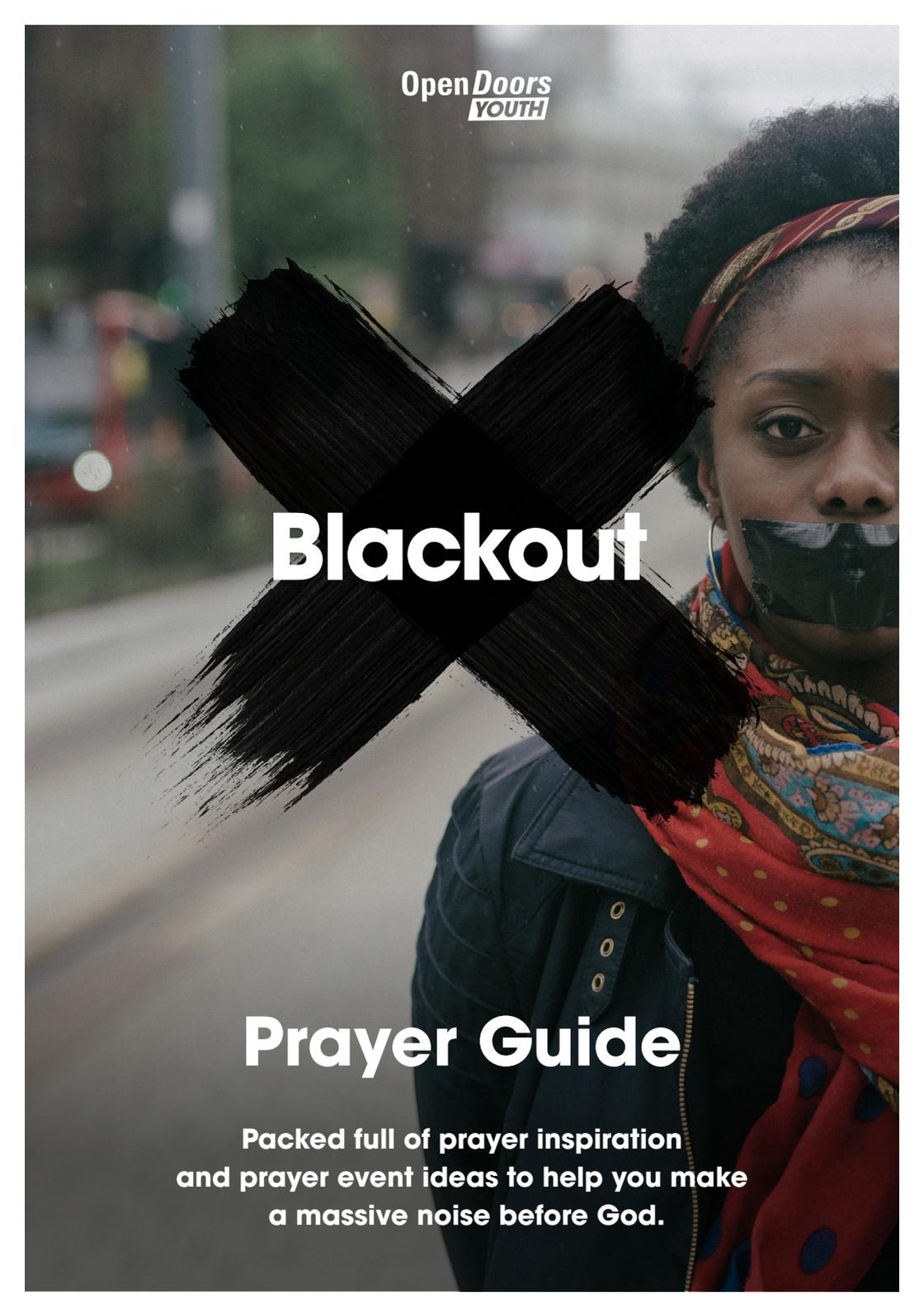


Open **Doors**
YOUTH



Blackout

Prayer Guide

Packed full of prayer inspiration
and prayer event ideas to help you make
a massive noise before God.

