

# mem30

A 30 day devotional and prayer guide  
for the church in the Middle East and North Africa.

middle east  
media

# How to use this guide

We've split up this devotional and prayer guide into three distinct themes to help guide our prayers. Each of these themes particularly relevant to the needs of believers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, but also to us here in the UK.

- **Days 1-9: Unity**

Praying for community, culture and leadership.

- **Days 10-20: Perseverance**

Praying for the pilgrims and the persecuted.

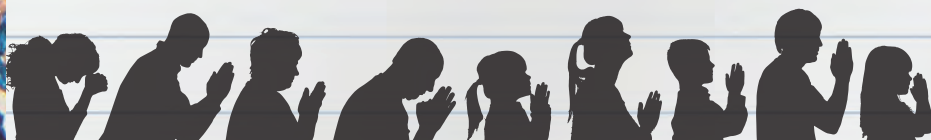
- **Days 21-29: Reach**

Praying for the cross-cultural, cross-generational spread of the gospel.

## **Day 30: Be still before the Lord.**

Pray as the Spirit leads you.

It is our hope and prayer that this guide blesses you and those around you, as much as your prayers for MENA and our work bless us! You can start anytime, but we suggest beginning day one with us on **Monday 12th April** - that way, you'll be able to benefit most from the additional content and encouragements we'll be sharing on social media over the 30 day period.





# Days 1-9: Unity

**Read: 1 Corinthians  
12:12-26**

**Reflect:** Paul's urge to the Corinthian church here to grasp the importance of unity and diversity in the body of believers is evidently one that was a common struggle for the early church, for he makes a similar appeal to the churches in Ephesus (Ephesians 4) and Rome (Romans 12). We sadly continue to see this in the church today, both in the UK and the Middle East. Especially over the past year, as we live with the restrictions of the pandemic upon church life, it can be easy to forget what a blessing and strength the body of believers is designed to be.



## **Pray:**

**Day 1:** Against the divisive impact of Covid-19, both on the church in the UK and the Middle East.

**Day 2:** For traditionally marginalised groups in MENA, such as women. Pray that the church would be distinctive in their unity and welcome of them.

**Day 3:** For the nations in MENA where Christians gathering together is prohibited and extremely dangerous.

# Days 1-9: Unity

Read: 1 Corinthians  
12:12-26

**Report from Pastor Shakir\*, North Africa:** “For believers from a Muslim background (who like to be called the New Church, NC), finding community is challenging on all levels. They first face life-threatening hostility from their families for renouncing Islam. If they survive this, the church is often also hostile towards them. Many churches refuse to welcome them inside, fearing the threat of closure. Others might welcome them into the church walls, but they are treated with suspicion, either of being untrue believers or of being spies that could report back to state authorities. Some people look at and treat them as second-class believers. If they manage to find a place within a church, they also find difficult the huge difference between their old conservative religious community of Islam, and the relative openness of Christian community.”

**“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it..”**

**Use this verse to guide your prayers, specifically praying for:**

**Day 4:** New Church (NC) believers.

**Day 5:** Believers in MENA from a Christian background, and our North Africa office, representing many different denominations.

**Day 6:** Our own hearts, as we learn of the suffering of our brothers and sisters in MENA.



\*name has been changed



# Days 1-9: Unity

Read: 1 Peter 5:1-11

**Using these verses,  
pray...**



**For your leaders,** or  
leaders known to you.

**For yourself,** whether you  
are a flock member or a  
leader as well.

## **3 Cultural Prayer Needs for Church Leaders in MENA:**

### **Day 7: ACCOUNTABILITY**

There is an absence of accountability/supervision for pastors, which can endanger both pastors, their families, and their people.

### **Day 8: SUPPORT**

Emotional support for pastors is lacking. Most are giving their time, effort and support to their congregation but never find someone to refer to and confide in themselves. This causes them to be drained and under constant pressure.

### **Day 9: REST**

The prevailing mistaken idea is that the pastor's time should be all for church members. Most pastors do not take any days off, thinking they best serve the Lord this way. They end up exhausted, and consequently unable to serve their people well.

