

Monday 5th August

Praying for Muslims on the Hajj pilgrimage

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." John 1:9

Each year, millions of Muslims want to take part in the Hajj pilgrimage. They view it as the greatest experience in their spiritual lives. Completing the pilgrimage, they believe, will absolve them of their sins. Saudi officials reported 2.37 million pilgrims performed Hajj last year.

This year's Hajj season does not begin until this week, but the logistics of moving millions of pilgrims started in July with specially chartered flights into Saudi Arabia. Last year, about 1,535 flights carried pilgrims to Saudi airports, with more arriving over land and sea.

This year's first pilgrims arrived in early July from Indonesia, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, the Saudi Press Agency reported. Most pilgrims arrive at King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah.

Because of the high demand for the Hajj pilgrimage, which every able-bodied Muslim is required to perform at least once, Saudi Arabia has established a quota system for the number of Muslims that can take part from each country. 75% or 1.8 million of non-Saudi Hajj pilgrims come from eight countries: Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Egypt, Nigeria, Turkey (all with Muslim-majority populations) and India.

Muslim men and women who can afford it will make the pilgrimage again and again throughout their lives. Yet, even if Muslims perform the in Mecca, they are not guaranteed forgiveness of sins or eternal life. Without the lasting peace of Christ, they continue their desperate search for eternal hope and forgiveness.

The prayers of intercessors like us have undeniably made an impact on Muslims coming to know Christ.

- Let's pray that Muslims, especially those who come on the Hajj, will discover Jesus' perfect sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world.
- Pray especially for the eight countries of Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Egypt, Nigeria, Turkey and India, where the majority of the pilgrims come from. Let's pray that these countries and Saudi also, will have an amazing spiritual awakening this week and during the days of the pilgrimage.
- Let's pray for Muslims worldwide to experience dreams and visions of Jesus at this time, leading many to discover Him and his sacrificial love for them.

Tuesday 6th August

Introducing Saudi Arabia

"You will be a crown of splendour in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God." Isa 62:3

Saudi Arabia is a country which has unparalleled influence on the rest of the Muslim world. Not only is it the birthplace of Islam, it is also the burial place of the prophet Muhammad, in Medina. It is a country steeped in religious significance and conservatism. The nation abides by the laws of the Quran.

Today the population is estimated at over 34 million, of which a significant portion is expatriates, meaning that around 8% of the population are now non-Muslim.



Most Saudis are Wahhabi Sunnis, following a strict and literal interpretation of the Quran. People of other faiths are forbidden to practise openly. Strict religious laws make it extremely difficult for believers to practise their faith and Saudis who follow Jesus face ostracism, discrimination, harassment and even death. Recent changes in leadership and policy have led some to believe the country may become more open to Christians practising their faith. And God is certainly moving in the hearts

and lives of the Saudi people.

People who live there have found Saudis to be warm, generous and friendly. Although much of their lives can appear hidden - protected by closed doors, religious symbolism or clothing - they are described as being open and eager to engage in the deeper things of life. Saudis are some of the highest users of social media per capita of any country in the world. Gospel workers there have seen success in using social media campaigns to reach out to those who want to learn more about Jesus.

Though numbers are unreliable, the secret Church is growing, and believers are present in every city. We can be encouraged by this testimony of a Saudi woman [here](#).

With a growing openness to the Good News there is a great need for people to go and take this opportunity to lead a new generation of Saudis to Jesus.

- Pray for people who can take their professional skills there, to make their homes in the communities and share Jesus with those they live amongst.
- Thank God for the growing numbers of believers in Saudi and for the groups which are believed to be meeting together. Ask for His protection over them and that they would be bold to share their faith with others in their communities.
- Pray for God's blessing on future efforts to spread the Good News through social media.

Sources of some information: <https://prayercast.com/saudi-arabia.html> and <https://www.frontiers.org.uk/latest/blog/posts/2018-10-04-introducing-saudi-arabia>

Wednesday 7th August

Leadership in Saudi

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.” Gal 5:13

Recent leadership in Saudi, beginning with King Abdullah (1995-2015), has worked to modernise the country through social and economic initiatives. Elections were first held in 2005 and in 2015 women were allowed to vote, with some winning seats on municipal councils. Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud became king in 2015 and named his son, Prince Mohammad bin Salman, the Crown Prince. Vowing to leave behind ‘extremist ideologies’ for a ‘more moderate Islam,’ the Crown Prince has worked to eradicate political and business corruption. He has also introduced several new policies, including lifting a 35-year ban on cinemas, allowing women to drive and beginning to issue tourist visas.

However, the government and leadership have been embroiled in recent controversies. This includes the country’s involvement in the war in Yemen, as well as those in Syria and Libya. Last year, the government was thought to be complicit in the murder in Turkey of an outspoken Saudi journalist. At the beginning of this year, Rahaf Mohammed al-Qunun, a Saudi woman fled from the country, because of the way she felt women were treated. She made it to Thailand and from there she was given asylum in Canada. She was afraid of being killed for renouncing Islam, a crime that is punishable by death in Saudi Arabia. You can read more about her story [here](#) in an article by Pray4Saudi.