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"We need prayer, every day. When we see pictures of IS (Islamic State) on the television, we're afraid. When we hear that IS has been driven back, we regain hope. Every day our feelings change. So please pray for us every day. Pray for us, for our thoughts and for the preservation of our faith."

Pastor based in Mosul, Iraq

Intro

Blackout is all about making a massive noise through prayer - and specifically prayer for Christians in Iraq and Syria. If we're honest, most of us don't know where to begin when praying for a region with such complex issues. But when we hear people's stories, when we see their faces and understand they are just like us, we connect. And when we connect, prayer becomes much easier.

This simple little guide is about helping you to spend a weekend away from the internet, giving you ideas on how to fill your time with creative, passionate and focused prayer for Iraq and Syria.

These pages are full of ideas. You can use them, adapt them, change them or ignore them altogether. The important thing is to find ways that you can engage in prayer, and keep engaging, over the duration of your Blackout weekend.

But it's not just prayer, we want you to petition. Whether you end up praying on your own, in a group or even as part of a bigger gathering, make it your mission to share the needs and requests of our church family in Iraq and Syria by asking people to sign the 'One Million Voices of hope' petition. Read on for details on how to get copies of the petition that you can use.

Along with the prayer ideas, we've also included some info on getting sponsorship and where you can get additional resources too. If you have any questions, ideas or thoughts, buzz them through to us at youth@opendoorsuk.org, we'd love to hear from you.



As you'll be getting offline during your Blackout, you might want to print this guide out. We've made the design pretty simple, so you can easily print it and have it with you during the weekend.



1. What is Blackout?

Blackout is simple. It's a challenge to get sponsored to give up all things digital for a weekend. Could you stay away from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Spotify and anything else you do online for 48 hours? Tough right? You'll be disconnected from 7pm on a Friday through to 7pm Sunday. A total on-line Blackout. You'll have no use of your phone - you'll be cut off, silenced, with no voice on, or access to, social media.

Why?

Millions of Christians around the world are silenced simply for following Jesus. They are beaten, intimidated, threatened, arrested, imprisoned, tortured and even killed. And in the Middle East, those who choose to live for Jesus are increasingly being targeted.

Christians have been in this region since the earliest days of the faith. But now the church is being singled out, destroyed and devastated. Thousands of Christians in Iraq and Syria have fled their homes and towns due to war and terror. Sheltering in safer regions, they can't go home. Their towns have been destroyed by the fighting, with many villages and cities completely devastated. They are stuck, forgotten, trying to figure out their future.

This isn't right. As part of our church family, Christians in the Middle East are asking us to stand with them in prayer. They are asking us to cry out to God with them. And that is the point of Blackout. By shutting down our phones and getting offline, we'll be experiencing just a fraction of the silence that they face for choosing Jesus. But we'll also be giving ourselves time and space to cry out to God afresh in prayer for them.

Pray like you've never prayed

We need to make a massive noise about this with all we have. By giving up some of our freedom to communicate online, we'll instead spend time shouting, pleading and calling out to our Heavenly Father - the only one who can truly bring light to the darkness.

But going quiet online won't help!

We know what you're thinking. 'Why get offline? I could just make a massive noise on my social feeds. Wouldn't that be better?' You're right. You can make a big sound online about Blackout. In fact, before the weekend fast we'd love you to post about what you're doing, use some image filters or nice pics (we've even made some that you can use) and upload some of your thoughts. We want people to know what you're doing and why you'll be going quiet.

But, and this is the big but... We're all addicted to our phones. Most of us use the internet and social networking every day. Our phones offer a massive distraction from sitting down and just getting on with praying. For all the benefits, our phones, tablets and laptops make us busier and interrupt our lives with new, sudden priorities.

Locking away our phones is about disconnecting, so we can reconnect with God. He's the one who can bring light and hope to the darkness. He's the redeemer, the saviour and the healer. It's Him we need more than anything else. And giving up our phones to spend time connecting again with Him is one of the reasons we want you to do Blackout.

