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# Deaf Worship in Sign Language Opens Gospel Doors in the Middle East

*A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.*

**KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY**

*"I just love worshiping in sign language because it's a full-body experience,"*

*(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)*

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

## The Story - Part One

A hearing missionary who could not help signing along to a worship song in his own living room has opened a door to the gospel among Deaf people in the Middle East, the International Mission Board reported on 12 November 2026. Noah Lewis - a name changed for his security - was sitting at home with his roommate and two Deaf friends while dinner was being prepared, when a worship song came on and his hands started moving in American Sign Language before he had even thought about it.

Across the room, a Muslim friend was watching. He did not look away. He called the signing beautiful and asked to see another song.

In that moment, a living room, a dinner half cooked and a song nobody had planned became a conversation about why Christians worship Jesus. Nobody had preached a sermon; the worship itself had done the preaching.

### Noah Lewis IMB Missionary: Worship In Sign Language Is A Full-Body Experience

"I just love worshiping in sign language because it's a full-body experience," Lewis said. He is hearing, and the hands that signed along that evening belong to a man who has spent nearly a year and a half in the Middle East learning sign language and building friendships in the local Deaf community. He did not arrive with a programme, only a long-term desire to serve, first shaped by a pull toward Central Asia, and he has spent his time since then learning a language most people around him never bother to learn.

There are no comparable sign-language centres where he serves. No classrooms, no evening courses, no textbooks to take home. Most of his learning has happened the slow way, through relationships with Deaf friends who correct him, laugh with him and teach him the signs that matter in daily life.

Simply opening his home, he has found, has created his most fruitful gospel conversations.

That evening shows why it works. A spoken sermon can be argued with, but a signed song, offered without a word, has to be watched.

Watching it asks a question the watcher must answer for himself. His Muslim friend answered it by asking for more - and the question behind the request, why do you worship like this, is the one every missionary hopes to hear. The same hunger to be seen and included has moved churches closer to home too, as shown by an exhibition celebrating Deaf and disabled church leaders, as reported in Called As We Are Exhibition at St Albans Cathedral Celebrates Disabled Church Leaders November 2026.

## The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

### PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

## READ THE FULL STORY

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