

ALGERIAN BELIEVERS ENCOURAGED TO REST IN THE LORD



In a world of constant change, new Algerian programme *Rest in the Lord* is inviting new believers into a discussion about the unchanging ways of God.

The table is set, the discussion has begun, and female viewers of *Rest in the Lord* are welcomed into the homeliest of atmospheres. Don't let the creative décor and plate of treats fool you, though; this isn't a tea party for small talk. The four female presenters waste no time delving into the Bible to explore some deep topics.

The first episode, aired this spring, focussed on the will of God. After a prayer, the presenters discussed the words of Jesus spoken to his Father, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven". After some discussion, one of the presenters named Sarah weighed in, "God's will is not known to us at all times. But God's will for us is to have a relationship with Him and know His word, to worship Him and seek Him."

Wisdom like this encourages Algerian viewers towards the Christ-shaped God of love in a part of the world where it is estimated that less than 0.5% of the population are Christians. Brave new believers often have to move away from an inherited family religion – and strong cultural expectations – to follow Jesus. On top of this, a wave of church closures swept through the country in the latter part of 2019, increasing pressure on Christians.

There may be national laws protecting the freedom of religious belief, but the actions of the government contradict this. Understanding the situation for Christians in Algeria helps to see why a programme like *Rest in the Lord* is so needed.

Presented in the dialect of Kabyle, spoken by about a quarter of Algerians, the programme is sure to light up the homes and hearts of new believers who are not able to practise their faith freely. ■



PRAY

Tuesday 1 Sep

Pray for new Algerian believers who need Christian input, that they will find and benefit from *Rest in the Lord*.

Wednesday 2 Sep

Pray that viewers of this programme will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18, NIV).

Thursday 3 Sep

Pray for the presenters of *Rest in the Lord*, that they will be filled with wisdom and love to share with viewers.

Friday 4 Sep

Pray for Algerian believers suffering as a result of church closures. Pray for an increase in their faith and hope.

Sat–Sun 5-6 Sep

Pray that Algerian Christians will find ways to gather together and "encourage one another and build each other up". (1 Thessalonians 5:11, NIV).

Monday 7 Sep

Pray that the Algerian government will hold up their own laws and allow freedom of religion and belief.

Tuesday 8 Sep

Thank God that He instituted rest at the beginning of Genesis, and still gives rest to His people now. "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9, NIV).

FATHER AND SON SHARE THEIR HEARTS WITH EACH OTHER AND IRAN



Sharing is caring, they say. In this case, it really is; Jalil Sepehr and his son Arvin are sharing their hearts with each other and Iran in a bid to benefit the future of church and culture in the region.

Joseph Hovsepian, producer of new series *Encounter of Generations*, which is broadcast by SAT-7 PARS, is passionate about the power of this new conversational programme. “This is a very special programme... it’s the first time a father and a son are sat together in such a beautiful setting. And in a very honest way they share their challenges and struggles.”

The idea of a generation gap is helpful in understanding why this show could have such a big influence. In many cultures, between one generation and the next, a sort of gap opens up. Societies change very quickly – even more so in recent times – and as they do, difference in opinions, expectations and values emerge between parents and their children. We have all heard (or uttered!) complaints that start with, “The children of today...” Animosity between parents and children can flare up in any family, but it seems extremely common in Iran.

Healing – or preventing – generational disharmony has the power to change the world, Arvin argues: “What’s happening here is indicative of what God is doing in our generation, in that, I know a lot of people who are not talking about changing the world, they’re talking about being good parents – and I think that’s going to change the world.”

Leaving no stone unturned, Jalil and Arvin cover topics such as marriage, employment, education, church, relationships, gender roles and sexuality. As they talk, they model something many viewers have probably never even witnessed before: forgiving, peaceful and loving dialogue between a father and a son.

Bridging the gap might require a lot of difficult conversations. *Encounter of Generations* shows that the process is absolutely worthwhile. ■



PRAY

Wednesday 9 Sep

Ask God to encourage Joseph Hovsepian, producer of *Encounter of Generations*. Pray that he will be bold and courageous in his desire to advance the Kingdom of God.

Thursday 10 Sep

Thank God for the friendship between Jalil Sepehr and his son Arvin, praying that it will continue and deepen.

Friday 11 Sep

Pray that the programme will inspire parents to be kinder to their children and build friendships with them.

Sat–Sun 12-13 Sep

Pray that *Encounter of Generations* will spark many important conversations among families in the Middle East.

Monday 14 Sep

Pray that the good parenting revolution, spoken about by Arvin, will sweep through Iran.

Tuesday 15 Sep

Thank God that we can come to Him as beloved children to a loving Father!

“Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’”

Galatians 4:6 (NIV).

HASHTAG HITS HOME FOR TEENAGERS

Vibrant new show *Hashtag* is reaching the hearts of teenage viewers all over the Persian-speaking world. Beautifully modern visuals and dynamic sounds decorate the programme as viewers are kept glued to the screen from start to the finish.



Consisting of many different segments including Bible Heroes, hacks and tricks, DIY and even science experiments, *Hashtag* is

entertaining and educating viewers between 10 and 16 years old. When it comes to analysing the show's impact, the proof is in the pudding, as presenter Parastoo explains.

"I was so encouraged by all the messages I received from our viewers," says Parastoo. "I love it when viewers call in and engage during the live broadcast, and it is wonderful to know that they really are learning more about God's Word and His love for them through *Hashtag*."

One 16-year-old girl from Afghanistan wrote in to say, "I have learned a lot through the Bible stories, and I have come to the conclusion that God is with us any time and place." A younger boy from Iran shared, "Through *Hashtag* I have learned to be kind and not to lie... I also learned to be joyful all the time, to study the Bible and to obey God. I like you so much!"

The challenge of keeping teenagers engaged with wholesome content is a big one. In a world of enthralling online content, much of which falls far short of wholesome, SAT-7 PARS is pumping out plenty of uplifting content to its 2 million viewers, half of whom are children and young adults aged under 25.

With sung worship opening and closing every programme, the *Hashtag* team do not shy away from the truth. Interestingly, it is not only Christian youth they are impacting. "[Sung prayer] is helpful especially for viewers who don't know how to pray or ask us to show them how to pray," says Parastoo. ■



PRAY

Wednesday 16 Sep

Thank God for the big impact of *Hashtag* on young viewers.

Thursday 17 Sep

Pray that even more young people will tune in to watch *Hashtag* so they can benefit from the show.

Friday 18 Sep

Pray for the presenter, Parastoo, to be encouraged in her faith and witness.

Sat–Sun 19-20 Sep

Ask God to fill the *Hashtag* singers with the Holy Spirit as they lead.

Monday 21 Sep

Pray for young people in the MENA who are addicted to consuming bad content on TV or social media. Ask God to help them get free of it and pursue positive activities.

Tuesday 22 Sep

Pray that the SAT-7 PARS team will love Christ even more deeply and seek to obey Him in everything they do this year.

"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

Jesus speaking in John 14:21 (NIV).

“I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE PEACE AND JOY THAT MY SISTER HAS”



The SAT-7 PARS viewer support team could not have been prepared for the amount of change that was to stem from one phone call.

Talita*, an Iranian woman, had been living with an angry husband and she was beset by extreme stress and anxiety. Her way of dealing with these feelings will be familiar to many of us: ring a family member and let it all out. Talita was having daily telephone conversations with both of her two sisters, who stood to benefit from these phone calls more than they could have ever imagined...

Talita started watching SAT-7 PARS programmes and became interested in the message of the Gospel. After getting in touch with the channel's viewer support team, she committed her life to Jesus!

Talita wasted no time in telling her family. After putting the phone down with SAT-7, she rang her two sisters and shared the Gospel with them! Amazingly, they were both very interested in Talita's message. Why? Because they had seen the transformation taking place in their sister.

Her extreme anxiety had been replaced by peace and tranquillity – a huge change – as she had claimed to have no peace at all before. It wasn't long before one of Talita's sisters called the SAT-7 team, saying, “I too would like to have the peace and joy that my sister has. Please help me.”

After the team explained God's plan of salvation, Talita's sister joyfully received the truth and readily committed her heart and life to the Lord. The other sister remains very interested, but she has said that she wants to do some research and find out more before committing herself.

“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” Romans 10:15 (NIV). ■

**Name changed and image used for representation purposes only.*



PRAY

Wednesday 23 Sep

Praise God for the transformation of Talita!

Thursday 24 Sep

Ask God to empower Talita through the Holy Spirit so she will speak to more people about her faith in Jesus.

Friday 25 Sep

Pray that God will strengthen Talita's sister who accepted the Gospel. Ask that she will grow in her faith.

Sat–Sun 26-27 Sep

Pray for the third sister, who is interested in the Gospel, to open her heart fully and receive what God wants to give her: new life!

Monday 28 Sep

Pray that more women in the MENA will be filled with peace in the midst of uncertainty.

Tuesday 29 Sep

Give thanks for SAT-7's viewer support teams who are available to speak to callers and help them in their faith journey.

Wednesday 30 Sep

Pray that you will be encouraged by Talita's story and inspired to share the Gospel with people you know.