Autumn 2026

Sandhya Shares From Her Life

ENGLISH VERSION

I was walking through the mall, looking at how Woolworth and KiK had started decking out their stores with Christmas décor sections. As the Christmas season approaches, I'm excited to start looking around, planning which decorations would be the cheapest and fit my balcony.

I paused to realise how much of a blessing it is to celebrate our Saviour's birth with all the festivities fit for a King!

Today, I wanted to talk about and show you what one of my Christmases looked like for me as a teenager in my liberal Hindu family. This is not a tale of a strict Hindu family, where persecution can be much, much more severe. I hope this encourages you to have a wonderful time with God this Christmas season.

24 December 2016 – Bangalore, India

I was back for my university vacation. I usually lived in Chennai, away from my family, and got to see them once every six months. But this time, my family had decided to go to my grandma's house in Bangalore to celebrate with the extended family.

Me: *(After trying to stay in my mum's good books the entire day)* Mum, would it be okay if I went to the all-night Christmas prayer meeting that Grandma, Uncle and the family are going to tonight?

Mum: Why did I think you were going to bring this topic up? *(Laughs)* Nooo…

Me: *(My eyes filling with tears)* But Mum, please. I have started going to temples, respecting every tradition, although that is not where my heart is, just so I could have this one night of prayer and a Christmas. Please, Mum. I don't get to go to church regularly either. I just want to celebrate this special day of my God's birth.

Mum: No, Sandhya. No means NO. You have been too obsessed with this Christianity stuff lately. Why can't you be a regular teenager like you used to be? I think you are too brainwashed, and I only see trouble for your future.

Me: *(Still crying, but a little angry)* Why do you want me to be a regular teenager? Would you like it if I brought home a boyfriend I wanted to marry, like other girls my age do?

Mum: *(Sarcastically)* I would be happier if you wanted a love marriage instead of an arranged marriage. I'm very prepared for the things kids do these days, and this would still mean you would have a regular life. The way you are obsessed makes me think you will become a nun.

Dad: *(Trying to intervene and calm the situation)* Beta, look, we don't forbid you to read the Bible or pray to this God. But just don't go too far and convert like them. Mum has a point, because too much of anything is only trouble.

Me: *(Now crying to my dad, as he was more likely to allow me than my mum)* Daddy, please… just this one night, Daddy. I will do all that you ask me to do from tomorrow. Please explain to Mum, Dad. Now she is very angry. Please, Daddy, just one night…

Dad: *(Trying to avoid giving in)* Okay, first go to sleep. Let's talk about it close to 10 p.m. or so.

I went downstairs to my grandma in the kitchen.

Me: Grandma, Daddy is very close to agreeing. I think I will go with you. Just wake me up, okay?

Grandma: No, beta. How can I do that? Your mum already accuses me of converting you. She will start a big fight with me.

Me: *(Crying profusely)* Grandma, please. It is a special day! It is to celebrate our Saviour's birth.

Grandma: *(Wiping my tears and consoling me)* Okay, sleep next to me. I can't wake you up, but I will make noises in the kitchen, like dropping a pan or something. You have to wake up and try to convince your parents again.

Me: Okay, Grandma! Let's do that!

I lay down next to Grandma, praying in my heart:

"Lord! I'm the girl who doesn't wake up after five alarms. How am I going to wake up to the sound of a utensil in the kitchen? Lord, now all is in Your hands! If You want Your daughter in Your presence, You have to wake me up!"

I quietly went to sleep, praying.

When the time came…

My grandma got up and went to the kitchen. She was stirring her coffee and dropped a spoon with a loud clatter.

I sprang out of bed!

Praise the Lord, who woke me up to the sound of a spoon!

Just as my grandma was about to drop a pot, I ran to her and said, “Grandma! I’m up! I’m up!”

Grandma: Good! Go talk to your dad. Maybe he will allow you to go.

I went to my parents’ room. They were awake, and I was in tears again.

Me: Dad, please, just this one day. After this, I won’t get to go to church again for a long time. Please…

Mum: *(Yelling at my grandma)* Did you wake her up? Everything is your fault. I should have nipped it in the bud.

I cried even harder at all this.

Dad: *(Convinced at this point, speaking to my mum)* Okay, let her go this one time. From next time, we won’t allow this.

Mum: Get lost! Don’t come calling me again. I don’t want to look at you.

Excited, I ran to my grandma.

“Okay, Grandma, I’m ready too!”

We got into an auto-rickshaw and went to the stadium, where the church was holding an all-night Christmas prayer meeting until sunrise!

And this is the story of our good, great God allowing His teenage daughter to have a whole night of prayer leading into Christmas Day—waking a sound sleeper to the sound of a dropped spoon.

If you want to know more about how I came to serve at Wycliffe, or are curious to read more of my stories, feel free to reach out to me.