Use your real voice!

So over the course of 48 hours you can shout as much as you want about persecution - but just do it in the real world. Do it in prayer. Do it over a coffee with your mates. Do it by getting others to sign our 'One Million Voices of Hope' petition to protect the rights and future of Christians in the Middle East. Do it by gathering your mates together and building a prayer room. Do it by crashing your Sunday morning church service and leading a time of prayer and reflection. Do it by holding your own prayer gathering. Do it by asking as many people as possible to sponsor you and raise money for your persecuted family.

And then, when the weekend is over, get back online and shout about your persecuted family on your Instagram, SnapChat, FB and Twitter profiles. Upload images of your prayer rooms, prayer gatherings and any Bible passages that have moved you. You see, even without your phone, you can make a massive noise!





2. Rules

1.

Blackout lasts from 7pm Friday to 7pm Sunday*.

2.

During that time you'll have no access to any internet connected device. This includes phones, laptops, tablets, TVs and games consoles^.

3.

No online streaming of music, no access to online gaming, TV, social feeds or anything that you'd do online. This is about disconnecting.

That's pretty much it.



*You can, of course, do Blackout for a longer, or shorter period. Some groups have done 24 hours, whilst other hardcore individuals have done a full week.

^Please use your common sense. If you're in an emergency use your phone. If you have to do homework, study or work get online, but only for those reasons (no entertainment).

3. Raise £100 and get a free t-shirt

Blackout is firstly about prayer. But it's also an opportunity to raise money. Do you your parents, or even your mates, doubt your ability to stay off your phone or the tablet for 48 hours? Well, make it interesting! Get them to sponsor your fast. We've included a simple sponsorship form that you can download, print off and get people to fill out at www.opendoorsyouth.org/blackoutpack.

You could also try going to www.justgiving.com/opendoors and clicking on the 'Fundraise for us' link at the top of the page to raise money online.

If you raise over £100 then we'll send you a free 'Blackout' t-shirt as a special thank you! These are limited – and we won't be printing more, so you'll be part of a select (and very trendy) club by getting one.

All the money you raise will go to help Christians across the Middle East. Could you raise enough to achieve one of the following things?

£50 could provide 7 Bibles to give comfort to believers in the Middle East. These could go to those who have fled their homes due to war and terror and lost their own Bibles or to new believers, helping them learn more about Jesus.

£150 could provide long-term leadership and discipleship training courses for up to 10 church leaders to strengthen them and enable them to build the church in the Middle East.

£250 could contribute to a loan or grant to help an internally displaced person set up a business and start earning a living, giving them independence and hope for the future.



4. The 'One Million Voices of Hope' petition

Even though you're going to be going silent online you can still help us make a massive noise by getting people to sign the 'One Million Voices of Hope' petition.

We're hoping over one million Christians around the world will join together to call on the UN to ensure the rights and future of Christians in the Middle East. We'd love you to encourage people to sign the petition as you talk to them about your Blackout challenge. Have copies of the petition handy at any prayer events you host or prayer spaces you create. Carry some around with you for the weekend and get as many signatures as you possibly can. You can download copies at opendoorsyouth.org/blackoutpack



5. Prayer spaces

Whether you're doing Blackout on your own, with a few mates, or even with your whole youth group, it's worth thinking about setting up a dedicated prayer space. This could be a bedroom, an empty garden shed, a garage or even a room in your church.

Get people to sign up for slots in the prayer room – see if you can cover the whole 48 hours of your Blackout weekened with prayer for Christians in the Middle East.

Once you've got your location, have a read through the following ideas and get creative with your space. Make your times of prayer fun interactive and varied – don't always pray in the same way. Mix it up. Pray in silence, pray whilst drawing or sketching, read some of the Bible or an inspiring Christian book, go for a prayer walk or even sing out some worship songs to God!



