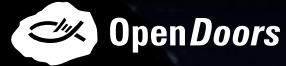


# 30 Days of Prayer for the SECRET CHURCH

24 April – 24 May 2020



**Pray for the Muslim World this Ramadan**


Thank you! p. 2 | "Life can be hard, but I've gained Christ", p. 3  
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**T**hank you for joining us in praying for our persecuted brothers and sisters and Muslims around the world this Ramadan. We pray that as you spend time praying for them that you will be strengthened in your faith journey as you help strengthen them in theirs through your prayers.

Your prayers and support show true love and commitment to believers facing persecution around the world – and with Ramadan underway from 24 April to 24 May, your prayers for our brothers and sisters in Muslim-majority regions are vital.

During this time of heightened persecution, they not only need your prayers for their protection and comfort, but they also need prayer for encouragement to reach others for Christ.

Please use this guide to direct your prayers over the next month for our brothers and sisters in the Muslim World.

We pray that as you join with us in prayer this month that the light of Christ will shine in the darkness as our brothers and sisters continue to be salt and light in some of the darkest places in the world. 

## “Life can be hard, but I’ve gained Christ”

Sofi\* (23) from the Horn of Africa used to diligently observe Ramadan rituals in the hope to earn Allah’s favour. But that all changed when she heard about Jesus through a Christian woman on the road.

*“She gave me a Bible and advised me to read it.”*

Sofi followed the woman’s advice and learned that righteousness is through Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. She then found a fellowship of believers and started meeting them in secret. *“When I wanted to go to fellowship, I would tell my family I was going to work.”*

The first Ramadan after she had converted, her parents noticed that she didn’t fast. They followed her and discovered that she had become a Christian.

**Her mom made it clear: “If you don’t fast, you’re no longer my child!”**

Living in a country where young women have no agency to live independently, Sofi had no option but to try and keep the peace by pretending to obey.

*“I fasted and even prepared the fast-breaking meals for them. I would go into my room and pretend to do the salat. But I would pray to Jesus.”*

Ramadan is a complicated and lonely time for Believers from a Muslim Background (BMBs) like Sofi. They’re under constant pressure to fast to keep up appearances. Secret believers may be exposed when they don’t fast. And BMBs who are young in the faith may be tempted to backslide out of loneliness and a longing for the community (brotherhood) they had lost as a result of their conversion. If they don’t fast, they even risk attack. No one should have to face such pressure and loneliness for their faith.

When asking Sofi how she feels about the complications of her new life as a Christian, she replies without hesitation:

*“Yes, it’s true, life can be hard, but I have gained Christ. I enjoy the emotional peace and rest I have gained through Him. And now salat [communal prayer] has meaning. It’s not just a ritual for me like it was before. I really meet with Jesus.”*

You can support believers like Sofi when you visit [www.opendoors.org.za/secretchurch](http://www.opendoors.org.za/secretchurch)

# RAMADAN BEGINS

## APRIL 2020

**24 | MUSLIM WORLD** Today marks the start of the month-long fast for Muslims worldwide. They believe that they'll earn spiritual rewards by fasting. Pray that the Gospel will take root in the Muslim World so that they'll be drawn to Christ.

**25 | ARABIAN PENINSULA** The Arabian Peninsula is home to some of Islam's most holy places and strict regimes. It's not an easy place to follow Christ, and yet God is moving in miraculous ways. Pray that in word and deed, Christians will be a shining light to the Muslims around them.

**26 | SAUDI ARABIA** According to Islamic tradition, Saudi Arabia is the birthplace and final resting place of the prophet Muhammad. Here, there is no room for any other religion. Praise God that despite this, Muslims are turning to Christ. Pray that the truth of Christ will be revealed to many more Muslims in visions and dreams.

**27 | OMAN** Omanis practise a unique brand of Islam called *Ibadhism*, which is a majority sect only in Oman and is more tolerant towards Christians. Pray that this tolerance towards Christians will provide many opportunities for Muslims and Christians to talk about Christ.

**28 | UNITED ARAB EMIRATES** Evangelism is prohibited, but non-Muslim groups can worship in dedicated buildings or private homes. Pray that Christians will be a living testimony to Muslims in this country.

**29 | YEMEN** Yemen abides by the strictest interpretations of Islam. Leaving Islam to convert to another religion is forbidden. Yet, some have become

## YEMEN continues

Christians. Pray that God will open the hearts of many Muslims to the truth of the Gospel.

**30 | QATAR** Qatar is one of the only two Wahhabi Islam (very puritan version of Islam) countries in the world. Pray for protection for Christians in this country and that God will grant them wisdom in reaching out with the love of Christ to the Muslims in this country.

## MAY 2020



**1 | ISLAMIC ASIA** In countries where Islam is the dominant religion, Christians face hostility from their families, communities, governments and Islamic extremists. Pray that these people will acknowledge Jesus Christ as the one and only Saviour.

**2 | BANGLADESH** Until recently, Bangladesh managed to stay clear of the kind of radicalism that has plagued other parts of the world, but that's changing. Pray that this will not hinder the growth of the Kingdom in this country but that it will draw many Muslims to Christ.

