

SEPTEMBER PRAYER GUIDE

** Names changed for security purposes*

HOPE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

1 Syria

After a decade of war and persecution, the number of Christians in Syria has dropped dramatically, from 1.8 million in 2011 to 677,000 today. Give thanks for the courage of pastors and church leaders who chose to stay to serve their congregations. Pray that their sacrificial witness will bring God's hope to their communities.

2 Syria

Over the last 5 years, 40 Centres of Hope have been set up by Open Doors church partners across Syria. These centres provide local Christians with relief aid, trauma care, livelihood training, business loans and spiritual support. Pray that these centres will bring Christ's hope to many believers – and through them, to the wider community.

3 Syria

Praise God for the Centre of Hope in Damascus, which is providing vocational training to 200 young men and women to encourage them to stay in Syria. Pray that more will join the courses and flourish under the wings of the church.

4 Syria

Pray for four new income generating projects started amongst Christians in Marmarita: a clothes shop, a meat store, a supermarket and a shoe store. Ask the Lord to bless the Christians involved in these projects as they work hard to build a better future for their families.

5 Syria

Drug abuse is widespread among youth and young adults in Syria's schools and colleges. Pray for more drug control by the government and for greater awareness among parents and youth about the dangers of addiction. Pray that the church will attract young people to Jesus and help them to walk the right path.

6 Syria

Pray for an Open Doors partner providing online training for teenagers. "It is sometimes difficult to keep them going due to technological malfunctions, but online training is much better than not having them at all due to COVID," says trainee Sally*. Pray for good access to electricity and the internet and that the training will equip many young people with new skills.

7 Syria

Give thanks that in the last 5 years, with your support, Open Doors partners have provided over 1 million food parcels to vulnerable Christian families, and distributed over 75,000 hygiene kits a year. Ask the Lord to continue to strengthen and protect Open Doors partners and volunteers delivering emergency aid to Christians impacted by the Covid crisis.

8 Iraq

Praise God that many Christians have now returned to the Nineveh Plains to rebuild their villages, following the liberation of the area from Islamic State (IS) extremists. The security situation remains unstable, however, due to the presence of militia. Pray for peace and stability for God's people.

9 Iraq

More Iraqi Christians are daring to speak out about family members kidnapped or killed by IS. The number of cases is higher than previously thought – many kept their stories quiet for fear of retribution. Pray that they will find help through the church or other organisations.

10 Iraq

Issa was 14 when he was kidnapped. The last that was heard of him was that he was taken in by a Muslim family who took him to the mosque each day. If he is still alive he is 21 now and will probably have been forced to convert to Islam. Ask the Lord to be close to Issa and to restore his life and his family to him.

11 Iraq

Pray for kidnap survivors who were released. They often struggle with trauma and feelings of shame. Mental health care is often stigmatised in Iraq. Pray that survivors will find and accept help so they can receive healing.

12 Iraq

Open Doors partners provide trauma care training for church and lay leaders in caring for the traumatised. Give thanks for three trauma care centres that have been set up in Iraq. Pray that they will be places of safety and healing for all who come to them.

13 Iraq

Ask God to encourage Open Doors partners and establish the work of their hands. "Our work is the hand that supports the broken wings of the church," says Shefa*, director of our local partners. "We strengthen the faith of local churches, so they know they are not alone. We help to restore lost hope and rebuild the community again."

14 Lebanon

Pray God's mercy over Lebanon as the country's economic and political crisis deepens. Ask the Lord to raise up godly leaders who will restore stable and righteous government in the nation. Pray also for courageous leadership in the church, so that God's people can bring His hope where there is despair.

15 Israel and Palestinian Territories

Pray for reconciliation and unity between Palestinian Christians and Messianic Jews. Both communities have seen tensions grow since violence erupted in Gaza in May. Pray for healing for those who lost homes, businesses or loved ones, and for grace to live out the peace that Jesus won for us on the cross.

NORTH AFRICA

16 Tunisia

Protests over the government's handling of the Covid crisis led to the prime minister being dismissed and parliament being suspended in July. Pray for peace and stability for Tunisia. Pray for protection for believers and that the church will be a place of refuge in these times.

17 Tunisia

Pray for Abel*, a young man who is being threatened by his friends after being very open about his faith in Jesus. Pray for courage to stand firm in his faith and ask God to change the hearts of his friends through Abel's bold witness.

18 Morocco

When Weam* left Islam to follow Jesus, his family admitted him to a psychiatric hospital because he had changed his faith. Ask the Lord to protect his heart and mind, and pray that he will be swiftly released.

19 Algeria

Three more churches were closed by the authorities in July, bringing the number of closed churches to 16. Pray for courage and perseverance for church leaders in the face of this ongoing opposition, and pray that all 16 churches will receive permission to re-open soon.

ARABIAN PENINSULA

20

Local contacts report that many Muslims across the Arabian Peninsula are seeking the Saviour. Give thanks for this move of the Spirit and pray that God will cause the scales to fall from the eyes of those who are looking for Him, so they can see the truth of who Christ is.

21

Pray for a brother who has been trying for many years to change his name after leaving Islam to follow Christ. As a result, he has lost his job and been ostracised by his community. He is struggling with disappointment. Ask the Lord to connect him to a church group who can help restore his hope in Christ.

22

Fellowships of believers from a Muslim background are forming across the Arabian Peninsula. Pray that these groups will grow in unity, in understanding of God's Word, and in service of one another and their communities.

23

The number of people struggling with depression is up to three times higher here than the global average. Ask God to reach those struggling with loneliness and deep sadness, and pray for Arabic speaking Christians who are trained counsellors to be called to minister to those suffering depression.

24

Ask God to raise up more Arabic speaking workers to serve in Saudi Arabia and help reach those who do not know Jesus yet. Pray for God's Word to saturate the Arabian Peninsula through online media, satellite TV, radio programmes, Bible apps and Bible distribution.

25 Yemen

It is a particular high risk for Christians to come together in the Houthi governed area. If you come together with more than 3-5 persons one could be subject to persecution. But the disciples need and long for fellowship. Will you please pray that a meeting place can be established in this area where Christians can fellowship in tiny groups, where they can sing and read the bible?

CENTRAL ASIA

26

Give thanks that Maxut*, a deaf missionary who was hospitalised after a car accident, has now recovered and returned to ministry. He recently attended a training event for deaf church leaders. "Being deaf in our country we do not have many opportunities to learn the Bible in such detail," he shares. "I learned so many things for myself personally and I have so many things to share with other deaf believers in my missionary trips."

27

Youth leader Rasim was brutally beaten by his uncle during a secret youth meeting. He suffered concussion and was hospitalised. Rasim asks for prayer for his recovery so he can continue his ministry to young people. Praise God for his faith!

28

Aysha* began working among Muslim women refugees after attending an Open Doors course five years ago. "I can't change their lives," she says, "but I can share the love of God and tell them about the hope in Isa (Jesus)." She is receiving many threats from local Muslims. Pray for courage and protection.

29

Adil* (20), a young soldier, gave his heart to Jesus in January. His church decided to pay for his dismissal from the army and he was demobilised. But he was robbed and beaten severely by other soldiers when they discovered his new faith. His family also threw him out of home. Open Doors is providing him with food and shelter through his house church. Ask the Lord to provide Adil with a new job.

30

Give thanks for nine new house churches that opened in August in strongly Muslim areas. Pray that Open Doors partners will have opportunity to visit these groups to encourage them, and will not be prevented by Covid restrictions.