24/7 Prayer Room in Sutton.
Image from 24/7 Prayer Instagram



24/7 Prayer Room in Edinburgh.
Image from 24/7 Prayer Instagram

Things you might need for any prayer space:

- Bible's
- Lots of pens, crayons and paper
- Tape to hang up any creations
- Maps of the world and the Middle East (email youth@opendoorsuk.org with your name and address to request a copy of the latest World Watch Map and World Watch Guide)
- Our 'Pray With Them' resource with prayers, stories and techniques to help you pray, not just for, but also with persecuted Christians (email youth@opendoorsuk.org with your name and address to request a copy)
- Our prayer posters for Iraq and Syria (download them from opendoorsyouth.org/blackoutpack, print them out and stick them up)
- A music player (no online streaming though, remember!)
- A recent newspaper
- Some books on persecution such as 'Song of the nightingale' by Helen Berhane from Eritrea, 'Captive in Iran' by Maryam Rostampour and Marziyeh Amirizadeh from Iran or 'God's Smuggler' by Brother Andrew (the founder of Open Doors).

Continued...



Prayer space ideas

Blackout: Many Christians around the world have to hide their faith. In some countries there are no legal churches and Christians meet in secret locations – in cellars, dark rooms or behind closed doors. So, make your space dark. Blackout the windows with bin liners. Stop all the light from coming in. Make the room as dark as possible. Imagine it's a secret, hidden prayer space. Get some candles, tea lights or fairy lights and brighten up areas of the room so you can draw, read and get creative on the walls. Connect with the stories of those who are living out their faith in secret, or in prison, and put yourself in their shoes for a few hours. Focus your prayers on them.

Prayer wall: Download the Blackout prayer posters (from www.opendoorsyouth.org/blackoutpack), print them off and stick them up around the room. Use them as ways to pray for Syria, Iraq and the people and situations they feature. But don't stop with the posters. Create your own artwork. Write out your prayers, Bible verses or thoughts. Spend a few hours decorating the wall with your own artwork and keep adding to it over the course of your weekend. Use the images, pictures, quotes and words as inspiration for your prayers.

Prayer maps: One of the simplest ways you can pray for Iraq and Syria is through some maps.



24/7 Prayer Room in Guernsey. Image from 24/7 Prayer Instagram



String map

Download a simple map of the countries at www.opendoorsyouth.org/blackoutpack as a starting point, but don't stop there! Try some of these ideas....

String map: Get a big notice board and stick up a map of Iraq and Syria. Add pins around the outline of the countries to make a pin map. One you've pinned all the outlines, get some string and start winding it round the pins, going round the outlines of the countries and then connecting the spaces between the countries. As you do this pray for the countries as you tighten the string around the regions. Once you've outlined and filled in your map with the string, get some pegs and pieces of paper. Write prayers on the bits of paper and peg them to the map in appropriate places.

Finger print map: Get a big piece of paper and draw around a map of the Middle East, marking out the countries and key cities. Then get some different coloured paints in some little pots. Ask people to pray for the countries on the maps, and the people and situations those countries represent. As they do so, get them to dip a finger in some paint and leave their fingerprint on the section of the map they were praying for. Repeat as many times as you want until your map is totally filled in!

IDP experience: Millions of people across Iraq and Syria are known as IDPs or internally displaced



Thumb-print prayer map

people. They have had to flee their homes because of war and terror, but haven't been able to leave the country itself. Many are stuck in camps or designated areas. Initially these people would have found shelter in tents... though 3 years on their accommodation is generally now more secure. Put a tent (or tents) up in your prayer room. Decorate the inside with stories from Christians in Iraq and Syria (see the Prayer Stories section) or some of our prayer posters (downloadable at www.opendoorsyouth.org/blackoutpack).

Add in other things – a Bible, some pictures of people from the Middle East, a map of the region and anything else that you can think of that will help tell the story of what many in Iraq and Syria have gone through. You could make the experience more real by sleeping in the tents and even limiting your diet to basics like rice or porridge.

Family tree*: Find a real tree outside or draw one on a big piece of paper as part of your prayer wall. Invite people to write the names of their own families and friends on pieces of paper or gift tags. Also encourage them to write the names of people in the stories mentioned in this guide, in our prayer resources and on the prayer posters. Then ask people to pray for the people on the tags as they stick the labels onto the tree.

