

Open Doors
YOUTH

WHAT IS FAITH
REALLY WORTH?

The Cost

THE YOUTH MAG FROM
OPEN DOORS SOUTHERN AFRICA



Blackout

A sponsored 48-hour digital fast
for persecuted Christians



WWW.OPENDOORS.ORG.ZA



OPEN DOORS SOUTH AFRICA



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BLACKOUT is a sponsored 48-hour digital fast for persecuted Christians. By putting away your phones and going offline, we want you to pray and raise money by spending a whole weekend without your phone, the internet, social networking or anything involving the web.

If we're honest, most of us don't know where to begin when praying for people on the other side of the globe. But when we hear people's stories, see their faces and understand that they're just like us, we connect. And when we connect, prayer becomes easier.

This edition of *The Cost* will help give you creative ideas on how to fill your internet free weekend with passionate and focussed prayer.

But, we also want you to speak out and spread the word. Whether you pray on your own, in a group or even as part of a bigger gathering, make it your mission to share the needs and requests of our persecuted family. Share what you're doing and why it's important that we pray for those who share our faith but not our freedom.

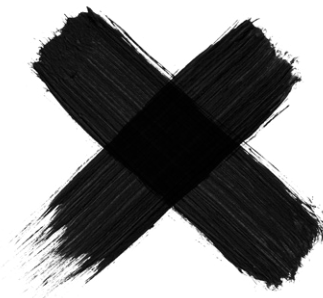
Along with the prayer ideas, we've also included some info on getting sponsorship for your digital fast. Why sponsorship? When you get sponsored, you'll help raise money for Christians in Syria who've fled horrific persecution and are still homeless, needing food, medicine, shelter etc.

Tennessee Williams said, *"Silence about a thing just magnifies it..."* So join us... put away your phone and tech and spend time making a massive noise in prayer before God for our persecuted family!

Until next time,

Natasja B

Open Doors Youth Coordinator



Blackout rules

1.

BLACKOUT lasts from 19:00 on any Friday in November to 19:00 the 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 streaming music, playing games online, accessing TV, social feeds or anything else that you would 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 a 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, then get online, but only for those reasons (no entertainment!)



What is BLACKOUT?

BLACKOUT is a sponsored challenge to give up all things digital for a whole weekend. Could you stay off Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp and anything else you do online for 48 hours? It's a total online BLACKOUT. You'll be cut off, silenced, with no voice on, or access to, social media. Are you up for it?

Why?

Around the world, millions of Christians have no voice – globally over 200 million Christians face high levels of persecution for choosing to follow Jesus. They're silenced, threatened, forced to flee and live on the run. Many suffer or die for their faith. But, when one part suffers, we all suffer. Their story is our story. We're family. We won't be hushed up. We'll stand up for the silenced.

So, we want you to go silent online to draw attention to Christians who face persecution and spend time making a massive noise for persecuted Christians through prayer.

Raising money

BLACKOUT is firstly about prayer. But it's also an opportunity to raise money to help persecuted Christians by getting sponsored to go offline. Do you, your parents or even your friends doubt your ability to stay off your phone or tablet for 48 hours? Well, make it interesting... Get THEM to sponsor your fast! Visit www.opendoors.org.za/blackout to download your sponsorship form.

All the money you raise will help Christians in Syria who need support after fleeing horrific persecution and war. Set a fundraising target and see what your efforts could help achieve.

Here are a few examples:

R250 could help provide emergency relief for one family in Syria for a month. This could include food, clothing, medicines, shelter and heating during the freezing winter.

R500 could help provide trauma counselling for one Syrian refugee traumatised by years of war.

R1 000 could help provide training to assist one person to open a small business in Syria, providing a sustainable future for a family.

Prayer spaces

Whether you're doing BLACKOUT on your own, with a few friends or even your whole youth group, it's worth thinking about setting up a dedicated prayer space. This could be a bedroom, an empty garden shed, garage or a room in your church or school.

