

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN RESPONSE | 2025

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER DEVOTIONAL



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When one member suffers, we all suffer.
(Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 12:26)



PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

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(Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 12:26)

At International Christian Response, we seek to facilitate greater unity within the global church by serving as a faithful channel for prayer, support, and encouragement between our persecuted brothers and sisters and Christians in North America.

The International Day of Prayer (IDOP) is observed on either the first or second Sunday of November and is a day for the church to pray for persecuted Christians throughout the world.

This devotional is intended to encompass both Sundays of IDOP as well as the week in between. Each day includes a story from a different country where ICR serves, a Scripture reading, and a call to prayer.

DAY ONE

MIDDLE EAST

Omar says, “I have experienced many situations of persecution. I’ve been a Christian since I was 17 years old. Before that, I was in a radical Islamist group that met regularly in the mosque. We were prepared for holy war, for example, in Afghanistan. Many of my friends from back then died in the war. Before I became more radicalized, Jesus met me in a vision and said: ‘You are my son.’ I knew that this was a completely different voice than that of Allah – because in Islam, no one can be the son of God. I publicly declared myself a follower of Jesus. My strict Muslim family disinherited me and kicked me out. I was no longer allowed to go to school. It really hurt me that I was no longer allowed to study, because I love learning and literature.

Later, because I always spoke very freely about Jesus, I was arrested several times. I was tortured. I can say: I know persecution in every dimension. And yet I know that without Jesus, I would have died long ago in a trench for a wrong cause. God had a better plan for me. It’s not easy being without a family. I also lost a lot of friends. At the time, I was an outcast in my country. I had nowhere to live, nowhere to work legally. I was always on the run. I developed severe depression as a result. I’m still not mentally healthy to this day.

But I have seen God’s glory. I am different today. God has allowed me to lose my biological family – but I have gained a new family everywhere I go. God has allowed me to return to school. With His blessing, I was a very good student, earned outstanding degrees and was able to pursue a career. Many people know that I am a Christian.”

SCRIPTURE READING: PSALM 138

PRAYER: PRAY THAT OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WILL NOT FEEL ALONE OR FORGOTTEN.



DAY TWO

COLOMBIA

In the countryside, a small group of Christians led by Pastor Alvarez gathered for a church service. It was simple, but passionate. Two young men attended for the first time. They had a deep encounter with God during the service. At the end of the service, they decided to place their lives in God's hands.

Two weeks later, Pastor Alvarez received the sad news that the two young men had been killed. As it turned out, they were members of a guerilla group. They lost their lives in an encounter with the military. Pastor Alvarez said, "We are very sad. One small consolation is that they are with Jesus."

When guerrilla members convert, this brings challenges and risks for local churches and pastors. One risk is that the guerrilla leaders decide the church is intentionally luring fighters away from their organization, making the church a target for them. Additionally, the government can assume that the church is aligned with the guerrillas, making the church a target for the army, too. It is also challenging when converted guerrillas start giving tithes, because the origin of these finances is almost always problematic. Pastors who follow the call of God in remote, rural areas risk a lot as they share Christ with those around them.

**SCRIPTURE READING: REVELATION 2:10
& HEBREWS 11:1-7, 13-16**

**PRAYER: PRAISE GOD THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED WILL
HAVE A GREAT REWARD. PRAY THAT GOD WOULD EQUIP HIS
PEOPLE WITH GREAT FAITH.**