Kingdom come*: Put maps, globes and newspapers in the room and encourage people to pray "your kingdom come, your will be done" specifically over the Middle East. Make sure you get a copy of the latest World Watch Map from us to help you develop this idea!

*Ideas adapted from our friends at 24/7 Prayer

6. Pray for ME gatherings

If there's a group of you doing Blackout together, then as part of your Blackout weekend hold a Blackout Pray for ME (Middle East, get it!!) gathering. You could do this as part of an existing church service, or hold a special one-off event built around prayer, with worship, teaching, videos and more.

Here are some ideas for bringing your prayer gatherings together:

Intro

Read out this quote from a Pastor based in Mosul, Iraq: "We need prayer, every day. When we see pictures of IS (Islamic State) on the television, we're afraid. When we hear that IS has been driven back, we regain hope. Every day our feelings change. So please pray for us every day. Pray for us, for our thoughts and for the preservation of our faith."

Worship

You could use the following songs as part of a time of worship to help people reflect on the cost of following Jesus and to remind everyone that God is in control, no matter how bad things may seem.

Whom Shall I Fear: Chris Tomlin

Your Love Never Fails: Jesus Culture

Sovereign Over Us: Michael W Smith

Never Once: Matt Redman

Our God: Chris Tomlin

Set the scene: Teaching

The focus of the gathering is prayer, so whilst it's good to have some teaching, keep it relatively short, focussed around the theme of prayer and use plenty of stories of persecuted Christians from the Middle East

(check the stories section for inspiration or head to opendoorsyouth.org for some recent news from Iraq and Syria). Here's a talk theme idea:

Theme: Stripping it all away

Many displaced Christians in Iraq and Syria have said that since losing their homes and having their lives turned upside down that they have found God in an incredible, fresh and new way (see Dr Rabia's story in the following section). When our hope, priorities and possessions get stripped away then we're able to depend on God so much more. What does that mean for us now? How has it been leaving our phones behind and getting off social media? Have we found it easier to connect with God? If so why?

Set the scene: Videos

Show some videos exploring what the situation is like in Iraq and Syria. You can find all of these in our Blackout 2016 playlist on our YouTube Channel (head to youtube.com/opendoorsyouth and scroll down till you find the playlist).

1. *Save ME* campaign film
2. *The Cost* (16 minute documentary on Syria – made in 2015)
3. *Joy featuring Jasper Rutherford* (including a story about Douglas, a church leader from Iraq)
4. *Family featuring Krish Kandiah* (including a story about Daniel, a church leader from Iraq)
5. *Pete Greig payer series*

Set the scene: Stories from Iraq and Syria

Have a look through the 'Stories' section on the following pages. Throughout the course of your prayer gathering have different people ready to read

out the stories. Space these out between various times to help people engage. Once the stories have been read out, ask 2-3 people to say a prayer for the person or people mentioned in the stories.

Prayer stations

We've created 12 downloadable and printable posters that can act as simple prayer stations for use during your gathering. Some include stories, some include prayers and some include actions. Stick them up in different places around your venue and split people up into groups. Get the groups to spend three to five minutes at each station, rotating around and praying together for the people and situations that are mentioned. Make sure you read through the posters and have any of the extra elements needed for the stations all ready (e.g. pens, paper or print-outs of the petition). You could get groups to go around the stations in one long section of your gathering, or split up those times with worship songs, videos and stories to keep people engaged (don't feel you have to use all the posters/stations if time is short).

The Lord's Prayer

Get everyone to pray out the Lord's prayer slowly, together. As you go through the lines of the prayer encourage people to think about the stories and people that they have heard from throughout the evening, and ask them to focus the lines of the prayer on those people and situations.

Prayer picture/selfie

Get everyone together and take a pic that can be shared with people from the Middle East to let them know you are praying for them. You could hold simple message on card (e.g. 'We're praying for you'), get people to kneel in prayer or hold out open hands. Once the weekend is over, tweet the pic to us



Candles used as part of a prayer gathering in Aleppo, Syria

@[opendoorsyouth](https://twitter.com/opendoorsyouth) or email it to youth@opendoorsuk.org. We'll then send it to our bases in the Middle East who will share it with Christian communities there.