Get people to sign up for slots in the prayer room – see if you can cover the whole 48 hours of your BLACKOUT weekend with prayer for persecuted Christians around the world.

Once you've got your venue, read through the following ideas and get creative with your space. Make your times of prayer fun, interactive and varied – don't always pray in the same way. Mix it up... Pray in silence, pray while drawing or sketching, read Bible scriptures or an inspiring Christian book, go for a prayer walk or sing aloud some worship songs to God!

Things you might need for your space

- Bibles
- Pens, crayons and paper
- Tape to hang up any creations
- Maps of the world (visit www.opendoors.org.za/blackout to download our 2018 World Watch List Map)
- Music player (remember, no streaming music!)
- A recent newspaper
- Some books on persecution e.g. "The Insanity of God" or "God's Smuggler etc. (visit our web shop at www.opendoors.org.za/shop for more information)



Images from 24/7 Prayer Instagram

Prayer space ideas

Blackout

Many Christians around the world must hide their faith. In some countries, there are no legal churches, so Christians meet in secret – in cellars, dark rooms or behind closed doors. Imagine your prayer space is a secret and hidden. Make it as dark as possible to block out any light. Get some candles, tea lights or fairy lights to brighten up areas of the room so you can draw, read or get creative on the walls. Connect with the stories of those who are living out their faith in secret, or in prison and put yourself in their shoes for a few hours (visit www.opendoors.org.za for stories). Focus your prayers on them.

Family tree

Find a real tree outside or draw one on a big piece of paper as part of your prayer wall. Invite people to write the names of their families and friends on pieces of paper or gift tags. Encourage them to also write the names of countries where our persecuted family live. Then ask people to pray for the people/countries on the tags as they stick it on the tree.

Kingdom come

Put maps, globes and newspapers in the room and encourage people to pray Matthew 6:9-13, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done..." over specific countries. Make sure you visit www.opendoors.org.za to get up to date information to help you pray for each country!



NB! Make sure you check out the Pete Greig series on prayer to help you pray more effectively and passionately. You can find the Blackout 2018 playlist on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/opendoorssouthafrica. Take a look before you start your BLACKOUT weekend!

Prayer story



Noeh | Iraq

Noeh, a Christian from Karamles in Iraq, is now 14. Back in 2014, everyone fled the town after the so-called Islamic State (IS), a violent Muslim extremist group, invaded it.

In 2016, when IS was driven out of Iraq, they destroyed nearly 450 homes, including Noeh's home. His house was still standing, but everything inside was destroyed. Noeh said: "After the liberation in October, we found out that IS had burned our house. I was very sad when I saw it..."

But Noeh was determined: "I do want to return, this is our land... After three years, Noeh's family have finally been able to return to their redecorated house in Karamles, thanks to Open Doors partners. Now he is back at school, but there's a way to go until life is back to normal for everyone. There aren't enough teachers to cover all the lessons, and basic services like water and electricity are unreliable. But there's always hope... the Christian town is coming back to life and the church community is being revived."

A prayer for those who have lost homes and possessions

Lord God,

We pray for those who've suffered loss because they're Christian; those whose houses have been destroyed, whose possessions have been taken, whose land has been stolen, whose churches have been burned or bombed. Bring comfort, Lord, we pray and provide for their needs.

We pray also for those who've suffered the loss of childhood, innocence and hope. Pour peace into their hearts and heal them from any painful memories.

Make us, Lord, restorers, repairers, rebuilders so we can freely help them from our abundance, which You have given so freely to us. Amen.

Leah | Nigeria

Leah along with over 100 other girls were kidnapped from their school in Dapchi, Nigeria earlier this year by Boko Haram, a Muslim extremist group (four years ago they also took over 200 girls from a school in Chibok, Nigeria). Two days later, most of the girls were released. But not Leah...

Leah's mother, Rebecca, told local media what Leah's friends told her...

