

Week 3: Pray for Choi Chun-gil (North Korea)



In December 2014 South Korean businessman and missionary Choi Chun-gil (65) travelled into North Korea from China, where he was involved in transporting religious and humanitarian goods for North Koreans. He was arrested and imprisoned on charges including spying for South Korea.

In March 2015 North Korea's state news agency KCNA announced Pastor Choi's arrest and described him and fellow-detainee Kim Kuk-gi, also a pastor and missionary, as "heinous terrorists" who operated from a base in the Chinese port city of Dandong near the border with North Korea.

In May 2015 the North Korean authorities presented Pastor Choi and Kim Kuk-gi at a press conference in Pyongyang attended by journalists and foreign diplomats at which the two men "confessed" that they had been paid large sums of money over several years to steal state secrets for South Korea. A month later the Supreme Court sentenced Pastor Choi to life imprisonment with hard labour for conspiracy to subvert the state, espionage, destruction and sabotage, and illegal border crossing. Since then he has been held incommunicado, with no family contact. Kim Kuk-gi was also sentenced to hard labour for life.

In November 2023 South Korea's Unification Ministry announced that the government would compensate families of Pastor Choi and five other citizens detained in North Korea, stating: "We hope that this will provide comfort and assistance to the families of detainees... The North has sentenced our people to severe punishments and refused to provide even minimal information on confirming the life or death of those who had helped the under-privileged in North Korea."

In December 2024, to mark ten years since Pastor Choi's arrest, the Unification Ministry called on North Korea to release the six detainees, stating: "*The Republic of Korea Government strongly urges the North, which is a party to major international human rights instruments, to immediately and unconditionally release our nationals who are illegally detained.*" It condemned North Korea for the sentencing of the six detainees without a fair and public trial; failure to provide basic procedural justice; and continued arbitrary detention.

Family

Information about Pastor Choi's family is not publicly available except for his son Choi Jin-young, who has travelled widely to appeal for international support for his father and five other South Koreans held in North Korea.

Latest News

In December 2024, South Korea called on North Korea to release the illegally detained Pastor Choi.

Prayer Diary

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| Sunday | Ask God to protect and sustain Pastor Choi in prison. |
| Monday | Pray for hope and a sense of God's presence. |
| Tuesday | Pray for good health and enough food for Pastor Choi. |
| Wednesday | Pray that Pastor Choi would be released soon. |
| Thursday | Pray for comfort and hope for Pastor Choi's family. |
| Friday | Ask God to change the hearts of North Korea's leaders. |
| Saturday | Pray for an end to persecution of North Korean Christians. |

