



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

WHY WE CARE ABOUT RAMADAN

In 1978 Brother Andrew wrote: “May I state here that in my opinion, the Muslim threat to the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ may, in one decade from now, be greater than the Communist threat has ever been.”

This year, the World Watch List, which lists the 50 most dangerous countries to follow Jesus, identifies over 30 countries where the main source of persecution is from Islamic oppression.

The word Islam triggers panic and fear in many Christians, but when we're honest, often we don't know much about their religion, worldview or lives.

To truly reach Muslims with the Gospel, we must first understand who they are and what they follow.



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What does Islam mean?

The word Islam means to submit. To be a follower of Islam, or a Muslim, is to submit to the will of god, known in Islam as Allah. The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam, written by Muhammad who is considered to be the 'ideal man' and final prophet. The Qur'an teaches that there is only one god, Allah.

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar during which Muslims fast and pray to get closer to Allah. Muslims believe that the first revelations of the Qur'an were made to Muhammad during Ramadan.

During Ramadan, Muslims often become more devoted and passionate towards their religion. As a result, extremist expressions of Islam become more violent. Persecution towards Christians living in Islamic countries intensifies during the month of Ramadan.

What Muslims believe about Jesus?

While Christians believe that Jesus is God, Muslims do not. Jesus appears 25 times in the Qur'an and is given special status, but He is only ever referred to as a prophet. The Qur'an states that Jesus never died on the cross but agrees that He will return to earth to usher in the end of time.

Believers from a Muslim Background

The number of Believers from a Muslim Background (BMBs) is growing. When Muslims convert to Christianity, they face intense persecution. The consequences of converting depends enormously on the country. Many are cast out by family and close friends, lose jobs, the benefits of citizenship, or are even killed. Nearly all BMBs must keep their Christian faith secret.

A Christian response to Ramadan

Over 1.8 billion people around the world identify as being Muslim. During Ramadan, Muslims are earnestly seeking to get closer to god. In Matthew 5:44, Christ commands us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us.

During Ramadan we are inviting Christians to not only pray for Christians who face persecution, but to pray that the 1.8 billion Muslims will find the one true God.

RAMADAN PRAYER CALENDAR

Praying for our persecuted brothers and sisters during Ramadan 2019

MAY 2019

5 | WORLDWIDE Today, millions of Muslims worldwide begin their month-long Ramadan fast. Pray that as Muslims seek to grow closer to Allah during this time that they will instead find Jesus who is the Truth, the Way, and the Life.

6 | MUSLIM WORLD Pray for recently converted Christians from a Muslim background this Ramadan. Pray that they will hold firm to the Lord amongst their fasting Muslim family and friends. May the Lord give them the wisdom to answer any questions about their non-participation in the fasting rituals.

7 | ASIA Pray that God will reassure Christian parents in Muslim Asia that He watches over their children, especially in countries where children are taught the Qur'an at school. Pray that these children will become and grow into followers of Christ.

8 | INDONESIA Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population. Pray that as they hunger and thirst to grow closer to Allah during Ramadan that instead, Christ will reveal Himself to them, filling their hunger and thirst with His truth.

9 | BRUNEI Restrictions are gradually being imposed on the whole population of Brunei. For instance, during Ramadan, all restaurants, including non-Muslim establishments, must close. Pray that God will undertake for Christians as they live out Christ in an increasingly hostile environment.

10 | SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES This month will mark two years since the battle-scarred city of Marawi was attacked by the Islamic State a few days before Ramadan began in 2017. Pray for good relationships between Christians and Muslims in Marawi, and for reconciliation and trust to be rebuilt between the different communities.


11 | MALDIVES In the Maldives, many desperate people turn to all sorts of destructive behaviour to find hope. Pray that during Ramadan, God will grant the very few Christians here wisdom and courage to reach out to these lost souls with the hope that we have in Christ.

12 | PAKISTAN A law, which prohibits the selling and consuming of food and drink during Ramadan, was introduced in Pakistan in 1981. Those caught breaking this law are fined or imprisoned for up to three months. Pray for strength for Christians who are forced to observe Ramadan against their will or beliefs.

13 | TURKMENISTAN Many Christians in Turkmenistan will endure yet another Ramadan during which they keep their faith secret from their Muslim families and communities. Pray that they will be able to connect to Jesus and will draw strength from Him. May they boldly share their faith if any opportunity arises.

14 | CENTRAL ASIA Pray for Christian believers, abandoned by their Muslim families. Pray that during Ramadan they will be able to meet with other Christians and find their true family in God's children.

Representative image used.



15 | BANGLADESH Pray for Believers from a Muslim Background who seek opportunities to reach out to their Muslim relatives and neighbours during Ramadan. Pray for the Lord's hand of protection to be over them as they often face increased persecution during this time.