"They were boarding the truck that was bringing them back. Boko Haram said she should convert. Her friends tried to sway her, but she said she will not convert to Islam. They said since she will not convert, she should stay behind. She is alone..."

Leah asked her friends to pray for her and to give her mother a message:

"Mom, you shouldn't be worried. I know it's not easy missing me, but I want to assure you that I'm fine where I am. My God, whom we've been praying to, is showing Himself mighty in my trying moment. I [remember] your words to me during our morning prayers that God is very close to people in pain. I'm seeing this now. I'm confident that I shall see you again. If not here, then there at the bosom of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

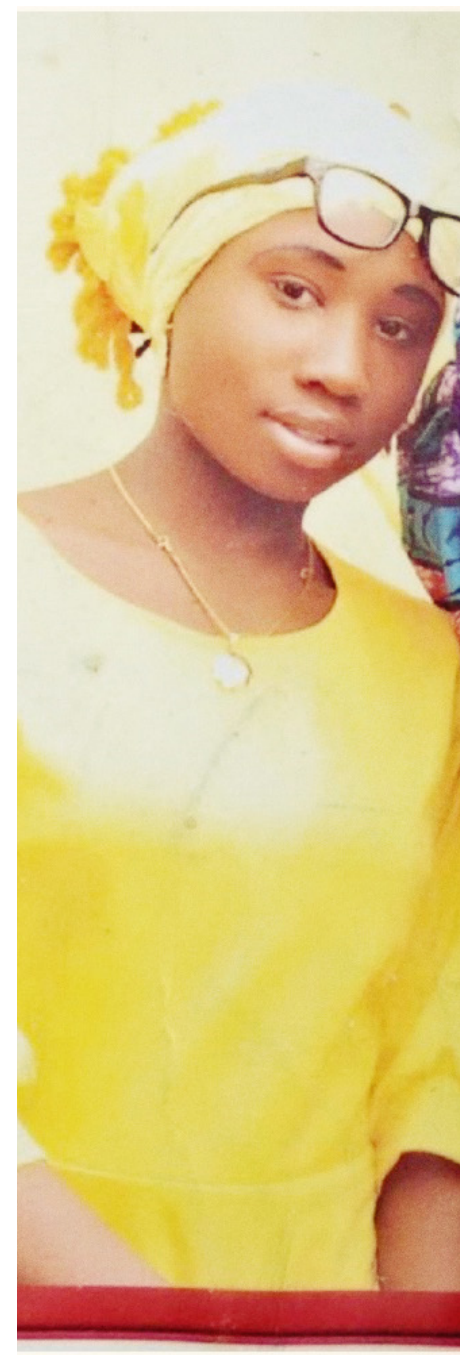
A prayer for the powerless

Lord God,

We pray for those who feel powerless and weak, those running on empty, the exhausted and the scared, who feel they've nothing left...

Fill them with Your power: give strength to those who have no strength left, hope to those who feel hopeless, victory to those who feel that everything is lost.

Be present, Lord, in such a powerful way, that their sorrow will turn to joy. So that they can rise like eagles and shine like stars for You. Amen.



After the BLACKOUT

Reflect

How was it? A whole weekend without the internet. Did you survive? What did you learn or enjoy? What did you find challenging? 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 in your church or at your youth group.

Deposit the money you have collected into our bank account (details below) and use as your reference, BO18.

Bank Accounts

Open Doors, ABSA, Northcliff (632005),
Account number: 160340568

Open Doors, Nedbank Business Account
(198765), Account number: 113 750 4552

Tell us

We'd love to know what you did, what you learnt as well as any other feedback. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

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. When posting about your Blackout weekend on social media use the hashtag #Blackout2018.

Just the beginning

We hope you've been inspired by the courage and determination of our persecuted family. Stay connected with Open Doors for more ways to pray, give and speak up for the persecuted Church.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for up to date news and more.



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted Christians worldwide



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