

Ramadan

PRAYER GUIDE FOR MUSLIMS



INTERNATIONAL
MISSION BOARD



Let's pray during Ramadan

A stab of hunger pain—it's hours until Iftar, the meal when the fast is broken. A dry, scratchy throat, raspy for a drink of water. Saliva will have to do unless you are very devout and don't swallow your spit at all. From sunrise to sundown, Muslims fast from food, drink, smoking, and sexual relations during the holy month of Ramadan.

This physical pain and thirst indicate devotion, submission, and a desire for acceptance. This aching hunger for acceptance and intimacy propels us as Christians to share we are loved and accepted not by what we do as humans but because we are made in His image. Hope is within hand's reach.

Join us in interceding for the 1.8 billion followers of Islam so they will hunger and thirst no more and find their worth and value in their Creator.

First, let us learn some basics about Ramadan

Muslims around the world observe Ramadan in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Followers of Islam spend this month exercising self-restraint by fasting to focus their attention and worship Allah.

When Muslims fast, it shows a longing for acceptance through the demonstration of submission. When Christians fast, it displays a longing for Jesus, who secured our acceptance by submitting Himself to the ultimate sacrifice.

During the month, Muslims direct their minds and energy toward an awareness of Allah and a dedication to piety. This awareness is called *Taqwa* and is cultivated by fasting, giving to the poor—or providing money for the meal to break the fast for a larger group—and public readings and recitations of the Quran.

Near the end of Ramadan, Muslims observe the Night of Power, which remembers the day they believe Muhammed received the first part of the Quran. The actual date of the Night of Power isn't known, so Muslims will pray the night of and several nights before.

Ramadan is a period of increased spiritual openness, which means it's a crucial time when we can pray for God to reveal Himself. Through this prayer guide, you'll discover ways you can intercede for Muslims and those who serve among them. Journey with us as we pray for the resolution to the world's greatest problem—spiritual lostness.



DAY 01

Praying for our lost Muslim friends and neighbors is our responsibility. Jesus calls us to pray for this very task. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, "The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." ***Pray God will remove the blinders from Sub-Saharan African Muslims' eyes, hearts, and minds so they can believe in Jesus.*** Those lost will spend forever suffering in torment away from God if they do not embrace Christ. This realization should cause us to plead to the Father for Muslims to believe the gospel and for God to save their souls from an eternity in hell.



DAY 02

Islam is growing across the world through new births, the marketplace, and radical movements. However, we serve a God who is greater than man's plans. Would you pray with us that the good news of Christ would enter the home of every Sub-Saharan African Muslim family, overpower marketplaces with the message of hope and freedom, and bring the most radical jihadist to his knees? ***Pray the good news of Christ changes lives around the world and overcomes fear with true hope and peace.***

DAY 03

After hearing the gospel, an Arab man was asked to describe Christianity in one word. He replied, "Love." He was profoundly affected by his encounter with Arab Christians and the love they have for God, each other, and the world around them. Pray that the churches surrounded by Islam would embody the love of Christ as Jesus said in Matthew, "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven," Matt 5:44. ***Please pray for these churches to be strong and to endure harsh words and actions against them as they rely on Jesus to sustain them so they seek to be a blessing to those around them.*** "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them," Rom. 12:14.



DAY 04

In Colossians, Paul exhorts believers to "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ...Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person," Col. 4:2-6. Pray for missionaries who meet people for coffee, go for walks in the park, and share play dates with their children and are looking for an "open door" to share the gospel. Pray they do not neglect time in the Word and prayer, which is their lifeline, both in the joyful days and discouraging days. **Pray for boldness and courage, so they are led by the Spirit in their conversations to point their Muslim neighbors and friends to Christ.**

DAY 05

The Hui people group of China is among the largest unreached people groups in the world. Out of 13 million Hui, only a few thousand are followers of Christ. That means that 99.9% of Hui people are unaware of the gospel. For the Hui, to be Hui is to be Muslim, and turning to Christ would mean abandoning their ethnic identity. The Hui trace their lineage to Arab traders who came to China during the seventh through fourteenth centuries. Muslim ancestry is important to the Hui, but most have never heard that the true descendants of Abraham are those who have faith in Christ. **Pray to God to save spiritually lost Hui through Jesus.** "And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost," Luke 19:9-10.



