Ephesians 6:18–20: "*With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, [19] and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak*."

SIX WAYS TO PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

1. PRAY FOR COURAGE TO REMAIN FAITHFUL.

   Scripture: Acts 4:29–31 "*And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, [30] while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." [31] And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness*."

   a. Pray that believers facing threats, imprisonment, violence, and intimidation will have courage to stand firm in their faith.

   b. Pray that fear will not overcome their commitment to Christ.

   c. Ask God to give them boldness to proclaim the gospel, even when doing so comes at great personal cost.

   Prayer emphasis: Lord, give our persecuted brothers and sisters courage to remain faithful regardless of the consequences.

2. PRAY FOR PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE AND PERSECUTION.

   Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 3:1–2 "[1] *Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; [2] and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. [3] But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one*."

   a. Pray for protection from extremist groups, hostile governments, and individuals who seek to harm Christians.

   b. Pray for families who face threats because of a family member's conversion to Christianity.

   c. Ask God to provide safety for pastors, missionaries, house churches, and those meeting secretly for worship.

   Prayer emphasis: Lord, be their refuge, their defender, and their protection in the midst of danger.

3. PRAY FOR BELIEVERS WHO ARE IMPRISONED OR SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES.

   Scripture: Hebrews 13:3 "[3] *Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body*."

   Matthew 25:35–36 "[35] '*For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; [36] naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me*.'"

a. Remember Christians imprisoned because of their faith.

b. Pray for those enduring interrogation, mistreatment, isolation, and unjust sentences.

c. Pray for spouses and children who have been left behind and are struggling financially and emotionally.

d. Ask God to strengthen their faith and sustain them through their suffering.

Prayer emphasis: Lord, remind those in prison that they are never forgotten, never alone, and never outside Your presence.

4. PRAY FOR CHRISTIANS WHO ARE SUFFERING BECAUSE OF THEIR CONVERSION FROM ISLAM.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:12 "*Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*."

a. Pray for Muslims who have trusted Christ but have been rejected, disowned, or threatened by their families and communities.

b. Pray that they will find Christian fellowship, discipleship, and encouragement.

c. Ask God to provide safe places where new believers can grow in their faith.

d. Pray for believing parents who are trying to raise their children as followers of Jesus in hostile environments.

Prayer emphasis: Lord, strengthen those who have lost everything in order to follow You, and surround them with a loving Christian family.

5. PRAY FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE 10/40 WINDOW.

Scripture: Matthew 9:37–38 "*37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest*."

a. Pray for the millions of people in this region who have little or no access to the gospel.

b. Pray for missionaries, evangelists, pastors, and indigenous believers who are taking the gospel into difficult places.

c. Ask God to open doors for the gospel and prepare hearts to receive the truth.

d. Pray for Muslims who are searching for truth and that they will encounter the message and person of Jesus Christ.

Prayer emphasis: Lord, open doors for the gospel in places where the name of Jesus is rarely heard and send laborers.

6. PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTORS THEMSELVES TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST.

Scripture: Acts 9:1–22 "*1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 As he was*

*traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; [4] and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" [5] And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, [6] but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." [7] The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. [8] Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. [9] And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. [10] Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." [11] And the Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, [12] and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight." [13] But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; [14] and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." [15] But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; [16] for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." [17] So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." [18] And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; [19] and he took food and was strengthened. **N**ow for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, [20] and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." [21] All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" [22] But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ*."

a. Pray for those who persecute Christians, that God would soften their hearts.

b. Pray that those who are hostile toward Christianity would encounter the transforming grace of Jesus.

c. Remember the conversion of Saul, who went from persecuting the church to proclaiming the gospel.

d. Pray that the testimony of faithful Christians will become a powerful witness to those who oppose them.

Prayer emphasis: Lord, transform hearts of hatred into hearts of faith, just as You transformed Saul.