

WHAT IS FAITH  
REALLY WORTH?

# *The Cost*

THE MAG FROM  
UNDERGROUND SOUTHERN AFRICA

## Blackout

### Mini Guide

Spend 48 hours offline for  
silenced, persecuted Christians.  
Could you stay quiet?

November 2017



[WWW.OPENDOORS.ORG.ZA](http://WWW.OPENDOORS.ORG.ZA)



[FB.COM/UNDERGROUND-SA](https://FB.COM/UNDERGROUND-SA)



[@UNDERGROUND\\_SA](https://@UNDERGROUND_SA)

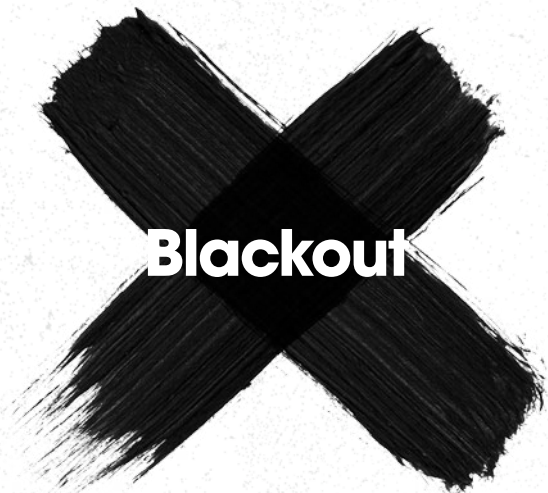


**No Instagram.  
No Snapchat.  
No FaceTime.  
No gaming.  
No Facebook.  
No phone.  
No Internet.**

**48 hours offline.**

**Complete  
digital blackout.**

**Could you  
cope?**



### **What?**

BLACKOUT is a sponsored 48-hour digital fast for persecuted Christians. That means a whole weekend without your phone, the Internet, social networking or anything else involving the web.

### **Why?**

Around the world, persecuted Christians have no voice. Millions are persecuted, threatened, beaten, arrested, tortured and some even killed for their choice to follow Jesus. They're being silenced. By getting sponsored to go quiet online, you'll raise money for change and use the time you're not spending on your phone in prayer, making a massive noise before God for our persecuted family.

### **When?**

BLACKOUT 2017 is taking place in November from 7pm on any Friday to 7pm on the Sunday (but if the days don't suit you, you can do BLACKOUT whenever you like)!

### **Let us know you're taking part**

Send an email to [undergroundsa@od.org](mailto:undergroundsa@od.org) or let us know via Facebook or Twitter.

# How to BLACKOUT

## 1. Fast

BLACKOUT is about giving up your tech and going quiet online for a whole weekend. It's about understanding what it is to not have the freedom to talk and share our lives openly, like many persecuted Christians around the world.

But it's more than that too. If we're honest, we're addicted to our phones. We depend on them to feed our cravings constantly throughout the day. So we'll give them up to refocus and put our attention back where it belongs with God, the Almighty Creator and loving Father.

This is about connection, both with our persecuted family and with God. Two days of limiting our freedom to stand alongside persecuted Christians. Two days without the constant distraction of our phones to refocus and seek Him.

## 2. Pray

BLACKOUT is about going silent online so we can make a massive noise in prayer before God. As you'll read over the next few pages, persecuted Christians need our prayers. They need us to seek God with them – to ask for healing, boldness, courage, perseverance and change. As Brother Andrew, the founder of Open Doors says:

**“Our prayers can go where we cannot... there are no borders, no prison walls, no doors that are closed to us when we pray...”**

Use the stories in this little booklet to guide your prayers.

## 3. Raise

Prayer and action go together. That's why we want you to get sponsored and help raise money and awareness so the persecuted Church around the world can keep shining the light and hope of God's love. As you gather sponsors, ask people to sign the *One Million Voices of Hope* petition that urges the UN to protect the rights and future of Christians in the Middle East. Visit [www.opendoors.org.za/hope](http://www.opendoors.org.za/hope) to add your name and download the petition form.

## Set a target

BLACKOUT is a sponsored digital fast. That means you can raise money to help persecuted Christians by taking on the challenge of a weekend off the web. Set a target and see what your efforts can achieve. Here are a few examples:

**R75** can provide one isolated Christian with a digital Bible. Digital Bibles aren't just faster to deliver and safer than distributing printed copies, there's also less of a chance of believers being discovered with Scriptures and Christian literature.

**R125** can provide one Christian with their first-ever Bible. Many Christian families who used to live on Iraq's Nineveh Plains lost all their belongings – including their Christian literature – when they had to flee IS in 2014. *“Through these books I understand who Jesus is,”* says 15-year-old Fadia. Yet many believers around the world are still waiting for their very first Bible!