**3 | MALDIVES** All nationals are considered Muslim and are expected to take part in Islamic rituals and community events such as attending the local mosque. Anyone caught not doing this will be questioned. Pray for wisdom for Christians and that God will help them to use these situations to be a shining light for Him in the darkness.

**4 | PAKISTAN** Pakistan is home to a plethora of radical Islamic groups. Pray for a divine encounter to take place amongst the people of this country as well as the radical Islamic groups so that they'll come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

**5 | BRUNEI** Every day in the local newspapers, there are reports of converts to Islam who were given gifts and financial support. In contrast, Christians aren't allowed to evangelise at all. Pray that, in such an unfair playing field, God will grant His Church wisdom and boldness in sharing Jesus.

**6 | INDONESIA** Christian converts from Islam are often heavily pressured to renounce their faith. Pray that they would have access to Bibles and Christian community so they can be strengthened to endure the pressure. Pray that as they reflect Christ, Muslims will start to question their faith.

**7 | MALAYSIA** The constitution defines ethnic Malays as Muslims, which means they don't have the liberty to leave Islam, and those who practice other religions are

## **MALAYSIA continues**

forbidden from sharing this among Malay Muslims. Pray for change in Malaysia.

**8 | MIDDLE EAST** The Middle East is the birthplace of the Christian Church. Yet today, in some areas, the Church has almost been eliminated under Islamic pressure. Pray that God will use the Christians that are left to continue to be salt and light in the region.

**9 | IRAQ** Despite the difficulties church ministries and leaders face, they stand strong to proclaim and glorify Jesus' name. Pray to the Lord that their example will promote peace, church unity and development in the country.

**10 | AFGHANISTAN** Officially there are no local Christians in Afghanistan, so all visible acts of Christian worship are dangerous. Pray that the Gospel will continue to find its way into the hearts and homes of Muslims.



**11 | JORDAN** An open testimony of faith by a Christian from a Muslim background can lead to beatings, arrest and even death. Pray for God's hand of protection to be over these Christians and that they'll be reflections of Christ to their Muslim family members.

**12 | SYRIA** Christians from a Muslim background are especially put under pressure by their family, as their conversion brings great dishonour to them. Pray that the Lord will change the hearts of these Christians' families so that they'll also surrender their lives to Christ.

**13 | SUDAN** All Christian communities in Sudan are afraid of having conversations about their faith with Sudanese Muslims as this might be construed as being an "act that encourages apostasy against Islam". Pray for opportunities for Christians to be able to talk about their faith with Muslims without any backlash.



**14 | AFRICA** The presence of Islam in Africa can be traced to the 7th century AD when the prophet Muhammad advised several of his early disciples to seek refuge across the Red Sea when they faced persecution from the polytheistic inhabitants of Mecca. Pray that Muslims searching for the truth across Africa will find Christ.

**15 | ALGERIA** It's forbidden by law to "shake the faith of a Muslim" or to use "means of seduction intending to convert a Muslim to another religion". Despite this restriction, the harvest is great, but the workers are few. May the Lord call and send people to spread the Gospel in Algeria.

**16 | EGYPT** In Egypt, especially in rural and impoverished areas, radical imams and less tolerant brands of Islam are growing in prominence. The government is making efforts to reverse this trend but has been unsuccessful so far. Pray that God Himself will stop the growth of this type of Islam in the country.

**17 | LIBYA** The military conflict in Libya has helped the influence of radical Islamic thought to grow. Subsequently, the anarchy has resulted in several areas becoming home to radical Muslims. Pray for an end to the conflict in this country, and that steps will be taken to minimise the influence of radical Islam.

**18 | MAURITANIA** Mauritania is a self-proclaimed Islamic Republic. Here, non-Muslims experience intimidation and persecution, particularly at the hands of Islamic groups. Pray that despite this, God will give them courage and boldness in sharing the Gospel with their Muslim families.

**19 | NIGHT OF POWER** The Night of

## NIGHT OF POWER continues

Power is a highlight of Ramadan. Muslims believe that on this night, the blessings and mercy of Allah are abundant, and sins are forgiven. Pray that tonight as they seek forgiveness, many Muslims will come to know true forgiveness of sins through belief in Jesus Christ.



**20 | MOROCCO** Moroccan law criminalises “shaking the faith of a Muslim”. This puts many Christians who talk to others about their faith at risk of arrest. Pray that when Muslims and Christians talk, God will make a way for them to share their faith.

**21 | TUNISIA** Tunisian believers all come from a Muslim background. If their faith is discovered, they may lose their jobs, be rejected by family and friends, and face verbal and physical abuse. Pray that God will protect them from harm and that He'll use them to grow His Kingdom in the country.

**22 | NIGER** Until recently Niger had been, somewhat, spared violent Islamic militancy and the Church was not the main target. Pray that as this continues to change that the Lord will grant His children safe passage to come together and allow them to share their faith with their Muslim neighbours.

**23 | SOMALIA** If Al-Shabaab finds someone who has become a Christian, the militants will often kill them on the spot. Despite the risks, Somali people are coming to faith in Jesus – some in miraculous ways. Pray that many more Somalians will come to faith in Jesus despite the dangers.

