

Open *Doors*

PRAYER DIARY | May/June 2024



“I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.”

MATTHEW 16:18
(NLT)

MAY

India

Wednesday 1 May

General elections are continuing across India. Pray for peaceful, free and fair elections, and ask God to raise up a government who will govern for the welfare of all Indians, regardless of ethnic or religious background.

Thursday 2 May

Political parties at central and state levels strategically manoeuvre Christians to gain more votes. Pray that Christians will use their vote wisely in choosing a government who will lead the nation with justice and righteousness.

Friday 3 May

Remember the thousands of Christians displaced by ethno-religious violence in Manipur a year ago. Many still have no home, food or income. Ask God to provide their daily needs and pray for Open Doors partners supporting people with food and aid.

Saturday 4 May

India is seeing a rise in regional conflicts based on ethnicity. Pray that tensions will not be exacerbated during the elections, and pray for God's wisdom and protection for believers in affected areas.

Sunday 5 May

Indian Christians who convert from Hinduism are especially vulnerable. Pray for their protection as they follow Jesus, particularly in states where Hindu extremists are most active.

Monday 6 May

Twelve of India's states have implemented anti-conversion laws, which are often used to falsely accuse and arrest Christians. Pray that anti-conversion laws will not be imposed in more states, and that the country's laws are used for the good of all its people.

Tuesday 7 May

Pray for the many pastors and Christian leaders arrested on false charges because of their ministry, and tortured behind bars. Pray that the misuse of anti-conversion laws will stop, allowing pastors to freely serve God.

Wednesday 8 May

When Pastor Laxman's* church began to grow, local Hindu extremists accused him of luring people to Christianity with money. He was beaten, arrested and his church destroyed (see Magazine p.6). Open Doors partners helped him start a small farm to support his family and community. Pray for healing from his

injuries and protection for him and his family.

Thursday 9 May

Laxman asks that we pray for the reconstruction of his church so his congregation has a place to worship. "This is God's work," he says. "No one can close it or shut it down. It is for the Kingdom of the Lord."

South Asia

Friday 10 May – Sri Lanka

A controversial online safety bill was passed in January to regulate online content. Any social media content deemed 'insulting' could now be subject to legal action. Pray that the bill will not be used to target minorities, and that Christians will be wise in what they post online.

Saturday 11 May – Sri Lanka

Many government schools are Buddhist schools. They teach Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism, but don't give Christianity the same attention. Open Doors partners support volunteer teachers to teach minority Christian students in rural schools. Pray for strength to keep serving despite opposition.

Sunday 12 May – Bangladesh

Mojnu (27) was jailed in January for sharing the gospel and distributing gospel leaflets. A case

was also filed against his church leader, Lovelu, who has gone into hiding. Pray for a wise lawyer to represent these brothers and ask God to provide for their families.

Monday 13 May – Bangladesh

Praise God for the release of Akram*, a Muslim-background believer jailed in 2023 on false charges of conducting anti-government activities and converting poor Muslims. Pray for his full recovery. "I am thankful to all of you for continuously praying for me and supporting my family in my absence," he says.

Tuesday 14 May – Pakistan

Pray for those living in fear following August's attacks on Christians in Jaranwala. Some youths are seeking to arm themselves to defend their churches. Pray that Christians will instead take refuge in the name of the Lord, their strong tower (Proverbs 18:10).

Wednesday 15 May – Pakistan

Nationwide prayer and evangelistic outreaches are taking place across the country. Pray that many will be impacted by God's love and that the church will grow.

*Names changed for security reasons

Abdulla's obedience bears much fruit

Abdulla and his family had a plan when they fled Afghanistan – but God had other ideas

When the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021, we asked you to pray for the many Afghans who were forced to flee the country. This included Abdulla*, whose story we shared last year. When he and his family left Afghanistan for a neighbouring country, their goal was 'a better life' in Europe. But they soon sensed God had another plan.

"I prayed and now I'm sure God is calling me and my family to serve here," shares Abdulla. "I know that many refugees from Afghanistan are already in Western countries, even some of our friends, but we are not going. My wife and I decided to follow God's calling.

"I'm working on a Christian internet resource," he continues, referring to a new online ministry that involves sharing the gospel in his native language. "A month ago,

a man called us and asked a lot of questions about Jesus. It turns out that he was from a radical Muslim community but was very interested in learning about Jesus. That man is now ready to accept Jesus.

