

A prayer for persecuted Christians

Our Father in heaven,

We praise Your Name for the grace and courage You grant to our brothers and sisters who suffer for their faith, to those who endure poverty, hunger, discrimination and mockery, to those who are beaten, imprisoned or tortured, to those who have lost family and friends, home and job, because of their decision to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Please fill them day by day with peace, joy and hope. Give them a special awareness of Your loving presence at all times. Strengthen them to endure hardship. Give them Your words to say to those who despise and reject them. Fill them with Your love for those who ill-treat them and give them the grace to forgive and pray for their persecutors.

We pray also for ourselves. Help us to remember that we and they are members of one Body. Help us also to value the freedom You have blessed us with and guide us to use that freedom more wisely as we serve those who have none, for their peace and to Your glory.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen

Original new song "Lord, teach us to rejoice in you"

We are grateful to Mr Christopher Idle, a Barnabas Fund supporter from Kent, UK, for permission to publish his song "Lord, teach us to rejoice in you". Based on Philippians 2: 4-5, this song speaks about remembering that Christ died for us and seeking to help those who are suffering for their faith. Mr Idle has set the words to the tune of *Bristol* (Thomas Ravenscroft, 1621), so that people can sing the song easily and thus concentrate on the meaning of the words without struggling to learn a new tune. *Bristol* is often used for the hymn "Hark the glad sound", and can be found in *Songs of Fellowship*, 154.

Lord, teach us to rejoice in you

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| <p>1. <i>Lord, teach us to rejoice in you
in chains or liberty,
but not to rest one hour too long
while others are not free.</i></p> | <p>2. <i>Grant us your patience, gentle Christ,
if hunger stalks our path;
but when our sisters have no bread
lend us your righteous wrath.</i></p> |
| <p>3. <i>Help us, strong Christ, to know
your grace
wherever we may live;
but for our brothers' homelessness
divine impatience give.</i></p> | <p>4. <i>Give us a peaceful, quiet mind
for all we lack or need;
but zeal to help when
neighbours cry,
to hear where nations bleed.</i></p> |
5. *Lord Christ, you came not for yourself;
for us you faced the worst;
for your sake let us serve your world;
for their sake, put you first.*

Christopher Idle

Suffering Church Sunday offering

The decision to follow Christ is a life-changing one, especially for those who have left Islam, as their decision can often turn family and friends into violent persecutors. Converts can lose their job, their house, their freedom and their health. Barnabas Fund's **Convert Fund** offers support to provide safe accommodation, meet practical needs (such as food, shelter and medical assistance), and help with pastoral care, discipleship and training.

Through our **Victims of Violence Fund** you can help Christians for whom following the Lord Jesus Christ has meant harassment, violence or imprisonment. This Fund also cares for the families of those who have been martyred. With your help, we will be able to support even more Christians who are suffering for their faith.

Please consider taking up a Suffering Church Sunday offering for one of the following:

- Convert Care Fund (00-113)
- Victims of Violence (00-345)

Suggested songs for your service

- Justice and mercy (Matt Redman, *The Father's Song*)
- It is well with my soul (Horatio Spafford, *Sacred Songs and Solos* 210)
- The Lord's my Shepherd (traditional, *Songs of Fellowship* 537)
- The Lord's my Shepherd (Stuart Townend, *Songs of Fellowship* 1030)
- Be still, my soul (Katharina von Schlegel, *Hymns Ancient and Modern* 719)
- Blest be the tie that binds (John Fawcett, *Songs of Fellowship* 49)
- Brother, let me be your servant (Richard Gillard, *Songs of Fellowship* 54)
- Pray for the church afflicted and oppressed (F Pratt Green, *Common Praise* 559)
- I pledge allegiance to the Lamb (Ray Boltz, *Concert of a Lifetime*)