

# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

SUNDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2021

## INFORMATION FOR LEADING PRAYERS

Thank you for taking part in the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church – you and your church will be joining many churches in Ireland, Britain and other countries in devoting time to praying for the persecuted. This information sheet offers suggestions as to how your prayers for our brothers and sisters in India can be incorporated into your time of worship (whether that be in-person or online). Please discuss with your church leader and choose what would work best in your church.



## PREPARATION

View IDOP video at [www.churchinchains.ie](http://www.churchinchains.ie) and familiarise yourself with it (even if you don't plan to use the video, it would be helpful in your preparations to view it). The video features Shibu Thomas of Persecution Relief (a Church in Chains partner organisation serving persecuted Indian Christians), the well-known Gospel song "I have decided to follow Jesus" and ends with three prayer points for India. These are also included on the bookmark. Arrange in advance with the person responsible for projection in your church to download the video. On Sunday 7 November, distribute bookmarks to people as they arrive or place on seats/pews (in consultation with your church leader).

## PRESENTATION

**The estimated time involved (introduction + video + prayer) is around 7 minutes.** Introduce the subject briefly – "Today is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church". Explain that this year our prayers will focus on India, where persecution is on the rise as Hindu militants harass and attack Christians – especially those living in rural villages – and falsely accuse them of forcibly converting Hindus.

Show the video (**approximately 3 minutes long**). If not using video, give a basic introduction to the situation in India – the following may be a helpful summary: The rise in persecution of Christians in India has been driven by Hindu militant groups that believe India should be for Hindus only. Extremist attacks have increased as militants use the recent introduction of strict "anti-conversion" laws (intended to stop Hindus being converted to other religions) in several Indian states as a licence to attack Christians. Typically, attackers burst into church services, especially in rural villages, beat the Christians and then pressurise police to arrest them on false charges of forcibly converting Hindus.

## PRAYER

Use the following three prayer points (shared by our India partner Shibu Thomas) which are printed on the bookmark. Alternatively, you may wish to use the prayer that is also printed on the bookmark.

- 1. Pray for Indian Christians who've been expelled from their homes and villages.** *This often follows church raids by Hindu militants who beat up Christians and demand that they renounce their faith.*
- 2. Pray that the church will be filled with the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel boldly.** *The aim of militant attacks is to strike fear into pastors, evangelists and church members and to halt the spread of the Gospel.*
- 3. Pray that the persecutors of the Indian church will be changed, like Saul to Paul.** *Hindu militants want to destroy the church – like Saul in the New Testament. Pray that they too will meet Jesus and be changed.*

Finish by encouraging people to find out more by visiting our website [www.churchinchains.ie](http://www.churchinchains.ie)

**MORE IDEAS:** If your church encourages individuals to participate in prayer, the three prayer points could be covered by different people. If your church is using Zoom, you could use breakout rooms so that more people could participate in prayer.



**CHURCH IN CHAINS**

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