DAY 06

On an island in Southeast Asia live a feared group that most nationals will not reach out to because of a long history of violence. Yet, in the hearts of four local Christian young women, there is a calling to bring the message of hope by living in communities where this unreached Muslim people group dwells. "They need clean water, they need sanitation, but they need Jesus more than anything," one of the women said. Pray for the four women as they lead gospel studies among the women and have seen several put their faith in God's plan for salvation. They also provide opportunities to make a living. ***As the community work they offer changes the physical lives of this resistant people group, pray the gospel continues to transform their spiritual lives and brings maturity to believers, enabling them to stand against persecution.***

DAY 07

Jesus promised that He would build His church, and He's doing so in some difficult Muslim-majority areas of Southeast Asia. These house churches are small, dedicated, bold in their witness, and thriving despite threats from neighbors, local government, Muslim clerics, and the national government. ***Pray for these believers as they joyfully live out their faith in Jesus in the midst of persecution.*** Pray for comfort in the struggle and pray for boldness. Pray they stand strong and endure in their faith no matter what arrows the enemy slings at them. Pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ as they pray for you!

DAY 08

Pray for local Baptist churches in Southeast Asia as they seek to understand and live out the call of God in their lives. Pray for boldness in their witness to their Muslim friends and neighbors. Pray for all disputes and tensions within the churches to be resolved. Pray Southeast Asian Baptists would heed the prayer of Jesus and would "be one"—unified—amid difficult living circumstances, physical needs, and pressure from local governments to be silent about Jesus.





DAY 09

Proverbs 12:14 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." Likewise, Muslims believe they know the way of life through following the tenets of Islam—prayer, fasting, giving to the poor, a pilgrimage to Mecca, and their belief there is only one God and Muhammad is his prophet. In truth, they are lifeless. Paul said, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world," Ephesians 2:1-2a. Apart from Christ, everyone is spiritually dead, without hope for resurrection. **Pray Muslims will feel the weight of their spiritual death and encounter the truth of the Life-giver Himself, Jesus Christ. Ask God to send dreams, visions, believers, and media to touch hearts. Pray He will raise them to walk in eternal life as His beloved children.**

DAY 10

The gospel is advancing where God's Word is available in the heart language of the people and proclaimed in a manner they can access. After a long absence, a believer returned to his home and was amazed to find new believers. When asked how that happened, the new believers replied, "Remember, you left us God's Word." The Bible had been recorded and downloaded on an SD card. In other testimonies, the Word is heard over the radio waves, or for those who are literate, they read a Bible in their language. **Pray for the millions across Northern Africa and the Middle East (NAME) to have access to God's Word in their languages. Pray for the hard work of translating the Word where there is no Bible and producing it in audio and written form. Pray for gospel advancement across NAME.**





DAY
11

Churches in Northern Africa and the Middle East (NAME) face outside pressures of persecution and internal fissures that lead to disunity. Believers can face rejection from family, social isolation, difficulty finding a job or spouse, physical abuse, imprisonment, or even death. Faced with these threats, many believers are afraid to tell others of their faith or meet with other Jesus followers. Pray believers will remain faithful as they endure persecution. Ask for miraculous provision and deliverance according to the Lord's will. Pray persecuted believers grow in their faith and support one another in sacrificial ways. Pray believers will love and be patient with one another when faced with disagreements, sin, and offenses. ***Pray they will "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another... And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony," Col. 3:12,14.***

DAY
12

Despite the resistance to Christianity in many areas, Christians have lived in some areas of Northern Africa and the Middle East for centuries and continue to live among and love their friends and neighbors. It is not easy. Believers often deal with persecution and cultural differences between faiths and meet resistance at the mention of Jesus. However, they seek to obediently and boldly make known the name of Jesus despite the hardships that may come. Pray for believers to be reminded of David's words, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold," Psalm 18:2. ***Pray for their protection and encouragement. Ask for the Father to use them mightily throughout these difficult places.***

