

MARCH PRAYER GUIDE

** Names changed for security purposes*

PERSECUTED WOMEN

1 Persecuted Women

Open Doors' research has revealed the hidden suffering of millions of Christian women who are targeted for both their faith and gender. Pray that Open Doors' campaign will raise awareness of this issue within the church and government of our nations, and effect real and lasting change for our persecuted sisters.

2 Syria

When Sozan and her sister left Islam to follow Jesus, they faced such opposition from men in their community that they had to flee their town. "They said we had a bad reputation and that we should be killed. Our father should take care that this shame would be washed away," she says. Give thanks that Sozan and her family received food and shelter through a Centre of Hope. Pray for her continued protection and for strength as she serves the children in her new church.

3 Syria

Many women have become the breadwinners for their families after their husbands were killed or went missing in the war. Some struggle with depression as well as making ends meet. Pray for Open Doors church partners providing practical and spiritual support for these women.

4 Domestic violence

There have been sharp rises in domestic violence and 'honour' killings during the pandemic, exacerbated by lockdowns and economic hardship. Ask God to protect vulnerable Christian women facing persecution in their own homes, and pray for Open Doors partners trying to make contact with and support them.

5 India

Lalita* was so badly beaten by her husband when he found her praying that she had to have five stitches in her head. Pray for her healing, that she will stay strong in her faith, and that her husband will come to know Jesus and repent of his behaviour.

6 Kyrgyzstan

Pray for Ayna*, whose husband Rasul* beats her and is threatening to divorce her because of her faith in Jesus. Her son Musa* (9) wants to protect his mother but doesn't know how. Ask God to protect Ayna and her children, and to soften Rasul's heart so that he turns to Jesus.

7 Arabian Peninsula

Pray for a sister who has been undergoing severe abuse from her family-in-law since she accepted Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen her faith and pray that her husband will stop the abuse.

8 Kenya

Praise God that Peninah, whose husband was killed by al-Shabaab militants, is recovering from trauma and is now equipped to provide for her son Steve (2), after receiving trauma care and dressmaking training through Open Doors. "My faith would have collapsed," she says, "but the seminars and Open Doors partners encouraged me a lot."

HOPE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

9 Iraq

January's bomb attacks in Baghdad left at least 32 dead and over 100 wounded. Pray for God's comfort and healing for the injured and bereaved, and pray that the Islamic State group will not regain a foothold in the country.

10 Iraq

Last year, Iraqi Christian activists started a campaign called 'Know your rights and speak up', to raise awareness of the challenges facing Christians in Iraq. Pray that the campaign will grab the attention of the authorities, and lead to a reduction in violations against religious freedom.

11 Iraq

The high costs of Covid-19 tests and medical treatment deter many people from being tested early and getting treatment, so many wait till their health deteriorates. Pray for strength and protection for medical staff working under great strain in hospitals that lack medical supplies, and ask God in His mercy to help the Iraqi government to bring the infection under control.

12 Iraq

Most schools remain closed due to the spread of Covid-19. For the second year, Iraq still can't find a way to provide online teaching and electronic devices for children in poorer, rural areas. Ask the Lord to intervene so that Iraq's children are not robbed of their education and their future.

13 Palestinian Territories

Although Covid restrictions are preventing believers from meeting in person, church services and home groups continue online. Give thanks that this has enabled secret believers, who normally can't attend church services or meet with other believers, to join church groups and find fellowship online.

14 Lebanon

Last year's explosion in the port of Beirut, coupled with the growing Covid-19 crisis, are having a devastating impact on Lebanon. Ask God to strengthen His people to be salt and light at this challenging time. "We believe that only Jesus can change the situation in this country," says one believer. "It's gone from bad to worse, but we know that Jesus is here with us!"

PRAY FOR SYRIA

15 Syria

It's now 10 years since the start of Syria's devastating civil war, which has killed half a million people and displaced over 12 million. Ask the God who 'breaks the bow and shatters the spear' to bring this terrible war to an end so that His name is exalted in Syria and across the earth (Psalm 46:8-9).