Final Prayer

As a closing prayer, get someone to pray these words, written by a Syrian Christian (this features on one of the prayer posters).

Thank you, Lord
For all that you have done
and are still doing.
I trust your will is always good
and finally you will turn evil to good.
I know you are not silent, but patient. ...
But how long will it take, Lord?
I am looking forward to a new beginning
amongst my people.
My own desire is that evil will stop
and that we see your glory shine again
in the darkness.
I'm longing for healing, for restoration.
I cry out to you, Lord.
I'm longing for a new generation
to take their place in your kingdom,
To be the light and salt of this nation.
Help me to see my role in this transformation.
Protect me and be with me.
Carry me, day by day.
Amen.

7. Prayer stories

Use some of these stories throughout your prayer event or print them out and stick them up on your prayer walls to help guide people's prayers.

Noeh

Noeh is 12. He's from a town in Iraq called Karamles. Like many people that once lived there, his family are Christians. Back in 2014, the so called Islamic State (IS), a violent extremist group, invaded his town. Everyone fled.

Since then, Noeh and his family have lived in a city called Erbil, it's in a safer part of northern Iraq. They are displaced, receiving all kinds of help from Open Doors partners.

Towards the end of 2016, IS retreated and left Karamles. But Noeh and his family can't go home. IS soldiers set fire to his house. Nearly 450 homes in the town were burned, 100 or so were completely destroyed.

Noeh's house is still standing. He can walk around the charred remains of his bedroom. He even found some of his old marbles that survived the fire. Noeh says: "After the liberation in October we found out that Islamic State had burned our house. I was very sad when I saw it for the first time."

Noeh is determined "I do want to return, this is our land." But for now, for Noeh, and many others from Karamles, the journey home is just beginning.

Pray: Pray for Noeh and his family as they think about rebuilding their lives, and at some point, return to Karamles. Pray that help would come enabling the rebuilding process to begin. Pray for many Christians

still displaced and unable to return home. Ask for grace, strength and hope.

Nidal and Janan

Many parts of the Nineveh Plain in Iraq were taken over by the so-called Islamic State in 2014. But in the last year large portions of land have been liberated, giving hope to the families who were forced to flee that they will be able to return home.

But, things are not as straight forward as simply going home; security is still a concern, many villages have been left without basic infrastructure and many houses will need to be completely rebuilt.

As Gabriel, a church leader from Al Qosh, walks around the liberated village of Batanya, he says, "There were 750 Christian families living here when IS came. Four hundred of them already left the country. The rest will have huge problems returning here. Look around you, everything is destroyed." Batanya was shelled and bombed for days as the allied forces attempted to drive IS from the village – local Christians claim it is the most destroyed village in the Nineveh Plain.

In Telskuf, a nearby village, the damage that occurred was not so severe. So much so that families have returned. Nidal and Janan are sisters with six children. They left for a city in the North called Dahuk in 2014 to escape IS but have recently returned home. Nidal says. "Better times have come! Today I'm happier than ever. I'm home."

Their home was ransacked by IS, but the damage to the building was fairly limited. The infrastructure of the village still needs to be restored, but Nidal is glad to be back.

"We had water and electricity there [in Dahuk], but it was not home. This place doesn't have all that, but it's home. We belong here. No way am I leaving this country. That is why we chose to return here as soon as we could – to show others it is possible. By returning here we also give hope to our children, we show the new generation that they have a future in Iraq.

"Life is not easy here, there is no school for the children. My brother-in-law has to drive them to a village 15 minutes away from here every day. But the good news is that life goes on. Every day is new; we believe in Christ. He will help us through this period, He keeps us strong."

Pray now: For encouragement and provision for displaced families. For wisdom and energy for Open Doors partners as they work to support our Iraqi brothers and sisters. That God will use Iraq's Christians to rebuild the nation.