16 | MIDDLE EAST During Ramadan, many Christians in the Middle East daily pray for their Muslim neighbours. Pray that their prayers will bear much fruit and for opportunities to share the Gospel with Muslims.

17 | PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES In the Palestinian Territories during Ramadan, it is socially unacceptable to consume food in public. During this time Christians must be extra careful. Pray for much wisdom and guidance for Christians in their daily conduct during this month.

18 | LEBANON Christians from a Muslim background in rural areas are frowned upon for refusing to participate in Ramadan. Pray for God's strength for Christians amidst the pressure they may face this Ramadan.

19 | ARABIAN PENINSULA In the Arabian Peninsula, for Christians, the Muslim month of fasting is a special time of prayer and reaching out to their Muslim neighbours with the Gospel. Pray that the Gospel seeds that will be planted will bear much fruit this year.

20 | UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Christians in the United Arab Emirates must live their lives in accordance with the Islamic law of the country. This includes not eating and drinking in public during Ramadan. Pray for greater acceptance in this country so that Christians will be allowed to practice their faith freely.



21 | KUWAIT Christians in Kuwait struggle to cope with the requirement to fast – imposed both by the government and the community. Pray for wisdom for believers from Muslim families who must be careful about expressing their faith publicly, especially during Ramadan.

22 | QATAR In Qatar, Ramadan affords Christians a special opportunity, despite them having to follow the Muslim fasting rules because they can organise extra worship and church services due to the shorter working hours. Pray that this time of fellowship will strengthen the Church in this Muslim majority country.

23 | SAUDI ARABIA Ramadan is a very challenging time for Christians as relatives keep an eye on each other to ensure all fasting rules are adhered to. Pray that Christians will focus on Christ and that they will be strengthened to endure when the pressure is at its greatest.

24 | OMAN In an attempt to please Allah, some Muslim children will copy by hand as many Qur'an passages as they can. Pray that God will do a mighty work in these children's lives – that their devotion in seeking to please Allah will draw them to the true, living God.

25 | AFRICA Christians in certain parts of Africa must keep their faith secret to avoid threats to their health, family or even lives. This means following the customs of their family in the month of Ramadan. Pray that their families will encounter Jesus through them, and that God will equip them with all they need to safely make it through Ramadan.

26 | TUNISIA Social pressure to observe Ramadan is felt throughout Tunisia. Non-Muslims need to respect the majority Muslim population in, for example, closing their restaurants during fasting. Many are upset about this. Pray for more leniency from the government towards non-Muslims who don't observe Ramadan.

27 | EGYPT While Ramadan is often difficult for Christians because of the increased persecution they experience, it is also a month in which they can show love to their Muslim neighbours. Pray that their Muslims neighbours will experience Christ through them as Christians visit and host breakfasts for them.

28 | MOROCCO Christians in Morocco still face considerable restrictions during Ramadan despite claims that there is religious freedom in the country. Pray that God will be with Christians this Ramadan and that He will reveal Himself to Muslims through His children.

29 | ALGERIA Pray for Believers from a Muslim Background who recently became Christians. Pray that God will give them grace and wisdom in their interactions with their Muslim families and community who become more devout during this month and may try to get them to return to Islam.

30 | SOMALIA In Somalia, the culture-shaping force of Islam is even more apparent during Ramadan. Here, if a Muslim is discovered to have converted to Christianity, they may face being beheaded. Pray for believers in Somalia as they seek to live for Jesus amidst suffocating pressure.

31 | NIGHT OF POWER Muslims around the world believe that this is the night that the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad. Many will be doing their best to attain the pleasure of Allah and forgiveness for all their sins. Pray that tonight especially they will encounter Jesus instead and realise that He is the eternal source of all power.

1 | MALAYSIA Many Christians from eastern Malaysia convert to Islam when they move to western Malaysia for work and education. Pray that Open Doors' discipleship training will be a catalyst for them to stay faithful to Christ. Especially during these last few days of Ramadan.

2 | BANGLADESH Pray for Christians during these last few days of the Muslim month of fasting. Pray that they will be salt and light to their Muslim neighbours as Ramadan comes to an end.

3 | COMOROS Christians in Comoros are prohibited, by law, from openly speaking about their faith. Pray that despite this, their lives will be living testimonies to the majority of Muslims around them.

LAST DAY OF RAMADAN

4 | ISLAMIC COUNTRIES Praise God for all He has done through Christians in Islamic countries and for the seeds that were planted in the lives of Muslims. Pray that these seeds will grow into a personal relationship with Christ. Pray also that Christians will continue to be a shining light for Christ in every Muslim-dominated country.

5 | EID AL-FITR Today, Muslims around the world celebrate Eid to mark the end of their month-long fast. This is a time when Muslims seek forgiveness from one another. Pray that God will open their eyes to see that the way to eternal forgiveness is in Jesus Christ.



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