DAY
13

Praise God that He is building His church in Central Asia, and the gates of hell will not overcome it (Matt. 16:18). Although the final victory is sure, this period before Christ's return is fraught with spiritual attacks and difficulties. The church must be grounded in the true understanding and application of God's Word. With that in mind, please pray for Central Asian pastors. There is a common need across Central Asia for pastors who are mature, faithful, living holy lives, and committed to faithful Bible teaching. Some pastors rule with a heavy hand. Others do not faithfully teach the Word. ***Pray God raises up godly men and that He will mature existing pastors who are weak. Pray that as the pastors grow, their flocks will thrive under a humble leadership that mirrors the chief Shepherd Himself (1 Peter 5:4).***

DAY 14

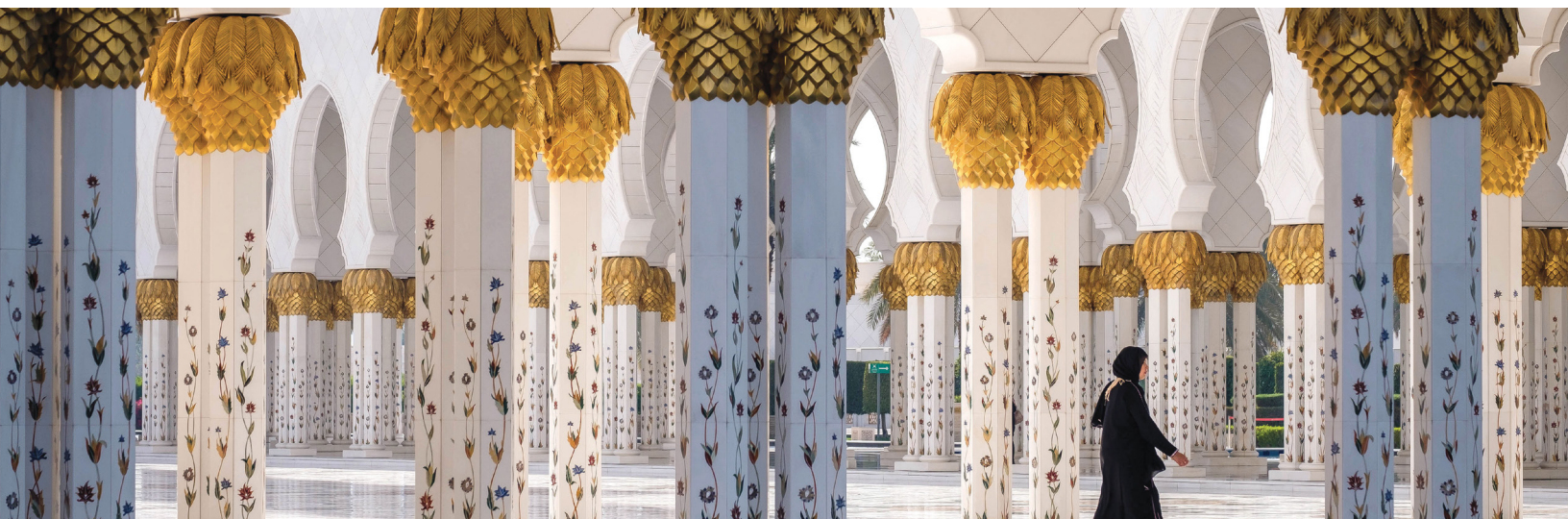
Many locations in Central Asia are difficult to access and spiritually dark. Cultural pressures make those curious about Jesus afraid to read the Bible or enter a church. In some locations, seekers fear they might lose their lives if they continue down a path of learning about Christianity. Even so, the gospel is advancing. People find gospel truths online. They hear from believing relatives who have emigrated to the West. They rally their courage to walk up and ring the doorbell of a place where believers are known to gather. This is the incredible work of God. ***Pray the gospel will continue to advance in Central Asia. Ask the Spirit to stir hearts and lead seekers into the knowledge of Jesus as Savior and Lord.***

DAY 15

The work in Central Asia is still new. Most of Central Asia's nearly 400 million people are spiritually dead—when you break it down, this means only one person in a crowd of over 1,000 people is an evangelical Christian. Central Asians think Jesus is a prophet who lived and died, not a divine and merciful Savior who is their only hope of salvation. Many locations in Central Asia are difficult to access because of war, visa problems, or simply the reality that they are small villages that are closed to outsiders. Pray God will open doors into places of lostness. In many closed and difficult locations, national partners are vital for any gospel presence. ***Pray God will raise up godly Central Asian men and women with a passion to share the gospel with the lost around them and, as God leads, even go to difficult places.***