16 Syria

Around 84 per cent of Syrians live below the poverty line and the price of basic goods continues to skyrocket. Pray that soaring inflation rates will fall, international restrictions will be lifted and the government will have wisdom to know how to stabilise the economy, so people can afford basic necessities like food and shelter.

17 Syria

Open Doors partners have started a number of new income-generating projects this year, to help struggling Christians to support themselves and their families. Pray that these projects will restore people's dignity and hope, and enable them to stay in the country.

18 Syria

Many younger people have fled the country, leaving the elderly without caregivers. Pray for 20 elderly people being looked after by the local Orthodox church in Marmarita. With your support they are now receiving high quality meals three times a day. Pray that this support will be a source of comfort and strength, and will let them know they have not been forgotten.

19 Syria

Give thanks that Open Doors was able to distribute 26,000 children's Bibles to children all over Syria through local churches and Centres of Hope. Pray that God's Word will strengthen His children with hope for the future.

20 Syria

The government has yet to take serious action to address the spread of Covid-19. Pray that a vaccine will reach the country and will be distributed fairly and efficiently. Pray for God's miraculous protection for doctors, nurses and other hospital staff treating Covid patients with very limited resources.

21 Syria

Pray for good health for our local partners and their families. Several are struggling with Covid-19 and others have family members with the virus. Pray for healing and protection so they can continue the good work.

PRAY FOR MYANMAR

22 Myanmar

February's coup by the military put an end to a decade of civilian rule. Pray for a return to stable, democratic government, and that the rights of all Myanmar's people – especially ethnic and religious minorities - will be respected.

23 Myanmar

"The military government of the past has always been protective of their Buddhist culture and tradition," says Open Doors partner, Brother Lwin*. "We are expecting restrictions on the church to happen once again though we are unsure of the extent and the form it will take as of yet." Ask the Lord to intervene to protect the freedoms the church has gained over the last decade.

24 Myanmar

Ask the Holy Spirit to give church leaders wisdom and courage as they pastor their members through the crisis. "The churches are praying," says one pastor. "We are calm, but scared at the same time."

COVID CRISIS - ASIA

25 India

India's economy has been badly hit by the pandemic. Millions of people have lost their jobs, and many, including Christians, are struggling to survive. Ask God to protect Open Doors local partners delivering relief aid to those in need.

26 Nepal

At the time of writing, the number of Covid cases here is increasing. Pray for wisdom for Nepal's leaders as they try to get the pandemic under control. Pray for Open Doors partners providing relief aid to those in most need, and ask God to use His church to reach out with love and hope during this crisis.

27 Bhutan

Christians are not allowed to gather for any occasion because of the covid-19 pandemic, and vigilant groups are patrolling villages and town to enforce restrictions. Pray that Christians will be wise and careful in their actions as they follow Jesus in these difficult times, and pray for God's protection and provision.

28 Sri Lanka

Many pastors and church workers have faced great difficulties during the pandemic, as they were unable to hold services and collect offerings to support their work. Pray for God's provision and presence in their lives as they continue to serve the Lord amidst financial difficulties.

29 Malaysia

Malaysia is hoping to receive vaccines for covid-19 in the first quarter of 2021, and the priority will be frontline workers. Pray for wisdom for the government and community leaders in rolling out the vaccine, and pray that the nation will heal soon from this virus.

30 Vietnam

Give thanks that Open Doors partners have been able to reach 1,208 Christian families with emergency relief aid, thanks to your prayers and support. Thao*, a church leader who received support, said, "On behalf of all the Christians here, I would like to thank all of the supporters. We are so grateful for the help, for remembering to pray and help us."

31 Laos

Laos is one of the poorest countries in southeast Asia. Covid-19 has left many jobless and struggling to provide for their own needs. Pray especially for churches and pastors who are greatly affected by this. Pray for God's provision and peace.