

Praying for our family

TAKE PART IN IDOP

Every year hundreds of churches around the world join the International Day of Prayer (IDOP) for persecuted Christians.

Ask your church leaders now to consider taking part on Sunday, November 6 (or another day of your choice). Look at the creative ideas and resources here, and plan your prayer event.

Normal church meeting (up to 5 mins)

Read out one or more of the prayers on pages ii to iv, perhaps using different readers. Use the topical bullet points to guide informal prayers.

Produce photocopies of page ii, or project the PowerPoint version available from www.releaseinternational.org/idop. Use the prayer and bullet points to pray together as a church or in small groups.

Or play just a brief extract from one of our DVDs (see page iii), followed by prayer.

Meeting dedicated to IDOP (10-20 mins)

Choose one or more of our DVDs listed overleaf, which focus on a particular country where Christians are being persecuted today. Most of our DVDs are about ten minutes long, so are ideal for playing during a meeting.

Our four most recent DVDs focus on North Korea (*No Other God*), China (*Forbidden City*), India (*Standing Firm*) and Pakistan (*Cry Justice*). If you choose one of these, then you can use the prayers and bullet points on page ii, and in the *North Korea Prayer Guide*. DVDs focusing on other countries are also available (see page iii).

Before the meeting, watch the video(s) and **plan** which section(s) you wish to use. Most of our videos give specific prayer points on screen, which could also be incorporated into your meeting.

Using the information we have provided, try different ways of praying: allowing people to pray in silence, as small groups, or reading the written prayers together aloud. Feel free to **experiment**.

Consider setting up four **prayer stations** for North Korea (see opposite), or use the Liturgy by Release Patron Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali on pages iii and iv. Another prayer is available at www.releaseinternational.org/pray

Other ideas

- Young people in your church could set up their own 24-hour prayer room to pray for some of these topics. Check out the prayer information from Release Potential at www.releasepotential.org/category/prayer or the country profiles and news at www.releaseinternational.org
- Check out the songs which have been written specially for Release at www.releaseinternational.org/songs

Ideas to help you and your church take part in this year's International Day of Prayer (IDOP) for persecuted Christians on Sunday, November 6.

Prayer stations for North Korea



Please use our free 31-day *North Korea Prayer Guide* to set up **four prayer stations** in your church or meeting room. You can download the guide from www.releaseinternational.org/idop or request a printed copy by calling us on 01689 823491.

Set up a location for each of the four stations: you could use a table or display board, a corner of the room, or a separate room or space for each. Each station

focuses on a different aspect of life for Christians in North Korea and allows for both personal reflection and prayer. If you wish, you can also use visual prompts at the different stations (see below). Ask individuals to make the 'journey' between the four stations, stopping and praying at each in whichever order they choose. Or organise your intercessors into four groups that rotate between the stations.

You could print or photocopy the Prayer Guide prayers, enlarge them to poster size, or write them out on postcards for people to choose from.

1 Hermit kingdom

Prayer Guide prayers: 1-8

Visual prompt: a **Bible**. In North Korea, possessing a Bible, Christian literature or attending a Christian meeting is illegal.

2 Life behind bars

Prayer Guide prayers: 9-15

Visual prompt: bowl of (uncooked) **rice**. It is estimated that the North Korean authorities hold about 200,000 people in concentration and detention camps, many of whom are Christians. Prisoners endure brutal treatment in appalling conditions.

3 Far from home

Prayer Guide prayers: 16-24

Visual prompt: image of **North Korean flag** (downloadable from www.releaseinternational.org/idop). Untold numbers of North Koreans defect to China each year, many hoping to reach South Korea. The journey is long and dangerous.

4 Bringing Christ home

Prayer Guide prayers: 25-31

Visual prompt: inflated **balloon** (or balloons). Release partners drop gospel leaflets inside North Korea using large, slow-release balloons. Pray that these leaflets will plant seeds of faith in everyone who finds them.

North Korea petition

If you have not done so already, please download and print our petition for North Korea, which urges the authorities to allow greater religious freedom. Encourage members of your church to add their names to support persecuted Christians.

Pray for persecuted Christians

CHINA

Although the constitution provides for religious freedom, China's Government has consistently tried to control religious practice. All religious groups are required to register. Those who refuse are regarded as 'illegal' and sometimes forced underground. During 2011, a number of churches and Christians have continued to face intimidation, with some individuals being detained and tortured.

PRAY FOR

- Pastor **Shi Enhao**, vice-president of the Chinese House Church Alliance, who was sentenced in July to two years of 're-education through labour'.



- Prominent Beijing human rights lawyer **Gao Zhisheng** who has not been seen since April 2010. Gao has made public statements about his brutal torture by security police in 2007 – despite being warned by officials not to do so.
- Members of **Shouwang Church**, Beijing, who repeatedly held their Sunday worship outdoors during 2011 after being barred entry to their normal venue. Police officers then arrested hundreds of church members and detained several leaders. It is believed that the church has attracted official attention because its members include many well-educated people, including human rights lawyers, former government officials and religious scholars.

INDIA

Hindu nationalists have been open and violent in opposing the church. Several pastors have been murdered, others beaten. Churches and their congregations have been attacked or threatened. Seven Indian states have now passed anti-conversion laws.

Lord, we pray for the vast majority of Christians in India who are from lower castes, scattered across India, and often under-educated.

Give wisdom and insight to all those engaged in evangelism. Specifically, we pray that the conferences which the All India Christian Council (AICC) gives on basic civil rights, sensitivity in witnessing and theology of persecution will help 10,000 attendees this year.

