



**May 2018**

Dear faithful prayer supporters,

2018 has been a pretty significant year for Forte Torre. It has been seven years since the church began its public services, and recent times have seen noticeable numerical growth. The new faces are primarily students and young workers. A good few new youngsters are also coming along to our children's work - Torricine Domenica. Furthermore, we're (finally...) approaching the move into our new building (via Castiglione 65). In one recent evening, JP called the whole church to soberly 'take stock' of where we are: numerical growth, tangible encouragements, aspects to work on, shaping the future. Our latest prayer-letter picks up these themes.

### 1. Thankfulness for Growth amongst students.



In recent months we've held three joyful baptisms, amongst a mushrooming presence of students (Italian and Erasmus programme). Every Sunday we hold 'Palestra della fede' (Gym of faith), a student study expounding Romans, aimed at helping students in bible handling. A number are also learning to give talks regularly at our Wednesday clubs. Some are beginning to share more in church prayer, music and children's work; all reasons to give God praise! This said, our prayer is that new

regulars learn to live the 'mainstream disciplines' of church life: weekly church prayer times, helping in a regular ministry and financially supporting the work.

#### PRAY!

- With heartfelt thanks for new arrivals, with church attendance now between 50-60 people.
- Pray FT students would delight to read and grasp the word of God, especially through the ministry of PDF Romans, and that they in turn would read with others.
- Pray too that students would learn with us the 'disciplines' of Christian living: committing to regular prayer, a regular church ministry, and regularly financing the work (for giving to increase €500/month).

### 2. Targeting Growth at midweek groups



One major area of targeted growth is our midweek work. Currently the midweek work sees us stay together for bible study and prayer. In via Castiglione 65 more people can be present, thereby enabling more (four?) smaller bible study groups to form, led by others. The intention is always to train and involve other men in preaching through the year. It is an express aim of 'Applicazione' (the internship programme), which we hope will be able to flourish once we have our own premises!

#### PRAY!

- That more people would come to live church midweek.
- That 2-3 of Forte Torre's men would 'step up' to leading a small group regularly.

- That the church would be 'producing' faithful, godly, gifted Italian preachers, particularly among **S, D, G, G** and **G**. Pray such men will aspire to, and be eligible for eldership, particularly as the Internship programme develops.

### 3. Planning for Growth in responsibility, with inauguration of the building.

After what appear interminable delays, via Castiglione 65 is in the final (two?) months of completion. It'll be a fabulous resource. Working with many over the years has certainly helped us engage in Bologna! Using spaces fruitfully will require us to think wisely on how to best initiate new ministries. We'll have a welcome area/book shop open, as a regular contact point with the town. Two church members will be moving into the flat and will live alongside other residents. We have plans to begin each day in prayer for Forte Torre, Bologna and Italy!



#### PRAY!

- Pray for the right church members to assume new responsibilities: at the welcome-point, site maintenance and for wise structured planning, before we move in!
- Pray that contact with many builders and workman through these building years would not be lost.
- Pray for timings of the remaining works, with a September inauguration in view. Pray for remaining costs to reduce (currently £170,000, though project underwritten).

### 4. Being a model of church life for Growth across Italy.

We long for Forte Torre to be a model for other Italian churches, often fragile, unstructured and in 'survival' mode. We hope to do this by forming a culture which prizes faithful pastor-teacher ministry



(funded by the fellowship), by giving high value to biblical training (Applicazione), and by aspiring to be visibly present in key town centres (Via Castiglione 65). We want to reaffirm these values at the first national conference of 'The Gospel Coalition Italy' (30 April – 1 May), a fledgling movement in which JP is a founding member and Susan administrator.

More than 100 people are attending the conference and it will see the exposition of 2 Timothy, with a zeal to create a network of like-minded churches (accompanied by TGCi website).

As for Bible resources written in Italian, the Exodus commentary/guide is now also published!



#### PRAY:

- That the TGCI Conference, faithfully expounding 2 Timothy, may stimulate among a growing number of churches a passion for expository preaching and Reformed theology, in gospel-partnership with other churches, with an increased sense of working together for a credible witness to the nation.
- Pray that resources such as the Exodus commentary may be meaningful tools to current and future preachers, pastor-teachers and study group leaders.

Sending our love from Bologna and please DO send us your news of what is happening in your local churches - JP and Sue xx

#### PRAYER POINTS

- **Thankfulness for Growth amongst students** - Church attendance now between 50-60 people. Pray FT students would delight to read and grasp the Word of God, especially through the ministry of PDF in Romans.
- **Targeting Growth at midweek** - Pray more people would come to live church midweek and that 2-3 of Forte Torre's men would "step up" to leading regularly a small group
- **Growth in responsibility with inauguration of the building** - Pray for the right church members to assume responsibilities: at the welcome-point, site maintenance, initiating new ministries to reach the town and for wise structured planning, before we move in!
- **Growth for Italy** Pray FT would be a model of church life, especially at the imminent TGCi conference, in giving high value to funding word ministry and Bblcal training and being visible and present in key town centres... for a faithful and stable witness nationwide.

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