"It's obvious that people are using it; we get phone calls very often. It is very encouraging that we can serve such people through our internet resource."

"MY WIFE AND I DECIDED TO FOLLOW GOD'S CALLING."

Abdulla and his family are also serving other Afghan refugees, and Abdulla leads a house group at the church they're involved in. His wife, Fatima* is involved in Sunday school.

Recently, Abdulla was invited to Bible training organised by Open Doors local partners. "This training is so interesting



Local partners are helping Abdulla grow in his understanding of the Bible

and informative," he says. "I am very grateful for the invitation; I learnt a lot."

Abdulla's passion for the gospel is rubbing off on his three children, and their eldest, who is 12 years old, is now telling his classmates about Jesus! "He is also responsible for leading our evening family prayers twice a week. We gave him this responsibility to teach him," says Abdulla.

And in further good news, Abdulla was granted citizenship in the country where they've settled. The family are now seeking this for Fatima. Once this is secured, they hope

to visit Fatima's parents, who are Muslims, and tell them about Jesus. They also fled Afghanistan, leaving all their property behind, and now live in the Middle East.

PRAY

- For continued safety for Abdulla and his family
- That Fatima will be granted citizenship, and that the couple can visit her parents and tell them about Jesus
- For the family's ministry to keep bearing fruit.

*Names changed for security reasons

South East Asia

Thursday 16 May

Pray for Open Doors partners meeting to review the progress of projects in the region and to plan for the future. Ask God for insight, guidance and unity.

Friday 17 May

Nina*, a local partner's daughter, is sharing the gospel with her friends. They even come to her for prayer. She's one of several children in the region bravely expressing their faith in schools. Pray for their passion and influence to grow.

Saturday 18 May – Brunei

"Leave that book at home!" Lina* was told by friends who saw her reading the Bible. "I was so frightened," she says. Ask the Lord to guide and embolden young believers, like Lina.

Sunday 19 May

– Pentecost

When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, onlookers were "Amazed and perplexed, [and] asked one another, 'What does this mean?'" (Acts 2:12). Pray that the Spirit's work amongst our persecuted family will provoke similar reactions, and lead people to Jesus.

Monday 20 May

– Philippines

"It's a great help in my walk with God," says Gracie,

one of 40 believers from Muslim backgrounds at a youth leadership programme run by local partners. Ask the Holy Spirit to give this group prophecies, visions and dreams that inspire them in their calling.

Tuesday 21 May

– Philippines

"Jesus has never abandoned me, despite persecution," says Lyn* (19), who was beaten by her father for her faith. She's now a youth leader. "I want the children to experience the love that I have from Jesus." Ask God to richly bless her ministry.

Wednesday 22 May – Vietnam

After telling others about Jesus, Danh* and his wife, Thoung*, lost their home and livelihood. The couple, who have three children, were also beaten. Local partners are providing them with support, including material for a new home. Ask God to encourage the family in their faith.

Thursday 23 May

– Vietnam

Tuan Kiet* was beaten by thugs hired by the village authorities after leading seven families to Jesus. Pray for Tuan Kiet's healing and that more villagers will encounter Jesus through him.

Friday 24 May – Laos

Persecution survival training by local partners is helping Pastor Thongsai* equip believers facing imprisonment. "Previously, they could be held for however long the authorities wanted, but now they can be released quickly," he says. Pray that partners will be strengthened in their work.

Saturday 25 May – Indonesia

After attending a discipleship class run by local partners, Surya* was inspired to preach and baptise and disciple new believers. Pray for more testimonies like Surya's.

Sunday 26 May – Indonesia

Praise God that local partners could finalise the provision of 1,000 New Testaments for the Moi tribe in Papua. "We know that this will impact the Moi for generations to come," said Stephen and Carolyn Crockett, who've been working on the translation for 23 years.

Monday 27 May – Malaysia

The court case into the disappearance of Pastor Raymond Koh – who was abducted by secret state police on 13 February 2017 – is due to resume tomorrow, and continue on 4-6 June. Pray that truth and justice will prevail.

Myanmar

Tuesday 28 May

More than three years since the military takeover, many believers are struggling to see answers to their fervent prayers. Pray for perseverance, encouragement and breakthrough.