# Days 10-20: Perseverance

**Read: Jeremiah 29:1-11**

**Reflect:** After years of living under enemy, Egyptian authority and exile in Babylon (today's Iraq), surely the last thing the Jews wanted to hear from God was the command to seek peace and settle down in their land of exile. In the midst of deep suffering away from the Promised Land, the message of the false prophet Hananiah found in the previous chapters, that God would bring about an immediate rescue and victory, was an appealing one. Yet, we see the opposite thing happen. God calls His people to live peaceably amongst their enemies, amongst those who have brought nothing but hardship and oppression.

**But** God does not leave them, nor us, without hope! Though He does not promise immediate escape from danger, He promises that whatever our situation, however defeated we feel, He is bringing about His purposes. He has not forgotten His people, nor His promises to them. He promises to hear their cries, and urges them to seek Him wholeheartedly. The trial may be great, but His purpose is greater. Two and a half thousand years later, on this side of the Empty Tomb, we have even more reason for **HOPE.**

**Day 10:** Pray for yourself and your own circumstances - may His Word encourage you today.

**Day 11:** Who known to you might need to hear this encouragement? Why not share with them and pray for them!

**Day 12:** For Christian believers in the Middle East who are often a religious minority. May they continue to seek the Lord wholeheartedly, whatever they face from the outside.



# Days 10-20: Perseverance

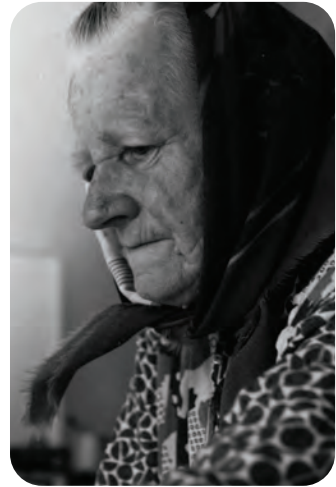
**Read: Jeremiah 29:1-11**

**Nawra's\* Story:** "I am a 72-year-old Christian widow living all by myself in my flat. My neighbours are trying to kick me out of the building because of my religion. They've made several false accusations and even filed a report against me, suggesting that I am running a business in my flat that causes noise at night - the police came to take me to the station at 3:00 in the morning. The police in our country never come by to stop a noisy wedding on the streets that affects thousands of citizens.... Another time, they changed the way water in the building is pumped so that I got a minimum share of water. Many of these troubles threaten to destroy my peace and cause me to wonder if I should leave the place altogether, yet my faith and trust in the Lord urges me to show patience and good behaviour, even under this ill-treatment."

**Day 13:** Pray for Nawra\* and believers across MENA facing daily persecution. Pray that they would turn to Him wholeheartedly and receive the strength they need to continue living peaceably amidst their oppressors.

**Day 14:** Pray that more people would come to know Jesus through their witness and perseverance.

**Day 15:** Pray that persecuted believers would take comfort in the hope of Jesus' return.



\*name has been changed

# Days 10-20: Perseverance

**Read: Ruth 1:1-17**

**Reflect:** All the facts pointed towards it being much easier for Ruth to stay in Moab. Having lost her husband, why on earth would she uproot herself from the rest of her family and follow her grieving mother-in-law to an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people and an unfamiliar God? Especially when, on the face of it, this seemed to be sentencing herself to a life of widowhood and childlessness herself. Yet, Ruth demonstrates truly remarkable faith and commitment. Ruth wasn't even one of God's chosen people, Israel...and yet, unbeknownst to her, she ends up being a vital part of the family line leading to Christ.

**Day 16:** Is there an area of your life that the Lord is calling you to be more committed to Him in, even in the face of uncertainty or hardship? Pray for your own situation.



**Read: Philippians 2: 5-11**

**Carlos\*\* Story:** "In my country I've been denied several benefits at work for being a Christian. I am 50 years old. For a person like me who has worked for 20+ years, I should have the opportunity to be sent to another country to work there temporarily and receive a much higher salary during this period. But this privilege is always given to my colleagues who have less experience and fewer qualifications."

**Day 17:** Pray for individuals like Carlos, both in MENA and the UK, as they choose to follow the way of the Cross. May they be encouraged by Jesus' model to us in Philippians 2.

\*name has been changed

Image: shutterstock.com/g/Molostock



**MENA Report:** NC believers face huge tension when it comes to openly sharing their faith in Jesus. To deny Islam is to face estrangement and oppression from their own families and communities. Beating, torture, confinement and even murder is not uncommon, and the treatment is more severe for a female. A believer known to us in North Africa declared his faith to his family, and his father falsely accused him of raping his own sisters so that other family members would kill him. NC believers face other problems if they have accepted Jesus in their heart, while in front of the community still practicing Islam. This can include having to fast during the month of Ramadan though they no longer believe in it. A clear example is when Muslims leave the house, they usually say a special greeting which consists of two phrases. One person would say “No God but Allah” and the other should reply “Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah”. For a convert to say such a phrase is tough, but if they refuse to reply, it will disclose their change in faith.