DAY THREE

NORTH AFRICA

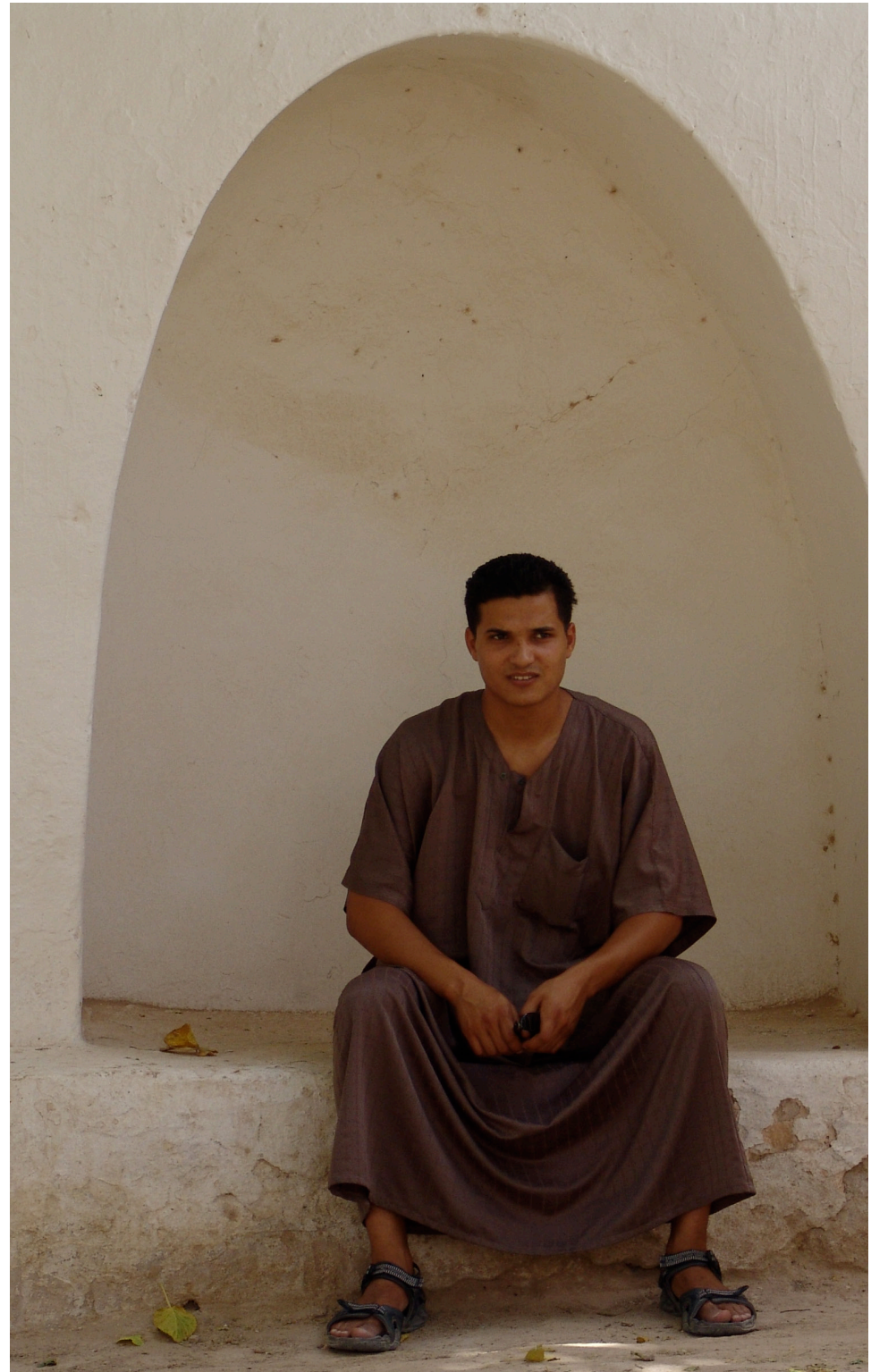
Sometimes a scent will bring Marc right back to his prison cell. A whiff in the market, a waft down an alley as he passes. And each time, something inside him freezes. He never wants to go to prison again.

When Marc first became a Christian in North Africa, he tried to hide his faith. But eventually, the secret police found out, and they put him in prison for three weeks. “That was a very, very hard time for me,” he said. When he was released, his family sent him to Mecca to complete the Muslim pilgrimage. They hoped this would bring him back to Allah. “Instead, it had the opposite effect,” Marc said. “Whereas before I was floundering as a new follower of Jesus, ... the experience in Mecca made me absolutely certain: believing in Allah was leading me down the wrong path.” Marc was so certain, he took a big risk. One day, he stood among the throng of Muslim pilgrims before a long wall where many pilgrims write inspiring messages from the Quran. Marc wrote on the wall: “JESUS is the son of God.” “If anyone had noticed, I would have been killed,” he said. But in that moment, Marc released his old beliefs as new ones about following Jesus became clear.

Despite his clarity, life hasn’t been easy. “A Jesus follower in my country sacrifices a normal life. Every day I am haunted by fear that they will arrest me again,” Marc said. “It could happen at any time.” Marc is still traumatized by his weeks in prison. Whenever he smells the scent of the cell, the awful words of his prison guards come back to him. Today, Marc says his country is even worse than it was when he was arrested, because the government is more strongly Islamist than before and “doesn’t hesitate to deal with Christian converts,” he said.

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-26

PRAYER: PRAY THAT GOD WOULD KNIT YOUR HEART TO THE HEARTS OF PERSECUTED BELIEVERS. THANK GOD EVERY MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST IS SIGNIFICANT AND HAS PURPOSE FROM GOD.



DAY FOUR

UZBEKISTAN

Almost every Sunday after church, Dilara's husband beats her. He beats her relentlessly until he's breathless and tired. Only when he is completely spent, does Dilara, 33, seize the moment to share Jesus with him. He's willing to listen when he's completely exhausted from beating her. Dilara's husband, a Muslim, hates that she attends a house church on Sundays. He threatens to divorce her often, but in more than 10 years, he hasn't yet followed through. She told an ICR worker, "As long as I live, I will follow my Savior Christ and tell my husband about Him. If not me, who will?"

Another Christian, Nargiz, has lost much because she chose to follow Christ. When Nargiz tried to share the good news with her friends, they stopped being friends with her. After Nargiz married, she and her husband struggled with infertility. Her father said the reason was because she was a Christian. He announced, "She is no longer my daughter! No one can call her by my last name, because she is not my daughter."

Today, by God's grace, Nargiz has five children.