Wednesday 29 May

"Many Christian youths, men and women, are battling drug addiction," says a pastor, highlighting how the civil war has increased drug abuse. Pray against addiction and availability.

Thursday 30 May

Ask God to renew church leaders attending a trauma relief programme run by local partners. Many are physically and spiritually exhausted. "We had almost given up," said Pastor Aung*. "Thank you for giving us the strength again."

Friday 31 May

In February, the government announced two years' compulsory military service for young people. "Youths are living in fear of being arrested or abducted to forced military service, and are anxious because their future seems hopeless," says a partner. Pray for their safety and wellbeing.

*Names changed for security reasons

A chain reaction of hope in Manipur

In May 2023, after a series of protests between two tribal groups, the Kukis and Meiteis, violence erupted – and Christians from both tribes were targeted. Four hundred churches were burned down, and 50,000 believers displaced.

Ajay* is an Open Doors partner from the Hindu-majority Meitei tribe, but his home, church and community came under attack from Hindu extremists. He remembers them shouting: “You, tribal people and followers of the tribal God, come out!”

“We are not alone in the battle of faith.”

AJAY STRENGTHENS CHURCH LEADERS

“After setting the church on fire, they began to attack the houses, throwing bricks and smashing the doors with axes,” Ajay says. “My family and I were very scared. We watched helplessly as things that took years to be built were burned down to

ashes within a few hours. It was heartbreaking.”

As the situation worsened and church leaders became targets, Ajay helped them get to safety.

“I found out that some pastors were being forced to sign an agreement stating they would return to their previous faith, they would not rebuild their churches or hold new worship services and they would not convert people to Christianity,” he says. “If they refused to sign this agreement, they were threatened with dire consequences.”

YOU STRENGTHEN AJAY

Thanks to your gifts and prayers, other Open Doors partners in the region were able to help Ajay and other believers immediately.

“We were uncertain about our survival and had no food to eat and no secure place to take shelter,” Ajay says. “When Open Doors partners approached us and provided grocery items and safe housing for us, our hearts were filled with joy. We are assured



Watch a video about Ajay at opendoorsuk.org/india



Ajay can continue meeting the needs of believers, thanks to you

that we are not alone in the battle of faith and that the body of Christ is present with us in every step, whether pain or joy.

“I am so thankful not only for the help that you provided to me and my family, but also for the prayer support and teachings through the persecution survival trainings,” he continues. “I have the strength now to encourage my fellow believers, because I have been encouraged through you.”

Though the worst of the conflict has passed, regular violence in Manipur State is ongoing. Ajay still lives in the area, helping pastors

conduct their ministries safely. “God has been protecting us,” he says. “These people might destroy our buildings, but they can never destroy God’s people.”

PLEASE PRAY

- For God’s blessing on Ajay’s ministry, that the church in Manipur will be strengthened
- For Open Doors partners ministering to displaced and grieving believers
- That the violence in Manipur will subside and true peace will be restored.

*Name changed for security reasons

JUNE

India

Saturday 1 June

Over 2,200 Indian churches were destroyed or shut down last year. Pray that the Indian government will protect the church's constitutional right to peaceful assembly so that Christians have a place to worship freely.

Sunday 2 June

Narendran* and Kavita's* (PICTURED ON COVER) church was attacked by Hindu extremists, injuring Narendran and beating Kavita unconscious. Yet they've chosen to remain in their village and minister there. Pray for their healing and protection, and for comfort for their children, who struggle with fear.

Monday 3 June

Many members of Narendran's church have also been threatened and are too afraid to attend services. Ask the Lord to change the attitudes of those who are opposing the church, so that these believers can meet freely.

Tuesday 4 June

"The more we face persecution, the more the Lord will bless our ministry," says Narendran. "We have hope in God for our future." Pray that Narendran's courageous

testimony would strengthen the church and draw many more from his village to Christ.

Wednesday 5 June

Ask God to change the hearts of Hindu extremists opposing the growth of Christ's kingdom in India. Pray they would see Jesus and be changed by His love.

