

## Canada

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When young, single Venkat moved to his new country, he did not know of any others from Tamil Nadu in his new town. When Diwali came, he visited a nearby Hindu temple. Although he enjoyed the firecrackers and fireworks display, a quick walk through the temple confirmed that he was completely unfamiliar with the worship traditions there as the temple he visited was from a different Hindu tradition.

Later that year, during Christmas time, he wondered what exactly Christians did for this festival since his co-workers mostly talked about their vacation plans.

On Pongal in mid-January, one of Tamil Nadu's biggest festivals, Venkat worked as usual. In the evening, he cooked a few of the traditional rice dishes. As he ate alone in his apartment, he decided to ask his parents to look for a wife for him. Next year, he could celebrate Pongal with her.

Most festivals in the Hindu world involve a party atmosphere: having the day off, putting up decorations, wearing new clothes, eating special dishes, exchanging gifts or other tokens of appreciation, singing and dancing. Many festivals also have traditions highlighting certain relationships. For example, Nepali parents and elders bless their children during Dashain. Sisters and brothers show their love by exchanging bracelets during Raksha Bandhan.

For many Hindus, affirming these relationships is at the heart of these festivals. On their favourite holidays, many Hindu immigrants are painfully aware of the community they left behind.

Similar to the United States, Canada saw a large increase of Hindu immigrants after it changed its immigration policy in 1976. This has led to a growing Hindu community in Canada that will likely soon pass one million.



### HOW CAN WE PRAY?

Ask Jesus to give each Hindu immigrant at least two close friends who will help them experience more of God's love and grace.  
**(ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12)**

Pray for Christ-followers to invite Hindus to family celebrations and to ask about favourite festivals.  
**(COLOSSIANS 2:16-17 OR COLOSSIANS 3:17)**

Pray for churches and Christians to find ways to include Hindu immigrants in celebrations and find ways to welcome them around the times they will be missing home.  
**(ESTHER 9:22)**