With more than 100 serious physical assaults each year, especially in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, we pray for courage for fellow Christians.

May the micro-grants administered by AICC help provide self-sustainable income for pastors. May rebuilt houses and churches serve as a symbol of the global church's support for victims of persecution.

May the Bibles that are distributed to people who have lost their belongings in arson or other attacks give them comfort and guidance in the days ahead.

From Release partner the All India Christian Council

PAKISTAN

The constitution establishes Islam as the state religion: proselytising among Muslims is banned. Pakistan's blasphemy laws – especially the notorious Section 295C of the Penal Code – are increasingly used against religious minorities to settle personal scores. So the number of Christians charged is disproportionately high. Christians, especially women, face discrimination at work, in education and in the legal system.

PRAY FOR

- Christians in prison under Pakistan's blasphemy laws. Although the death penalty for blasphemy has never been carried out, those accused often wait many years for their cases to be dismissed, putting severe emotional and financial pressure on them and their families.
- Release partner Sharing Life Ministry Pakistan, which gives pastoral care and practical support to Christian prisoners and their families. Pray for God's strength and guidance for all their staff.
- Release partner CLAAS (Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement) which champions the religious rights of Christians and other religious minorities. Pray for the protection of Director Joseph Francis (pictured) who has received death threats from militants.



Remembering the persecuted

LITURGY by Release Patron Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali

Open Blessed be your name (Matt Redman)

Invitation to Worship:

Leader: In You, Lord, do I take refuge

Response: **Let me never be put to shame**

L: In Your righteousness, deliver and save

R: **Be as a refuge and a strong fortress** (Psalm 71:2-3)

Prayer and Praise ending with the Doxology:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Reading: Matt 5:1-16 or Matt 10:34-42 or 2 Cor 4:1-10 or 2 Tim 4:1-8

Short message, or testimonies, from those who have experienced persecution or those who have visited such people.

Prayer:

Almighty God, who has taught us through your Son, Jesus Christ, that those who follow Him may be persecuted: strengthen, comfort and encourage all those who suffer harassment, violence, imprisonment and even death for being followers of Jesus. We pray for those who persecute your people; may their hearts be turned towards you through the faithful witness of those they persecute. Protect members of the families and church communities of those who are persecuted and bless the work and ministry of Release International and its partners as they support those who are suffering and seek to be a voice for persecuted Christians. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Continued overleaf

ORDER A RELEASE DVD FOR IDOP

Each DVD is available for a suggested donation of £10. They may also be purchased from our secure eStore www.releaseinternational.org/estore



No Other God (12 mins) includes the moving testimonies of North Koreans who have escaped from the brutal conditions and repression of the hermit kingdom.



Forbidden City (11 mins) features interviews with Chinese Christian lawyers who have been seized by the authorities for speaking out about human rights abuses.



Standing Firm (12 mins) reports on the rise of Hindu fundamentalism in India and how church leaders and their congregations are being targeted by extremists.



Cry Justice (12 mins) reports on the plight of persecuted Christians in Pakistan, and includes testimonies from the village of Gojra, Punjab province, which was attacked by militants.



We Forgive (10 mins) describes how Christians in Nigeria continue to face violent attacks in Plateau state, yet still find God's grace to forgive their attackers.



Staying Power (10 mins) Find out more about the secret and dangerous lives of Christians from a Muslim-background in Egypt.



Pray for Eritrea (13 minutes) tells how Christians are being detained without trial in Eritrea because of their active faith in Jesus.

FREE POSTER SET

These three punchy full-colour posters, in both A3 and A2 sizes, capture powerfully the needs of persecuted Christians, and are ideal for displaying in your church or on your church noticeboard. **Free** if ordered by phone or coupon here.



Turn over to order

LITURGY (continued)

Hymn or Song:

Choose from: *God moves in a mysterious way; For all the Saints who from their labours rest; How deep the Father's love; Faithful one, so unchanging.*

Closing Prayer

Lord God, heavenly Father, give us the courage of the martyrs to bear witness, without flinching, to Your great love for us. Give us their confidence in the resurrection of Your Son, Jesus, and give us that same power and reassurance of the Holy Spirit as You give them, so that we too may fearlessly bring Your good news to a needy world. This we ask in the name of Him who was crucified for us and who called us to take up our crosses and to follow Him, even Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

R: **Amen and Amen**

Song: All I once held dear

Benediction:

L: Christ crucified draw you to Himself, to find in Him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven and the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you forever.

R: **Amen**

L: Let us bless the Lord

R: **Thanks be to God**



Order form

PLEASE SEND ME THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

ITEM (please tick)	QUANTITY	TOTAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Set of 3 A3 posters		FREE
<input type="checkbox"/> Set of 3 A2 posters		FREE
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>No Other God</i> DVD (N Korea) Suggested donation £10		£
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Forbidden City</i> DVD (China) Suggested donation £10		£
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Standing Firm</i> DVD (India) Suggested donation £10		£
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Cry Justice</i> DVD (Pakistan) Suggested donation £10		£
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>We Forgive</i> DVD (Nigeria) Suggested donation £10		£
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Staying Power</i> DVD (Egypt) Suggested donation £10		£
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pray for Eritrea</i> DVD Suggested donation £10		£
	Total	£
	Donation to Release	£
	Grand total	£

I enclose my cheque
(payable to Release International).

You may also order resources by
telephoning 01689 823491.

Title _____

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Daytime Tel No _____

Email _____

release
international
voice of persecuted christians

Release International, PO Box 54, Orpington BR5 9RT
email: info@releaseinternational.org

Registered Charity 280577