Thursday 6 June

Pastor Hari* is under constant surveillance. He's been arrested twice and had his church closed down. "We now gather in secret," he says. "We do take precautions, but I am confident that even if they kill me for my faith, I want to continue to serve the Lord." Ask the Holy Spirit to enable Hari to keep speaking God's Word with great boldness (Acts 4:29).

Friday 7 June

Pray for local Open Doors partners serving the Indian church with relief aid, biblical training and livelihood support. Many face persecution themselves. Pray for protection and discernment to know how best to strengthen the church in this challenging season.

Saturday 8 June – Volunteers Week

Join us in thanking God for all those who volunteer

to serve our persecuted family by speaking, leading prayer groups, helping at events, or as Church or Advocacy Reps. Pray that they will fan into flame the gifts God has given them to build up His church.

Iraq

Sunday 9 June

It's ten years since so-called Islamic State extremists took control of the Nineveh Plains, displacing over 100,000 Christians from their villages. Many remain in displacement. Pray for peace and stability so that more Christians can return home.

Monday 10 June

Pray for 22 displaced Christian families who returned to Qaraqosh district in February under security protection. Ask God to guard and strengthen them as they rebuild their lives in their homes after being away for so long.

Tuesday 11 June

O dai lives in Qaraqosh with his wife and four children. With the support of Open Doors partners he got a microloan and started a printing shop in his hometown. Pray that his business will be successful so that he can support his family.

Wednesday 12 June

The growing crisis in the Middle East has spilled over into Iraq in recent months, leaving many feeling anxious and fearful. Pray that church leaders will find strength and wisdom to lead their members through these challenging times, and pray for a brighter and more peaceful future for Iraq.

Thursday 13 June

Give thanks for the ordination of 12 new deacons in the church in al-Mansour, Baghdad, in January. Ask God to give them wisdom, strength and discernment as they serve the church and community.

Friday 14 June

Please pray for those who have converted from Islam to follow Jesus. Pray that they remain strong in their faith, even during difficult times, and continue to hold firm to the teachings of Jesus.

Saturday 15 June

Praise God that Open Doors partners are able to run counselling training to teach church leaders how to pastor and counsel those in need. Pray that many people will find peace and freedom through this ministry.

*Names changed for security reasons

SECRETLY STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH IN VIETNAM

Pastor Mike takes Bible training to the remotest parts of the country

Pastor Mike has found that nearly any location can become a place to worship in secret

Pastor Mike* is a church planter at heart. Originally from the Kinh tribe in Vietnam, he and his family have been fined and threatened – but nothing will stop him from following God’s call.

MAKING DIFFICULT CHOICES

No matter where he goes, Pastor Mike faces pressure from the local authorities, who are suspicious of his frequent travelling and Christian materials. In one area, he had to decide whether to give up his faith or his home. “If I obeyed them, then my family would have freedom – or if I followed my faith, I’d face so many difficulties,” Mike says. “I prayed to God and chose to follow Him. I did not accept their demand. As a result, my family had to live without a house of our own for many years.”

Despite moving from place to place almost continuously, Pastor Mike has seen God’s continuous faithfulness. “My family faced many difficulties, but God was always with us.”

A SECRET BIBLE SCHOOL

Pastor Mike eventually joined an underground Bible school, supported by Open Doors partners. He was strengthened as a pastor and now takes the Bible school to others. “This training has helped many churches in Vietnam, even in remote places. The believers grow in their spiritual lives, and they are confident to preach.”

Most believers in Vietnam belong to ethnic minority groups, like the Hmong, and are often converts from tribal religions. If discovered, they

face social exclusion, discrimination and attacks, so Pastor Mike and other trainers have to be creative about where to meet. “In our country, it is impossible to gather in an open place. We have to pray and find a place that offers us greater security. We can study at the streambank, in the garden, in the cave.”

“IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO GATHER IN AN OPEN PLACE.”

“WE NEED PRAYER”
Pastor Mike believes this discipleship training is vital to the growth and survival of the church in Vietnam. “I see the local churches experience many difficulties and persecutions, but they still stand strong and keep their faith in God. I think that people

having a foundation is really important when they plant churches.”

He knows the power of prayer and urges the church around the world to pray with him. “We need prayer for the difficult places,” he says. “We need more Christians to pray for us.”

PRAY

- For wisdom, protection and provision for Mike as he continues his ministry
- That the Bible school participants grow more confident in sharing their faith
- For Open Doors partners as they strengthen the church in Vietnam.

