

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2018

Information for leading prayers



OUTLINE FOR 5 MINUTES

PREPARATION Download PowerPoint from www.churchinchains.ie and familiarise yourself with its content. It is self-explanatory and may be shown without spoken commentary but a suggested commentary is printed overleaf, which you may like to use. Read the bookmark with Prayer Points. Even if not using PowerPoint, it would be helpful to preparation to view it.

SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER Distribute bookmarks to people as they arrive or place on seats/pews.

INTRODUCTION Introduce the subject ("Today is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church"). Explain that today's prayers will focus on North Korea, known as the hardest place in the world to live as a Christian.

PRESENTATION Run the PowerPoint show (**approximately 2 minutes long, or 4 minutes if using spoken commentary overleaf**).

PRAYER Pray using Prayer Points 1 and 5 on the bookmark and encourage people to take their bookmarks home and continue praying for North Korea. Alternatively, you may wish to use the printed prayer overleaf.

OUTLINE FOR MORE THAN 5 MINUTES

PREPARATION – as above but also read through suggested Bible Reading (**Psalm 74**).

SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER Distribute bookmarks to people as they arrive or place on seats/pews.

INTRODUCTION – as above

BIBLE READING: Psalm 74 The following notes are for those with time to explain the relevance of the Psalm to North Korea today. This is a psalm of lament and deals with the crisis of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and God's seeming abandonment of His people to their enemies. The psalm is set in exile in Babylon and the psalmist calls on God to remember the people and Mount Zion (v1-3) – just over 100 years ago, so many Christians lived in Pyongyang (now capital of North Korea) that it became known as the "Jerusalem of the East".

The Psalmist asks God to notice that God's enemies have overwhelmed the place (v4-8) and he tells God that the people feel abandoned and alone (v9-11). "**But God is my King from long ago**" (v12) is the Psalmist's central declaration of faith. He reminds God that He has power over the waters and all creation (v13-17) and cries out to God to remember His people (v18-23).

PRESENTATION and PRAYER Run the PowerPoint show and pause as follows. You may wish to invite at least one other person to participate in prayer.

PAUSE at 7 (South Korean pastors) – Pray using **Prayer Points 1 and 2** on the bookmark.

PAUSE at 9 (Aid Shipment) – Pray using **Prayer Points 3 and 4** on the bookmark.

PAUSE at 11 (Kim Jong-un) – Pray using **Prayer Point 5** on the bookmark.

Encourage people to take their bookmarks home and continue praying for North Korea.

POWERPOINT COMMENTARY

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	SUGGESTED COMMENTARY
1	Today is IDOP	Churches all over Ireland will be giving time today in worship services to pray for persecuted Christians.
2	World map	Christians face varying degrees of persecution in 60 countries, ranging from Severe (Red) through Significant (Orange) to Limited (Green).
3	North Korea map	North Korea is coloured red on this map because Christians there face severe persecution.
4	Young man praying	Christians in South Korea constantly pray for their fellow believers in North Korea.
5	Kneeling group praying	In North Korea, Christians are at great risk of arrest even for praying together inside a private home.
6	Satellite view of labour camp	Those who are arrested face indefinite imprisonment in labour camp where Christians are often singled out for harsh treatment.
7	Pastors Kim Kuk-gi and Kim Jong Uk	Both these pastors were accused of spying by North Korea – a charge often used against Christians who seek to bring in aid.
8	People working in fields	Millions of poor North Koreans are at constant risk of not having enough food for their daily needs.
9	Containers of aid	North Korea is reluctant to accept much aid from outside the country as it believes that it would reflect badly on the government.
10	Giant statues	Pictures of Kim Il Sung (Left) and Kim Jung-il (right), grandfather and father of the current leader, must be displayed in every home.
11	Kim Jong-un	North Korea's young leader has met several world leaders in 2018 but nobody is sure about his intentions for the future of the country.
12	North Korea in next magazine	The next issue of <i>Church in Chains</i> magazine will include much more information for prayer from North Korea.

A PRAYER FOR NORTH KOREA

Sovereign Lord who rules over heaven and earth,

We bring before You today the nation of North Korea, the hardest place in the world to live as a Christian. We pray that all those who must practice their faith in extreme secrecy will know Your love and protection and encouragement as they worship You.

We especially pray for the thousands of Christians imprisoned in labour camps without any hope of release, sent there because the North Korean government sees their faith as a threat to the state. We ask that You give Your people strength to live day by day and we earnestly pray to You, the God of justice, for an end to the unjust, cruel labour camp system.

We remember also the many North Koreans who do not have enough food or medicine and ask that Christians and aid organisations seeking to help would be granted access and great wisdom.

We pray for Kim Jong-un, North Korea's leader, that he will change the repressive policies of his government and that he will govern his people with righteousness, justice and compassion. We pray for wisdom for the leaders of other influential nations as to how they can help to bring about change.

In the Name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.



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