

The Second Ashrama: *Grihastha*

Today is the Hindu festival of *Dhanteras* and the beginning of the five days of *Diwali*. *Dhan* means wealth, and *Teras* means thirteen, which is the date of the festival according to a common Hindu calendar. On this day, families will shop specifically for things made from metals, or make investments which are meant to secure future wealth. They will buy things as mundane as kitchen utensils as well as gold and silver and even appliances and automobiles. It is the biggest shopping day of the year for Hindus. It is believed that purchases on this day will bring blessing, wealth and security for the year ahead.

Today is also an opportunity to highlight some of the characteristics of the second *ashrama*. This life stage is called *Grihastha*, or the stage of the

householder. This stage is seen as full of enjoying the pleasures of life - possessions, food, family; but also as a stage of responsibility and carrying the burdens of a large, joint family. This stage features marriage, the aging of parents, the birth of children and the daily routine of work. For many it is marked by the absence of freedom, the heavy burden of responsibility to care for family, and obligations to the community. In this way, the stage of being a householder is often defined by pursuing wealth to provide for your family, as well as pursuing *Dharma* - your social obligations to society and to your faith.

*How can
we pray*

Pray for Hindu marriages, that they will be a place of safety and joy, and for couples to meet Christ together.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

Pray for Hindu joint families, and for effective ministry by believers to all parts of each family, from the youngest children to the elders.

1 TIMOTHY 5:4

Pray that God's great plan for families will be made even clearer as whole families turn to Him.

PSALM 103:17-18