

PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED

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Scripture calls on us to remember our brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted for their faith: *“Let brotherly love continue...*

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.” (Heb. 13:1, 3

ESV). Paul reinforces this: *“...there are many parts, yet one body....*

If one member suffers, all suffer together” (1 Cor. 12:20, 26a ESV).

American believers must stand in solidarity with fellow members of the body of Christ internationally who are suffering. Many are being singled out for acts of violence, torture, and even martyrdom simply because they follow Jesus.

When we pray for the persecuted, God hears and answers. We rejoice over the recent release of Pastor Andrew Brunson, who was imprisoned in Turkey. Tony Perkins, President of FRC, traveled to Turkey on behalf of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) for Pastor Andrew Brunson’s fourth hearing, carrying messages of encouragement from both President Trump and Vice President Pence as well as the names of the nearly 16,000 people who had pledged to pray for him in recent weeks. Those messages and



prayers were just the encouragement Pastor Brunson needed as he headed into the courtroom. While the prosecution called for an additional 35 years in prison, a three judge panel found him guilty of a lesser charge and essentially gave him credit for the time served. The decision was not final, allowing the prosecution to appeal. However, Andrew was removed from house arrest, and the travel ban was lifted. Pastor Brunson was able to return home!

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1. Pray for the Persecuted. Lift your brothers and sisters in Christ as they endure unbearable persecution. Paul asked the believers to “Remember my chains” (Col. 4:18). However, do not just pray generically for the persecuted church, pray specifically. Visit the websites of ministries which are pleading the cause of the persecuted and which post stories of men, women, boys, and girls who are suffering for Jesus. Pray for them by name. For example, pray for Leah Sharibu, a Christian teen being held captive in Nigeria by Boko Haram for refusing to renounce her faith. They killed others but plan to keep Leah a slave. Pray also for their persecutors as Jesus commanded (Matt. 5:44).

2. Participate in Practical Ministry to the Persecuted. Praying is good, but we must also act to meet real needs. There are a number of ministries which offer hands-on relief to refugees, victims of violence, and the families of martyrs, such as Samaritan’s Purse, Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors USA, and others. Donate to these and other ministries. Volunteer your time to serve. Be the hands and heart of Christ to our brothers and sisters.

3. Promote Public Policy that Protects the Persecuted. After the horror of the Holocaust, the international community established protections for religious freedom, first in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and later in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This right, consistent with the religious freedom rights articulated by our First Amendment, was established so that people of all faiths can be protected from persecution. Finally, take a moment to thank President Trump and his administration for working hard to free Pastor Brunson and others imprisoned for their faith. Call the White House @ 202-456-1111.



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