

Week 3: Pray for Saeed Abedini (Iran)

Arrest and Sentence Saeed Abedini (34), who has dual Iranian/American citizenship, was arrested by Revolutionary Guard soldiers in September 2012 while visiting Iran from his home in the US to manage the building of an orphanage. Saeed was put in Evin prison, and in January 2013 he was convicted of "threatening national security" by planting house churches and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. The government confiscated donations for the orphanage equivalent to €79,000.



Saeed was born into a Muslim family in Iran. Before becoming a Christian in 2000 he underwent training with Hezbollah to become a suicide bomber.

Following his conversion, Saeed established a network of house churches. He moved to the US in 2005 after questioning from police over his church activities. Saeed's health has been badly affected by the terrible prison conditions. He has been subjected to solitary confinement and severely injured by beatings. In August 2013 his appeal against his conviction was rejected, and in November 2013 he was moved to the very dangerous Rajai Shahr prison, where he faces threats to his life.



Family Saeed's wife Nagmeh was also born into a Muslim family in Iran. She moved to the US as a child, obtained US citizenship and became a Christian. Nagmeh met Saeed when she travelled to Iran to visit extended family. They married in 2004, moved to Boise, Idaho in 2005, and have two children, Rebekkah (8) and Jacob (6). Saeed, as the spouse of an American citizen, was granted citizenship.

Nagmeh is campaigning for Saeed's release in association with the American Center for Law and Justice, a law group based in Washington D.C. that uses litigation to press for freedom of religion and speech.

Latest news On 22 January Nagmeh and the children met President Obama, who told them that he is working hard to get Saeed home. Nagmeh was very encouraged and wrote, *"Praise God! We had great conversation... and he listed some next steps to take."*

Saeed's father, who lives in Iran, is able to visit him frequently and to give him family news and reports of many people praying for him. Saeed was encouraged to hear about President Obama meeting his family, and wrote a letter to thank him. At the most recent prison visit in mid-February, father and son were able to pray, worship and share from the Bible together (separated by a glass window) in a long visit which was not disturbed by guards. Saeed asked for prayer for his health, his nutrition and for clean water.

Prayer Points

1. Pray for God's protection on Saeed and for good relations with his fellow-prisoners.
2. Pray for Saeed's health, nutrition and for clean water and that he will be soon be released.
3. Pray for strength for Nagmeh as she campaigns for Saeed and also looks after Rebekkah and Jacob.