DAY 16

Many Christian workers in Central Asia live in a constant state of instability. Their lives feel uncertain, and questions like, "Will war break out?" or "Will my visa be canceled?" can be a looping track in their minds. Even in stable locations, questions like, "Will I ever learn this language?" or "Will my kids make friends?" can carry a sense of uncertainty. On the good days, this reminds workers they are passing through this life as they should, as "foreigners and temporary residents," with eyes turned toward heaven (Hebrews 11:13). On hard days, the stress of uncertainty can lead to discouragement, dread, and anticipatory grief. ***Please pray the Spirit of God will bolster spirits and strengthen the faith of these dear souls. Ask God to be the provider for His children and that they will never doubt His loving presence in the raging waters, even when they can't see His footprints (Psalm 77:19).***





DAY 17

In a Muslim country in the Balkans, a war fought in the name of religion has left a people mired in trauma and hopelessness. The mountainous terrain and isolated villages are a reminder of the lack of gospel access even in the midst of a historically Christian continent. Lostness in this country looks like young people who have no thought of a future and spend their days in fearful despair. They are afraid of the shame, societal pressures, and expectations of their families but feel that life has no purpose or joy. ***Pray for these people, young and old, to know this sure and steadfast anchor of the soul and hope that enters into their hearts because of Jesus Christ. Pray those who feel marginalized and oppressed will know they are seen and loved by our Heavenly Father.***

DAY 18

Amongst the diverse cities of Western Europe, a harvest has begun in the diaspora peoples from one Middle Eastern country. In a church in central London, baptisms continued for 30 weeks from this one people group. Many churches have seen the spiritual opportunity and opened their buildings to these new believers who need a place to gather and grow in their faith. Pray for these new believers to be disciplined and form healthy missional churches that reach out with the good news to communities where they live and their home country. ***Pray for leaders to emerge from these believers who will be faithful to teach and obey God's Word.***

DAY 19

Pray for the church in a Muslim country in Europe where many churches were planted in the early 90s. Despite the decline of the church in recent years, God is on the move. Believers in this country gather to pray for and plan a united strategy for reaching all their countrymen. Pray for the establishment and cooperation of this missional group. ***Pray for the individual churches to continue to provide gospel access in their communities and to begin to work cross-culturally to engage their neighbors.***



DAY 20

Reaching non-Christian Deaf can seem like a mountainous task. There are Deaf men and women who are living everyday lives, not realizing they're lost. Others may know they have done wrong but feel hopeless, knowing they can't save themselves. Many Deaf are forced by parents, schools, or society to practice Islam, but they don't understand what they're doing. Gaining access to a Deaf community can be difficult. Once contact is made there are still Deaf who show up at gatherings and see a cross and listen to someone preach but don't know its meaning. Many Deaf have no exposure to a Bible at all, or if they do, they are unable to read it or access it in their heart language. They may be eager to learn about Jesus but have no one to teach them. ***Pray for opportunities for Deaf people to see and clearly understand His Stories.***

DAY 21

Throughout the year, StoryOne camps are held in various locations around the world. The attendees usually gather from different countries, including Muslim nations. StoryOne camps provide training for the Deaf as they study His Stories and render them into their respective sign languages. They are provided with tools to edit, store, save, and upload their translation work to the Deaf Pathway Bible app. Praise the Lord for how He is working through these tools alongside a strategy for evangelism and church planting. Praise Him for the many stories that have already been translated into various sign languages, resulting in new believers and the formation of Deaf groups meeting together. ***Ask God to move in a mighty way among those who attend and, as they depart, pray they are equipped and empowered to carry on the task before them-proclaiming the good news of Jesus to lost Deaf.***

DAY 22

Whether it's one Deaf person in a village or a group of Deaf students at a university, storying groups are formed where His stories are shared. This leads to the transformation of lives and new churches. As Deaf nationals become believers and churches are formed, Christian workers partner with them to provide support through discipleship, encouragement, and teaching the functions of the church. This sometimes means a follow-up visit to a village, as the Deaf often travel several hours to these groups, returning home to share Bible stories with others. Ask the Father to increase their faith, sustaining, and drawing them closer to Him as they do kingdom work. ***Pray for local Deaf churches to be consistent in attendance and continue growing in Him as they disciple and develop new churches. Pray for the Deaf to see the good news lived out among believers.***