Yana

Pastor B's church is in the Syrian city of Tartus. With the support of Open Doors, he and his church community support over 4,000 displaced families. Before the war started, Pastor B had a church of 25 people, now they have grown to 200. About 90% of them are new believers. In Pastor B's church is an incredible woman - we'll call her Yana. This is her story, as told by Pastor B.

"Yana was used to taking risks. She was taking food supplies and food items to people who were living in rebel-controlled areas. One time rebels tried to force themselves into her house. Yana was protecting a number of women in her house, and managed to stop the rebels from coming in. They told her: 'Aren't you scared that we will come and slaughter

you?' Yana answered: 'No, I am not afraid because I have the mighty God with me, and he is protecting me.' She said: 'I don't remember what happened in that moment. Maybe they did not understand what I meant. Or maybe the angel of God was standing behind me and he did to them the same as with Lot in the Old Testament.'

"After a while these same people came to her house, not to threaten her but to invite her, saying that the head of their group wanted to listen to her, he wanted to hear her story. This man was responsible for the entire area there. Yana replied: 'Do you really want to hear who is behind me? Would you give to me the right to share everything?'

"When she went to visit him, he said: 'Usually when men come to me, they will be shaking. You are not. I want to know, who is behind you? Who is the source of your strength?'

"While the men were pointing guns at her, she shared with them about Jesus Christ who was strengthening her and who is the Lord of peace and the Lord of courage. She spoke for 25 minutes. They did not interrupt her and were listening attentively. At the end, the leader was crying. After that meeting, he disappeared; we don't know what happened to him. But we know that God took him out of this place."

Pray now: For Pastor B and the members of his church that are risking everything to show God's love to their war torn community. Ask for strength, boldness, courage and wisdom to know when to act and what to say. Thank God for Yana and her courage. Pray for more miracles and that many would come to know Jesus because of the work of the church. Pray for a peaceful end to the war.





Asmaa

Asmaa is from Mosul in Iraq. She was just 15 when she had to flee her home. She'd just had her birthday. She couldn't take many of her new clothes or presents with her. She was gutted. When Muslim extremists from the so-called Islamic State went on a rampage, targeting Christians and other minorities, her and her family didn't wait around. They left. And they left quickly.

"IS raided our house and took everything that was of value. We heard from our neighbors that the rebels threw our family photos in the street to get trampled on in the dust. It feels as if on that day all my hopes and dreams also got trampled on."

With no future, Asmaa's family have left Iraq. Like thousands of others they've left their country. They have no choice. They've been forced out, leaving friends, family and a whole life behind.

Pray: Pray for teenagers like Asmaa. Pray that the trauma of leaving everything behind, and seeing war and terror first hand are healed. Ask they would be able to stay in school and build a positive, hopeful future for themselves and their families.

Dr Rabia

"I was a successful businessman involved in calf breeding in Qaraqosh [a Christian town in a majority Muslim region in northern Iraq]. I come from a tradition which teaches that if you do not have land, you have nothing. But due to the IS attack on our city, I lost everything I had in one day. When I became displaced I started to reflect on what I had been doing in the past. Now I believe that IS was a lesson

from God to teach me not to collect a fortune here, but to make a fortune with God. And I believe that if you do so He will always help you."

Doctor Rabia was rich. In the summer of 2014, when IS swept through his town to 'cleanse' it of Christians, Doctor Rabia grabbed his wife and 5 kids and they fled for their lives. In doing so he lost everything. As they fled his business partner, a local Muslim friend, called him to tell him that he was taking all his property and possessions in the name of IS. He was gloating.

In the space of hours Doctor Rebia lost everything – houses, cars, a business – even a friend. But he says:

"I am not afraid! They can try to hurt me but they can't take away what is most precious. My Jesus lives in my heart and they can't take Him'.

"They come in the name of IS but we will stand firm in the name of Jesus Christ and we will not be afraid of them. We leave our houses, but I know that if we leave our faith we lose everything'.