**R750** can provide 10 Christians with digital Bibles and Christian literature. *“Thank you for the audio Bible,”* exclaimed a new believer in a strict Muslim country in Southeast Asia. *“We love listening to it!”*



# Alone or in a group?

BLACKOUT is pretty simple. You just need to give up the Internet and any Internet-connected tech for a weekend. Then you pray. You can do that on your lonesome, or in a group.

## Alone

If you're doing BLACKOUT on your own, make sure you download our latest World Watch Map at:  
**[www.opendoors.org.za/blackout](http://www.opendoors.org.za/blackout)**

Stick it up along with the stories in this guide and turn your bedroom wall into a mini prayer space!

## In a Group

Go big! Set up a prayer room, run a service or gathering and make a massive noise together in prayer.

# Before you BLACKOUT

## Tell people and get sponsored

Get the word out and tell people what you're doing. Plus, don't forget to get sponsored. Visit [www.opendoors.org.za/blackout](http://www.opendoors.org.za/blackout) to download your sponsorship form.

## Seal away

Just before you begin your BLACKOUT, grab your phone, tablet, laptop, Xbox or any other Internet-connected device that might tempt you and stick them in a cupboard or put them in a box. Seal them away, and stick a note on the door or box to say, "Don't open until 7pm Sunday!"

# BLACKOUT RULES

1. BLACKOUT lasts from 7pm Friday to 7pm Sunday\*.
2. During that time, you'll have no access to any Internet-connected device. This includes phones, laptops, tablets, TV's and gaming consoles\*\*.
3. No online streaming of music, no access to online gaming, TV, social feeds or anything else that you'd do online. This is about disconnecting.

## That's pretty much it.

\*You can, of course, do BLACKOUT for a longer, or shorter period. Some groups have done 24 hours, while other hardcore individuals have done a full week!

\*\*Please use your common sense. If you're in an emergency, use your phone. If you have to do homework, study or work, get online – but only for those reasons (no entertainment).





# During your BLACKOUT

Use these simple stories and prayers to help you focus on our persecuted family during BLACKOUT.

## BURNT

**Noeh is 12. He's from a town in Iraq called Karamles. Like many people that once lived there, his family are Christians. Back in 2014, the so-called Islamic State (IS), a violent extremist group, invaded his town. Everyone fled.**

Since then, Noeh and his family have lived in a city called Erbil, it's in a safer part of northern Iraq. They're displaced, receiving all kinds of help from Open Doors partners.

Towards the end of 2016, IS retreated and left Karamles. But Noeh and his family can't go home. IS soldiers set fire to his house. Nearly 450 homes in the town were burnt, 100 or so were destroyed.

Noeh's house is still standing. He can walk around the charred remains of his bedroom. He even found some of his old marbles that survived the fire. But for now, for Noeh, and many others from Karamles, the journey home is just beginning.

## PRAY

Pray for Noeh and his family as they think about rebuilding their lives and returning to Karamles. Pray that help would come enabling the rebuilding process to begin. Pray for a future of peace and security for all people in Iraq.

# STONES

**Simon is just 5. He's from Algeria, a Muslim country in North Africa. He's from a Christian family, which makes him and his parents stand out from the rest of the community.**

In fact, they don't just stand out, they're targets. People don't like the fact that Simon's family have chosen to follow Jesus. And they are keen to let even the little five-year-old know.

Often trips out of the house are cut short. Just recently Simon's dad hoped to take his son out for an ice cream. But a group of locals saw them and started throwing stones at them. This wasn't the first time this had happened. Nothing hit them, but they quickly headed back home.

Safely back in their house, Simon asked his Dad "Why do people throw stones at us, why don't people like us?" His Dad replied *"Simon, we are different because we serve the Lord, we follow Jesus...they don't accept people being different..."* Simon's Mom came to comfort her son. She promised him an ice cream the next day, and then they prayed for their attackers.

## PRAY

Pray for Simon and his family. Ask for protection, safety and courage. Pray that Simon will grow up with a strong faith, despite the attacks.

# BOMB

**Christians across the Middle East are facing all kinds of pressures, from intimidation and threats to the effects and consequences of living in a war zone.**