Watch a one-minute video here from Pray4Saudi to learn more about how to pray intentionally for this country: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWYarmNCIYA>

- Pray for God’s hand to be on Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as he leads his country in this time of transition and political change.
- Pray for peace and stability in Saudi society and a government and leadership that rules with integrity and for the good of all citizens.
- Pray that the government and leadership in Saudi Arabia will give Saudi women more freedoms.

Thursday 8th August

Jeddah

“The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.” Rev: 22:17

In the six countries of the Arab Gulf there are 50 cities with populations of over 100,000 and Saudi Arabia is home to more than half of these. One of these is Jeddah, a city we mentioned on Monday, because of its importance as a place where most Muslims on the Hajj (and Umrah, religious pilgrimages) arrive on their way to Mecca.

From its humble beginnings as a fishing village some 2,500 years ago, Jeddah has blossomed into one of Saudi Arabia's largest cities, second only to Riyadh, the capital of the Kingdom.



With a population of almost 4.5 million, Jeddah is home to the largest port on the Red Sea and is an important commercial hub. For centuries traders have converged on the city, which was once a key port in the frankincense trade.

Owing to its proximity to the two holiest cities in Islam, Mecca and Medina, it has an extremely diverse cultural heritage. Many of its inhabitants originally came from other nations and have either grown up or lived here most of their lives.

Little or no gospel witness is taking place there. Let's pray for this city that serves as an important commercial and religious hub.

- Pray that those who pass through Jeddah on their way to and from Hajj and Umrah would leave dissatisfied, hungering for more.
- Pray that Jeddah would also be known as a place where people come to Jesus. It seems impossible in a country that is steeped in Islam, in a city that welcomes millions of Muslim pilgrims each year, but the impossible is God's speciality.
- Let's pray for God to do something wonderful in and through the lives of the inhabitants of this city. May many drink the water of life without price.
- Pray for God to raise up new teams of faithful men and women to reach Muslims in this strategic city.

Did you know? King Fahd Fountain (the world's tallest fountain) opened in Jeddah in 1985. Illuminated by 500 spotlights and reaching over 900 feet into the air, it's about as tall as the Eiffel Tower.

Source: Arab World Media: <https://www.arabworldmedia.org/prayer-guides/in-this-city-jeddah/>

Friday 9th August

Mecca and the Hajj

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Matt 26:28

Today the Hajj in Mecca begins and will last for between three to five days, the main Hajj ending on the 11th August.

The Hajj begins with ritual cleansing. Upon arrival, pilgrims wash and then put on plain white clothing meant to symbolise a state of purity. Then they travel to Mecca's Great Mosque, which can

accommodate 4 million worshippers. Inside the mosque is the black-draped Kaaba, a square building that serves as Islam's most sacred site.

After walking around the Kaaba seven times, pilgrims travel to the plains of Mount Arafat about 12



miles east of Mecca. Here they perform one of the most significant rites of the Hajj: *wuquf*, or standing before God. They spend the afternoon repenting for their sins and seeking God's mercy. It's believed that completing *wuquf* with a pure heart will cleanse them of sin and free them from shame.

Several other sacred rituals happen during the Hajj. Pilgrims throw stones at pillars representing Satan, whom they recognise as the source of spiritual battles. They also circle

around the Kaaba again, sacrifice an animal, and drink from the holy Zamzam well.

Eid al-Adha, the Feast of the Sacrifice celebrated by Muslims all around the world, marks the end of the Hajj. This three-day holiday commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son.

To learn more about the Hajj, you can watch a video by the agency, Praying Through the Arabian Peninsula [here](#) or download their pdf [here](#).

- Pray for the glory of Jesus Christ to shine in Mecca and for Muslim pilgrims to experience dreams and visions.
- Ask that those who are genuinely seeking God will find Him, be reconciled through the blood of Christ and receive forgiveness of sins.
- Lift up those who have completed the Hajj and pray for a spiritual restlessness that compels them to seek Jesus, the Living Water.

Source of some material: <https://www.pray-ap.info/index.html>

Saturday 10th August

Prayer and worship for Saudi and the Arab Gulf

There is a beautiful worship song called *Bring An Awakening* by Dustin Smith. Some of the lyrics are written below.

Let's make this our prayer for those on the Hajj, for Saudi Arabia and for the Arab Gulf as we finish this week of prayer.

To listen to the song click [here](#).

“Come like the sound of roaring thunder
Cover the earth with signs and wonders
Come and consume us with Your power
Jesus we need You in this hour
Bring an awakening
Bring an awakening
We need an awakening
The increase of Your kingdom has no end
So we Your church will rise and take a stand
Miracles and life will flow as we reach out our hands
For Your glory, make us holy

Open up the blind eyes
We call out to the broken
We cry out for the hopeless
Commanding those in darkness
Come awake, come awake
We liberate the captives
We activate the passive
We scream out to the masses
Come awake, come awake
Bring an awakening
Come like the sound of roaring thunder
Cover the earth with signs and wonders
Bring an awakening.”

Lord we ask you to bring an awakening to Saudi, to the Arab Gulf and to all Muslims on the Hajj.