

## James & Heather COCHRANE

### PORTUGAL

**Location:** Porto

**Mission:** Church Planting

On Sunday mornings we have been looking at the curious story of Jonah. The narrative finishes with God describing the Ninevites as people who cannot tell their right hand from their left and asks "Should I not be concerned about that great city?" (Jonah 4:11).

The end of June will mark six years since we moved from the Algarve to live in greater Porto, and our concern for this great city continues. We bump into people who are unable to discern who God is, because for them, the Bible is a closed book.

This came clear to us again during the 'Cinco Noites' evenings as Isabel (a women in her early fifties) told us that she accepted the Bible was important, but she never had the confidence to open it and read it. As we explained to her and another young man that the large numbers mark the chapters and the small numbers mark the verses, we were struck again about the sad results of the reformation never having reached Portugal. The 'Cinco Noites' format has been a great opportunity to build relationships, answer doubts and begin to make the Bible accessible to those who are interested but do not know how to read it.

We were also struck about the challenge this context is for the Brazilian Christians who continue to arrive.



Growing up in large, strong churches they are well versed with doctrine and theological jargon and so to cross the huge gap to the unchurched and biblical illiterate context of Portugal is a real challenge. The series of apologetic classes have offered an opportunity to show the need for a simple approach that does not assume biblical knowledge.



Tradição Interconfe | Jonas 4

Deus replicou a Jonas: «Achas que tens razão para te irritares assim, por causa da planta?» Jonas respondeu: «Acho que tenho razão e estou profundamente irritado.»<sup>10</sup> Então o SENHOR disse-lhe: «Tu tens pena duma planta que não fizeste crescer nem te deu trabalho nenhum, que cresceu numa noite e, antes da noite seguinte, murchou: **11 e eu não hei-de ter pena de Ninive, a grande cidade, onde vivem mais de cento e vinte mil pessoas, que não são capazes de distinguir entre a direita e a esquerda, e onde há ainda um**

*"Bíblia para todos" - Portuguese Bible.*

## Prayer Points

- Give thanks for Isabel, Irene, Paulo and Gabriel who have been attending all or some of the 'Cinco Noites' evenings.
- Pray that we would be able to follow up this course by setting up other 'Cinco Noites' groups among the contacts of our members.
- Pray that the members of Comunidade Pedras Vivas would understand and adapt to the unchurched and biblical illiterate context of Portugal.
- Give thanks that the Bible is widely available in Portuguese and pray for opportunities to read the Bible with people on a one to one basis.
- Pray for stamina for Lucy as she continues with IGCSE exams until 12 June.

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