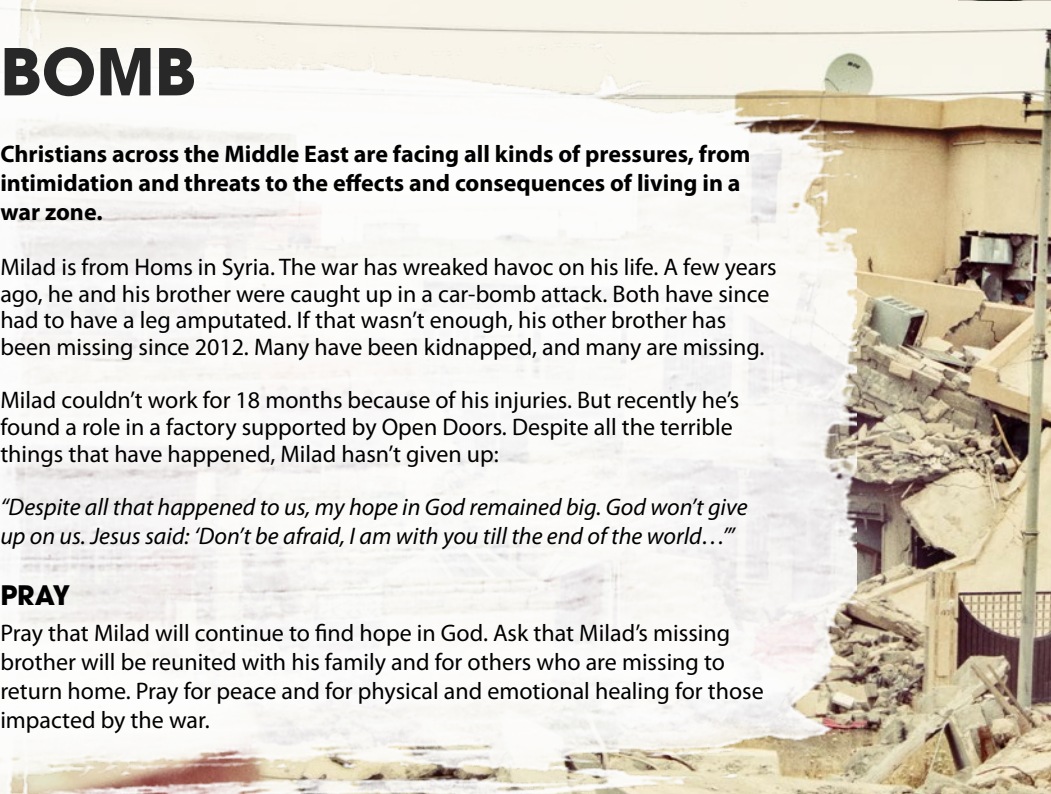
Milad is from Homs in Syria. The war has wreaked havoc on his life. A few years ago, he and his brother were caught up in a car-bomb attack. Both have since had to have a leg amputated. If that wasn't enough, his other brother has been missing since 2012. Many have been kidnapped, and many are missing.

Milad couldn't work for 18 months because of his injuries. But recently he's found a role in a factory supported by Open Doors. Despite all the terrible things that have happened, Milad hasn't given up:

*"Despite all that happened to us, my hope in God remained big. God won't give up on us. Jesus said: 'Don't be afraid, I am with you till the end of the world...'"*

## PRAY

Pray that Milad will continue to find hope in God. Ask that Milad's missing brother will be reunited with his family and for others who are missing to return home. Pray for peace and for physical and emotional healing for those impacted by the war.





# LASHES

**Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is one of the most significant rituals in Christianity. It's a time when we eat bread and drink wine to remember Jesus' death and resurrection. It's when we come back to the fact that God's love is so big that nothing can condemn us. It's about starting afresh and understanding His amazing grace.**

But for some, the celebration of the Lord's Supper isn't so simple. In Iran, three Christian converts from Muslim backgrounds, Yaser, Saheb and Mohammad, were arrested and sentenced to 80 lashes for drinking wine during a communion service. Alcohol is outlawed in Iran, but Christians are allowed to drink wine as part of the communion ritual. Their arrest and the charges against them show that the Iranian government doesn't want people to be able to change their religion, which is a fundamental human right. The three have appealed the charges and are still awaiting the judge's decision.

## ACT AND PRAY

Share communion with your friends or youth group. As you take the wine/juice and eat the bread, pray for Yaser, Saheb and Mohammad. Pray for their release and for boldness, courage and strength for Christians across Iran.



# After the BLACKOUT

## Reflect

How was it? A whole weekend without the Internet. Did you survive? What did you learn, enjoy, find difficult? Were there any stories that challenged you? Did God speak to you?

## Collect sponsorship

Collect all your sponsorship money. Don't leave it too long and make sure you thank the people who supported you. You might even get a chance to explain what you did at your church or your youth group!

## Tell us

We'd love to know what you did, what you learnt and get any feedback from you. Connect with us at [undergroundsa@od.org](mailto:undergroundsa@od.org), Facebook or Twitter. Plus, you'll need to send us the money you raised. Deposit the money you have collected into our bank account (details below) and use as your reference BO17.

Bank Accounts:

**Open Doors, ABSA, Northcliff (632005),  
Acc. nr. 160340568**

**Open Doors, Nedbank Business  
Account (198765), Acc. nr. 113 750 4552**

## Get back online

Make a massive noise online about what you did and why. Share your story and those of the persecuted Christians you were praying for. Make sure you follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for up to date news and more.

Find us at:



[underground\\_sa](https://www.facebook.com/underground_sa)