

Intercessors Target Persecuted Church During 30 Days of Ramadan

Ramadan is a time when most Muslims around the world observe 30 days of refraining from food and drink from sunrise to sunset. Many Muslims view this as a time to practice humility and submissiveness to Allah.

But Ramadan also affords Christians a powerful time to not only pray for believers in Muslim-dominated countries, but also for the entire Islamic world. As a result, Open Doors USA is launching a prayer campaign during Ramadan, which runs from July 9 to Aug. 7.

Each day of Ramadan, Open Doors will urge Christians to pray in one of the names of Jesus while using Scripture. Also, there will be prayer information about different countries on the Open Doors 2013 World Watch List, which records the worst persecutors of believers.

For example, during the first day of Ramadan, Christians can pray in the name of Jesus, our "Advocate." First John 2:1 reads, "But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One" (NIV).

On July 9, the featured country is Pakistan. Part of the prayer for Pakistan includes, "As Muslims fast from sunup to sundown during the Ramadan season, tensions can run especially high due to the long periods of sunlight, averaging 14 hours each day. Pray today, in the name of Jesus, for goodwill and justice to prevail for His people."

The organization is offering a user-friendly 30-day prayer and reference guide for use during Ramadan. The resource can be downloaded free of charge at .

Director of Ministries Michele Miller states, "During the season of Ramadan, we need to lift up in prayer our brothers and sisters in Christ who live in Islamic-dominated nations, strengthening them, empowering them, comforting them and encouraging them. Also pray for Muslims. There are millions of Muslims who have never experienced real peace and joy in knowing a loving God and having Jesus as their Savior."

The following is from a blog of a Christian leader in Egypt that was posted last summer regarding Ramadan:

"Ramadan brings a special cultural and religious atmosphere for Muslims in several ways. It's a month of celebration of one of Islam's most important pillars of belief. More food is consumed in this month than any other month of the year. From the time they break their fast each evening to the time they start the fast at dawn of the next day, some Muslims keep eating and drinking almost all night. This is called 'iftar.'

"The religious atmosphere among Muslims rises dramatically, more than during any other month of the year. During Ramadan, Muslims usually read the Quran extensively, often very loudly in public places such as public transportation, at work and certainly at home. This is a holy month for Islam, so they are promised to gain more points from Allah when they do good works, hoping that some of the bad things they have done during the past year will be erased.

"Many Muslims distribute free grocery packages, hold street-side, free iftar tables for passersby to sit down and eat if they are not able to reach home in time to break their fast in the evening. And of course, Ramadan is also a special month when Muslims want to try to win 'infidels' back to Islam; trying to convert their Christian neighbors, colleagues and friends.

"So this can cause a lot of tension among Egypt's Christians; to remain respectful but firm against their Muslim

acquaintances' conversion efforts, without falling into heated arguments.

"My heart is really broken for the millions of Muslims here in Egypt and around the world, who are seeking peace with God this month, trying so hard to do good works in an effort to somehow earn His favor and forgiveness. Although God is so near to those truly calling on His name, it brings tears to my eyes that most of my countrymen do not know that Jesus died and rose from the dead to give them freely, through simple faith, that peace with God they so long to have."