his trial in December, Pastor Lim has been held in a labour camp where he seems to be the only inmate. He told CNN that he works eight hours a day, six days a week, with rest breaks, digging holes for planting apple trees in the prison orchard. He said he receives regular medical care and three meals a day. Pastor Lim has asked officials for a Bible, but has not been given one. Two officials from Canada's embassy in Seoul were allowed to meet Pastor Lim in December and reported that he was in good spirits and health, and that he had received medication for an unspecified health condition. The Canadian government is reported to be making strong diplomatic efforts to secure his release.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would keep Pastor Lim safe and healthy and provide him with a Bible.
2. Pray that God would encourage his family and congregation, and bless the efforts of the Canadian government.
3. Pray for Pastor Lim to be released soon.