Nargiz's husband is a Muslim and a police officer. Over time, her faith became more of a point of contention. Once, he arrived at the place where she was in a house church meeting, furious and shouting that he would arrest everyone inside. Nargiz came out and pulled the door shut behind her. She told her husband, "If you want to arrest anyone, arrest me." Instead, he took her home and beat her. In Uzbekistan, it's no longer illegal to be a Christian, but people's minds take longer to change. It took her 20 years of praying for her father before he, too, became a follower of Christ. After that, he told everyone, "Nargiz is my daughter!"

SCRIPTURE READING: HEBREWS 10:32-39

PRAYER: PRAY FOR FAITHFUL PERSEVERANCE FOR CHRISTIANS IN PLACES WHERE THEY ARE PERSECUTED.



DAY FIVE

MEXICO & INDIA

Some of ICR's partners in countries where Christians are under pressure are doing an incredible job of helping to build a resilient church by preparing believers to withstand persecution. A partner in Mexico, Carlos*, has walked alongside persecuted Christians for decades. Over time, he has developed a training curriculum to help equip Christians to withstand persecution. Carlos starts by providing a Biblical perspective on persecution. "We realize that they don't know what the Bible teaches about persecution, which leads them to make mistakes in their responses and makes them an easy target," he said.

In India, a partner named Dev* believes it is crucial to teach believers how to face persecution. Like Carlos' curriculum, Dev's workshops start with a foundation in Scripture. His team educates believers on what the Bible says about being persecuted and how to respond to persecution according to Jesus' example. They also discuss how to endure persecution without becoming bitter.

**Names changed*

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 JOHN 3:11-24

PRAYER: PRAY BELIEVERS WILL BE PREPARED FOR PERSECUTION.



DAY SIX

UGANDA

A young man named Samuel is married with two children. His father is Muslim and his mother is Catholic, but they practiced a lot of animistic rituals. Every month they sacrificed to evil spirits. When Samuel attended a church service and heard that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, he accepted the message with joy.

From that day on, his family rejected him. They brutally beat him, and destroyed his crops and everything he had. Samuel's wife and children were in constant danger. Then, his family tried to kill him by setting fire to his house. Fortunately, Samuel and his family were gone, and they were spared. They fled the area.

For Samuel, it was painful to be betrayed by his family and to lose his income, his inheritance, his job, and his position in society. His church network is taking care of him, but he is still unable to work. In the midst of these painful circumstances, Samuel heard the hymn, "Do Not Pass Me By." The song was an incredible encouragement to him to keep going.

*Pass me not, O gentle Savior,
hear my humble cry;*

*While on others Thou art calling,
do not pass me by.*

*Let me at Thy throne of mercy,
find a sweet relief;*

*Kneeling there in deep contrition,
help my unbelief.*

*Trusting only in Thy merit,
would I seek Thy face;*

*Heal my wounded, broken spirit,
save me by Thy grace.*

*Thou the spring of all my comfort,
more than life to me;*

*Whom have I on earth beside Thee?
Whom in heaven but Thee?*

SCRIPTURE READING: ACTS 5:27-42

PRAYER: PRAY THAT BELIEVERS WOULD REJOICE BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE HONOR OF SUFFERING FOR CHRIST.



DAY SEVEN

AFGHANISTAN

An Afghan brother in Christ, Zia, was martyred because of his faith in Jesus. According to other believers, he was the very first Christian in the Afghan community in this southwest Asian country to give his life as a martyr.

The exact details are still unclear. Some say he was burned alive. Others say he was killed in another way. But one thing is certain: Zia was persecuted because he belonged to Jesus Christ.

This is one of the newest waves of persecution that has fallen on the Afghan church.

Though the world may not know his full story, Heaven does. Zia's name is written in the Book of Life, and his testimony will not be forgotten. Our partner says that he believes through Brother Zia's sacrifice, many more Afghans will come to know the hope and salvation that is only found in Jesus Christ.

Glory to God for the faithfulness of His servant, Brother Zia. May his testimony strengthen the church and awaken many to the truth of the Gospel.

SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 16:25-33

PRAYER: PRAY THAT PERSECUTED BELIEVERS WILL KNOW JESUS ULTIMATELY HOLDS THE VICTORY.



DAY EIGHT

GAZA

In this seemingly hopeless situation, ICR partners say they have never seen such openness to the Gospel.

A Muslim man came to Christ after meeting a group of Christians in a displaced people camp in Gaza. They had a secret church.

“It wasn’t just a casual encounter; our discussions about faith, God, and existence were filled with deep contemplation and reflection,” the man said. “I found them honest and transparent when they spoke about their personal relationship with God, which prompted me to delve into a study of Christianity.”

He decided to read the Bible. “I found in the teachings of Christ a message of love, peace, and tolerance. His teachings on unconditional love and forgiveness had a profound impact on me. I felt I had found the answers I was searching for.”

It was not easy to decide to become a Christian. The man feared how his family and community would respond. However, becoming a part of the church body gave him reassurance. He found safety and a sense of belonging, and singing hymns and praying together with other believers strengthened his new faith.

SCRIPTURE READING: ACTS 5:27-42

PRAYER: PRAY THAT CHRISTIANS UNDERGOING PERSECUTION REMEMBER WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED SO THEY STAY FAITHFUL.





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