*Name changed for security reasons

Arabian Peninsula

Sunday 16 June

Give thanks that church leaders from across the region were able to gather for a leadership conference in February. Pray that these believers will continue to be strengthened and encouraged in their ministry.

Monday 17 June – Yemen

In 2023, there were over 100 baptisms in Yemen! A local partner says, “Please pray for the Yemeni church, that they will continue to be faithful as they boldly preach the gospel and be good stewards of Christ’s harvest.”

Tuesday 18 June – Yemen

One local partner is encouraging the people he disciples to contribute to the social media ministry. He hopes to grow more leaders in different provinces of Yemen; pray for wisdom to choose the right people to help grow the ministry.

Wednesday 19 June – Yemen

There is often a lack of trust between different Christian networks and organisations in the country. Please pray for unity among Yemeni Christian leaders, that they would work well together and overcome any divisions with maturity and wisdom.

Thursday 20 June – Yemen

Pray for five leaders undergoing a two-year leadership coaching programme. Pray that their hearts and minds will be transformed by the materials they read and the lessons they learn, so that they become more like Christ.

Friday 21 June – Saudi Arabia

In some areas, Christians are finding it difficult to trust and welcome believers from Muslim backgrounds due to past experiences of persecution. Pray that God will heal these divides and help believers to forgive one another.

Saturday 22 June – Bahrain

Bahrain is surrounded by countries who severely restrict the human right of freedom of religion or belief. Praise God for the freedom that immigrant Christians and local believers in Bahrain have to worship and pray that God would protect this freedom.

Sunday 23 June – Oman

Recently, a believer who disciples others was banned from entering Oman. The local church is in desperate need of more discipleship mentors; ask God to provide for

their needs and grow the faith of His church.

COUNTING THE COST

Monday 24 June – China

When her husband Jianghong* was arrested for running a youth group, Jinyi’s* church pushed her away out of fear. Thankfully, Jinyi is being supported by Open Doors partners. Pray for Jianghong’s release and that God will reunite the couple soon.

Tuesday 25 June – Laos

Souvannee*, a widow in her 50s, was kicked out of home for her faith. With your support, Open Doors partners built a new home for her and her five children. “I feel safe now to exercise my faith,” she says. Please pray that her witness will lead others in her community to Jesus.

Wednesday 26 June – Central Asia

When Goelia’s* husband found out she was secretly attending church, he started beating her. Her two children are currently with another Christian family and Goelia is in an Open Doors safe house. Ask God to protect Goelia and her children.

Thursday 27 June – Sri Lanka

Nisha* grew up as a Muslim. When she became

a Christian, her family rejected her. Despite death threats, Nisha and her husband continue to follow Jesus. Pray that Nisha’s family will experience Jesus’ transformative love.

Friday 28 June – Uganda

After Aisha’s* conversion to Christianity, her family started threatening her – but she’s passionate about Jesus and evangelism. Pray that God will powerfully minister to others through Aisha.

Saturday 29 June – North Africa

Faissal* came to know and believe in the gospel online. But when he tried to share Jesus with his atheist father, Faissal says, “He became angry and started to beat me.” Even so, Faissal continues to read his Bible in secret. Ask God to build up Faissal in his faith.

Sunday 30 June – Southern Philippines

Linda* (21), a believer from a Muslim background, had her college scholarship withdrawn because of her faith shortly before graduating. She is trusting God that she will graduate and is receiving discipleship training from Open Doors partners. Pray that the Lord will provide for her studies.

*Names changed for security reasons



PRAYER GROUP LEADERS NEEDED

Do you have a heart to motivate others to pray? Could you start a prayer group with some friends in your church or community?

Open Doors wants to see people of all ages praying for and with the persecuted church, changing history on their knees whilst being personally challenged and inspired.

If you have the get-up-and-go to organise regular prayer meetings and encourage people to keep coming back, we'd love

to hear from you. As a prayer group leader, you'll receive ongoing support and encouragement and all the resources you need to fuel your prayer times.

"I'VE NEVER BEEN SO BLESSED IN ANY KIND OF MINISTRY."

Prayer group leader,
Rochdale

Find out more at
opendoorsuk.org/volunteer
or call us on
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