'Before they took away everything I was a Christian only by name, but now my faith is alive... IS is a gift. If you want to spend your time working for more money and more houses and just going along to church on Sundays you can lose it, but if you work for God, you can never lose it. So I say to the western church, "Wake up. Wake up!"'

PRAY: Ask God to provide for those, like Dr Rabia, who have lost everything. Pray faith will rise and that God will be known intimately by those who have

suffered so much because of their choice to follow Jesus. Pray for an end to war and terror and ask that God would bring peace and reconciliation.

Nathifah

Nathifah* is in her early thirties. She used to live in Mosul, a large city in Iraq, with her husband and two young children. They fled a few months before IS took over the city, but even then, Christians were facing hostility.

She was known as a Christian, and increasingly stayed home to avoid conflict. But then a close friend of her husband was killed. He had been working at a mechanic workshop which was known to be a Christian business. The workshop was targeted by extremists.

Nathifah says: "You can't imagine what it means when something like that happens, what you feel like in that moment of hearing the news... I didn't know how I would leave, but I decided that even if I had to live in only one room, I just had to leave."

And that is what happened. They fled to the Northern Kurdish region of Iraq. For a long time they shared one room with two other families. Nathifah says the only thing that kept her going and carried her through this time was her faith and prayer. She says that, at times, she felt that being able to pray to the Lord was the only thing she could hold on to.

Pray: Say a prayer for Nathifah and many like her that have made painful decision to leave home with no idea of what their future might look like. Pray for provision, safety and peace.

Ammar

Ammar is 10. He's from Iraq. As a young lad, he's grown up with war and terror.

"I sometimes imagine I have a special cape, like superman wears. I think of myself as a superhero, protecting people.

"I used to play outside, but when the war started we had to play inside all the time. When we do go outside we take the car, but I help my Dad, check under the engine first for bombs. We even have some suitcases stuffed with things in case we have to leave in the middle of the night.

"A really, really bad thing happened at our church – a bomb exploded and I lost a lot of my friends. They were all killed. I didn't see it, but I heard most of the stories. Things will never be the same, but if I have this special cape I can protect my family. Before bed, when my Dad prays for me, he tells me that Jesus will take care of us and I mustn't worry. He tells me that God even loves the people who hurt us. He tells me that Jesus is love—and that it is something like my special cape."

PRAY: Pray for children like Ammar living through some horrendous situations. Ask that they might have courage and strength. Ask that they will be protected from harm and that they will know Jesus right there with them.



Use the images on the following pages to help people identify with those in the stories.



The image is of Noeh

Noeh in his burnt out bedroom



Image is illustrative

Yana



The image is of Noeh

This image is of Nidal and Jana outside their home in Telskuf

Sisters Nidal and Jana and their children



Image is illustrative

Asmaa



The image is of Dr. Rabia

Dr Rabia



Image is illustrative

Nathifah



Image is illustrative

Ammar

8. Extra resources

As you prepare for a weekend in prayer, make sure you get some of our quality, free resources to help you reflect and pray more specifically.

Printed materials

Email us at youth@opendoorsuk.org and request the following:

Pray with them: A simple guide to help you pray with persecuted Christians.

One Family series: A series of short reflections, with Bible verses and prayers telling the story of people from the Middle East. There's also a special youth leader session too.

World Watch Map: A fold-out map highlighting the 50 countries around the world where Christians are experiencing the worst persecution.

Downloads

Don't forget these downloads, available at www.opendoorsyouth.org/blackoutpack

1. Prayer station posters
2. Sponsor forms
3. 'One Million Voices of Hope' petition forms
4. Social networking images
5. Editable publicity material

Video

Make sure you check out the Pete Greig series on Prayer that we've put together to help you pray more effectively and passionately. You can find all of these in a playlist on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/opendoorsyouth), so take a look before you start your Blackout weekend!



ABOUT OPEN DOORS

Millions of people worldwide are persecuted for following Jesus. Open Doors works with Christians on the front line. We are committed to smuggling hope by providing Bibles, training, literacy and livelihood programmes and advocacy support for people who know the true cost of following Jesus.

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