DAY 23

South Asia is home to one-third of the world's Muslim population. Many Muslims live in communities closed to outsiders, making it difficult to enter to share the truth of the gospel. Some of the communities are physically closed with walls or barriers. Access is also difficult when women wear head coverings, hijabs, or full-body coverings, burqas, and do not speak to outsiders. In some areas, it is not physically safe to enter, and others are geographically isolated, making access a challenge. God is not thwarted by this! Entry strategies are in place to reach those who remain inaccessible. Please pray for a digital engagement strategy. This month there will be ads placed for those who want to hear the Word. ***Pray for God to soften the hearts of those seeking Him and that they will reach out digitally, hear the Word, and choose to follow the Savior who loves them so deeply.***

DAY 24

"I was born and brought up in a Muslim family, but I had no peace in my heart. My father taught me how to do Muslim prayer. I did Muslim prayer and a 30-day fast every year in the month of Ramadan. But no peace. One day I met one Muslim brother who now follows Jesus Christ, and every Sunday they do Bible study in his house. I went to his house for Bible study. I joined their fellowship, and I felt so happy in my heart. After that I came to know that Jesus Christ is the only way to go to heaven. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and got baptized. I thank God because He sent His only son, Jesus, for our sin. I was saved by His blood," testimony from a South Asian man. Day-by-day, Muslims like this man are coming to faith in Jesus. ***Pray God continues to raise an army of former Muslims to share the gospel with their friends and neighbors!***

DAY 25

Meeting together regularly for discipleship and fellowship is often difficult among Muslim background believers in South Asia. Many risk losing family, a voice in their community, and sometimes their lives if they proclaim Christ widely. Many fight fear, and for some, it's financially difficult to gather and meet with others as they must travel some distance to find another believer. ***Ask the Father to draw many to Himself, and that these new disciples would be able to gather to form churches in their communities.***

DAY 26

Muslims fast from food and drink from sunup to sundown every day of the month of Ramadan. Some of the more devout Muslims will not even swallow their saliva, fearing it will negate the fast. Since being faithful to fasting during Ramadan is one of the core tenets of Islam, devout followers will take the utmost precaution. During their daytime fast, Muslims spend extra time concentrating on prayer and reading the Quran. When the sun sets each day, families and friends gather for a big meal to break the fast. On the final night of Ramadan, families typically arrange for a grand feast to celebrate their month of fasting. ***Pray God sends laborers to Muslims around the world. Pray they repent, believe, and follow Christ. Pray they learn that following Christ is not a set of rules to follow but a relationship with the Savior of the world!***

DAY 27

Many young Muslims are weary of the extensive rules they feel they must follow to be a "good Muslim." The call to prayer blaring through the speakers of the mosques five times a day reminds them of what is expected of them and how they fall short when they don't stop everything and roll out their prayer mats to pray. Pray God gives young people a realization of their need for grace and salvation that only comes through the Savior. ***Pray for God to send believers to share this good news with the many Muslims who are increasingly convinced of the futility of man-made rules.***



DAY
28

Heavenly Father, we pray the gospel will impact entire Muslim families. Use the power of your Word to help them hear and understand the truth of who Christ is. Send laborers to them. Grow your church among Muslims and raise up leaders from those who commit their lives to Christ. Teach them how to love one another well. Give them joy and peace as they experience the presence of the Living Lord.

DAY
29

Gracious Lord, we pray Muslims will recognize the sacrifice of Jesus so all their sins may be forgiven. You have made a way for them to be with You for all eternity, clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Bear witness to Muslim hearts that their sins separate them from You and they can only enter Your presence by the blood of Jesus Christ.

DAY
30

Merciful Father, watch over the Muslim-background believers who have turned from Islam to follow You. Give them Your peace when they face various trials because of their faith in You. Give them the courage to stand firm regardless of their situation. Provide for their needs and give them boldness and joy that can only be explained by Your power and love. Draw many to Yourself through their testimony of Your faithfulness in their lives.





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