## RAMADAN ENDS

**24 | MUSLIMS WORLDWIDE** Continue to pray for Muslims worldwide as Ramadan ends. Pray that where seeds have been planted through the witnesses of Christians around them – that it will be watered and grow into a life-changing relationship with Christ.



# Fast and Pray together

**In some places in the Muslim World, Christians fast and pray to show Muslims the love of Christ during Ramadan. Some even organise food for them and invite them to break the fast with them at the end of each day.**

**You can join them and organise a day of prayer and fasting with your small group, church, friends and family:**

**1 Invite your friends** – Choose a date during Ramadan (24 April to 24 May 2020) to host your event and invite your church, small group and friends to come along. Send an email or text message inviting people to the event.

**2 Plan your event** – Make sure to copy the prayer points (pg. 9) for everyone ahead of time, so they can pray and fast during the day. Plan what food to make as you come together to break the fast. (See recipe pg. 10.)

**3 Enjoy your day** – Encourage your group to fast and pray throughout the day. Send a text message to your group in the morning to remind them why you're praying. In the evening, break your fast together.

**4 Raise funds** – Help support Christians in the Muslim World to be salt and light in their communities by raising funds to equip and encourage them in their witness. The funds you raise will remind them that they're not alone. See page 11 for more details.





## Here's how you can pray during this critical month:

- Pray that as Muslims spend more time in prayer and meditation, the Lord would help them understand that they can only find salvation in Jesus.
- Pray for churches to find ways to share the love of Christ with Muslim neighbours during Ramadan and for the Gospel to be preached boldly.
- Pray that Christians would emulate Christ's love to Muslims and BMBs in their communities. Many BMBs share that it was the love of Jesus that drew them to Christianity.
- Pray for the Lord's Spirit to be at work among Islamic radical groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria, Islamic State in the Middle East and many others across the world – binding the darkness and calling out members into God's truth.
- Pray that support will pour in to help continue protect, equip and encourage believers in the Muslim World.





## BASBOUSA (Egypt)

### INGREDIENTS

125g unsalted butter  
 ¾ cup sugar  
 2 cups fine semolina  
 1 tsp vanilla essence  
 2 eggs  
 200g Greek yoghurt  
 1 tsp baking powder  
 Blanched split almonds  
 Zest of half a lemon  
 Crushed nuts to serve

### SYRUP

1½ cups sugar  
 1 cup water  
 1 tbsp lemon juice

### METHOD

1. Pre-heat oven to 180°C (160°C fan forced).
2. Grease a 30cm x 20cm cake tin.
3. Cream the butter, sugar and vanilla until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beat until combined.
4. Sift semolina and baking powder, and fold into batter, alternating with the yoghurt.
5. Pour batter into cake tin and level with a spatula. Place almonds in rows on top of the cake.
6. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until golden brown on top and a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean.
7. Meanwhile, place sugar, water and lemon juice in saucepan over medium heat and bring to the boil, stirring until sugar dissolves.
8. Simmer for 5-7 minutes. Remove from heat and leave to cool.
9. Pour syrup over the cake while the cake is still hot and leave to cool.
10. Serve cake by cutting into squares or diamonds, with almond in the centre, garnish with crushed nuts.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is Ramadan?

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

## Why must we pray during Ramadan?

Our brothers and sisters living in Muslim-majority countries, not only need our prayers for their protection and comfort during this time of heightened persecution, but also so they'll be empowered to reach others for Christ. It's a way to show the love of Christ to Muslims as we ask the Lord to shine His light into the darkness. Together, we can unleash a mighty movement of God's power.

## How does giving money help Believers from a Muslim Background?

At Open Doors, we hear stories of Muslims discovering Jesus all the time. The question for us is: what happens next? How do these new believers develop the foundations in their faith to not fall away when persecution comes?

As the Church grows as well as persecution, so does the need to equip and encourage them especially during dangerous times like Ramadan. You can make an impact today by providing Christians in the Muslim World with much needed Bibles, discipleship training,

persecution preparedness training and so much more. So that they can be empowered to stand strong in their witness for Christ.

**Visit [www.opendoors.org.za/secretchurch](http://www.opendoors.org.za/secretchurch) to help strengthen them.**



Dear partner of the persecuted Church

Open Doors' founder, Brother Andrew, made it clear throughout his ministry that we aren't against anyone, we're pro-Jesus. He also said that the word ISLAM is an acronym for I Sincerely Love All Muslims.

A way for us to show our love for Muslims is through prayer. And with Ramadan underway, we realise the importance of praying urgently, not only for our brothers and sisters in Christ, but also for Muslims. Christians face increasing pressure to return to Islam, while Muslims are more open to the Gospel as they seek the truth.

Use this guide and unite with us in prayer this month for our brothers and sisters in the Muslim World and Muslims as they observe Ramadan. Thank you for all your prayers and support!

Together in His service

Jan Gouws  
Executive Director  
Open Doors Southern Africa



**Help protect Christians  
in the Muslim World  
this Ramadan:**

\*Use your phone's camera or  
a QR code reader app.



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Persecuted  But never alone.