**Day 20:** Pray that NC believers would be comforted by Jesus' model of obedience.

**Day 18:** Pray for NC believers across MENA who face these difficult and costly decisions daily. Pray that, like Ruth, they would be given the strength and courage to remain committed to Jesus.

**Day 19:** Pray specifically for NC believers facing tension during Ramadan (12th April - 12th May 2021).

*“...but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...”*

# Days 21-29: Reach

**Read:**  
**Deuteronomy 31:12;**  
**Matthew 11:25**

**Reflect:** Children and young people are an incredibly important part of church life, and they are incredibly important to Jesus. We can often fall into the habit of seeing children's ministry as something separate to 'adult' church – with children 'progressing' to adult church when they're old enough. Deuteronomy 31:12 reminds us that children are part of the wider assembly, the people of God, and should be included as partakers in the mission of the church. Jesus' words in Matthew 11 remind and challenge us that children can teach us about the kingdom of God, too!



**Day 21:** Pray for the children in your church, and your own children if you have them. May they know that they are valued, loved and important members of the family of God.

**Day 22:** Pray these things for the children of the church in MENA.

**Day 23:** For yourself, adults in your church, and those in MENA to have their hearts challenged and encouraged by the young.

**“The best thing about Jesus is that He is so sweet and He loves me. I wish I could see Him!”**

**- Amirah\*, aged 7 from one of our partner churches in the Gulf**



\*name has been changed



# Days 21-29: Reach

Read: Titus 2:1-8

“The people who lead the church and are on church councils are mostly between 40-60 years. They do not belong to the generation of the youth they serve and cannot reach them and feel what they need.”

## What are pastors in the MENA region saying?

“Becoming a pastor was my calling based on the shepherd figure I had in my church pastor when I was young. He was a model that I looked up to. He was committed, loving and caring and that moved me to strive to be like him.”

**Reflect:** Have you had someone that has been a role model for you in the Christian life? How might you be able to set a godly example to the young people known to you?

**Day 24:** Pray for there to be godly leaders of all ages being raised up across the MENA region, creating a cross-generational church that can powerfully impact the culture around them. Pray specifically for our Future Leaders project, for everyone who has been trained through the project to find ways of creating transformational media.

**Day 25:** Pray for young people born to parents of NC believers struggling with identity and belonging. Specifically for our series of ‘On Bended Knee’ for children being produced this year, that it would be a powerful tool for New Church children.

**Day 26:** Pray for media to be used in a culturally and generationally relevant way to reach young people’s hearts and minds for Christ.

# Days 21-29: Reach

**Read: Isaiah 49:6;  
Acts 1:8**

The Servant of the Lord has come to gather His people back to Himself, but as the prophet Isaiah tells us, for Jesus to come only to bring salvation to Israel is **“too small a thing”**! He has come to bring salvation to **“the ends of the earth”**, and we, as His followers, are called to play our part.



**Day 27:** Pray for Middle Easterners to hear the Good News about Jesus through the many ways God is at work in the region. Pray specifically for MEM’s projects that pursue this goal: for the establishment of our new media teams, and for ‘Got It!’ and ‘Life in the Desert’ being dubbed into new languages and dialects this year.

**Day 28:** Pray that the church in the UK would be ignited with passion for global missions despite the impacts of the pandemic, longing to support the Gospel going out to all nations through prayer, giving and action. Pray for your church and yourself specifically, for opportunities to get involved with global mission.

**Day 29:** Give thanks for MEM’s church partners, without whom much of our work wouldn’t be possible. Pray for our vision to partner with 19 more churches in 2021.



Day 30

Today, pray freely for yourself, those around you, and the Middle East as you feel led. Thank you for all of your faithful prayers this month!

If you're struggling to get started, have a look back at our three themes: **Unity**, **Perserverance** and **Reach**. Pick one that has particularly struck you as we've been praying together over the past month, and focus your thoughts there. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you as you go.

*A space for notes*



*"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."*

**Ephesians 6:18**