



Rejoice always, **pray without ceasing**,
give thanks in all circumstances; for this
is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

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app.**

PRAY

SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLES



Every day people around the world wake up and say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit." Yet they do not know what tomorrow will bring, for what is their life? They are like a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes (James 4:13–14).

In these pages you will get a broad overview of the lives of people in South Asia. You will see where and how they live. You will read about who they worship and what they fear. You will be offered a chance to join with others and pray for nations to have access to the gospel soon.

Time is not in our hands, but it is in God's sovereign hands. May these people hear and believe the gospel of Christ in their lifetime.

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This guide contains eight themes to help you pray for the peoples of South Asia. We encourage you to gather with friends or small groups to pray for each need. It is designed to be used at your own pace. You could meet monthly, weekly, or even eight days in a row.

It is our hope that as you pray for countries and people around the world, your hearts will grow together in a desire to see Christ exalted in your own community and among the nations.



HARD PLACES

Imagine walking into Himalayan villages with women in hiding and men bearing weapons. Years of war and strife are etched on faces and evidenced in the hardness of hearts. In a different corner of South Asia, pristine islands have populations that are 100 percent Muslim and are governed by lawmakers who

don't allow Bibles. Millions of people across South Asia live in dangerous, hard-to-access places where God's Word is not available and a Christian witness is not welcome. People live in fear, deception, and without hope. The task of physically reaching these people often feels like a maze with many obstacles.

Discuss creative ways that we can overcome the obstacles presented by places that are physically hard to reach.

Pray for God to move aside barriers and give those in hard places access to the good news.



CITIES

Picture your city. Now add millions of people who reside in anything from mansions to multistory gated communities to sprawling slums. Add mosques and temples. See the streets filled with men, women, and children all weaving through traffic. Add religious festivals, weddings,

and holidays that fill the air with the sounds of celebration. Now imagine turning the power off and the city being plunged into complete darkness. Add in a few lights scattered throughout, and you see the spiritual image of cities full of people who are not followers of Christ.

Discuss how your life would be different if you were one of only a few believers in your state. How might your priorities change?

Pray for movements of prayer and concentrated gospel efforts in South Asian cities.



HINDUS

Hear the ringing bells calling worshippers to the temple. Men, women, and children with bowed heads and clasped hands enter the temple barefoot. Statues of gods line the front of the room and are freshly washed and adorned

with marigolds. Incense burns, gifts are given, prayers are prayed, and Hindus wait for answers to their requests. In vain, they worship gods who do not see and do not hear, and do not give hope.

Discuss how you have seen your prayers answered. How would you feel if day after day, year after year, your prayers went unanswered?

Pray that the one, true God will bring light to their hearts and hope into their lives.



BUDDHISTS

See the prayer wheels turn in the hands of Buddhists as they count each rotation of their daily prayers. Feel the warmth of flickering lamps believed to represent enlightenment and dispel darkness. Watch prayer flags raised to bring good karma blow in the wind.

Buddhists believe in no God, no soul. The consequences of the deeds in this life will be carried over into the next life through reincarnation. Mankind's ultimate goal is to receive enlightenment, which allows an escape from the cycle of birth and death.

Discuss the ways non-Christians accuse Christians of simply following rules and rituals, similar to other religions. How would you explain to them that Christianity is different?

Pray that Buddhists will look to the Lord and find the God that gives salvation and hears their prayers.



MUSLIMS

Think about devout Muslims bowing toward Mecca five times a day. From many perspectives, that act sounds like something one might aspire to if the object of devotion is the one true God. But sadly, dedicated Muslims spend their lives following law and ritual in an attempt to be found

righteous before Allah, whom they hope will allow them to enter paradise when they die. About 457 million Muslims call South Asia home, more Muslims than the Middle East and North Africa combined. God is calling them to himself and many are choosing to follow him.

Discuss any prejudice in your own heart toward Muslims. How does God view Muslims? How can we share God's love with Muslims we encounter as we go about our lives?

Pray that many Muslims will find the freedom and grace that is only available through Jesus Christ.



SIKHS

Listen as Sikhs gather morning and evening to pray and sing hymns. They wear turbans to contain their uncut hair as a symbol of holiness and strength, steel bracelets on their wrists to represent the eternity of their god, and a dagger to represent the Sikh duty of defending the weak. They

have these physical religious items on their body yet no presence of the living God in their hearts. 23 million people follow their sacred scriptures and gurus' teachings. They believe in one god and a cycle of reincarnation that can be broken through meditation and a life of integrity.



Discuss how Christians can be more intentional about “putting on” the armor we read about in Ephesians 6:10–18.

**Pray God would redeem
Sikhs for his glory and that
they would serve as mighty
warriors for his kingdom.**



UNENGAGED & UNREACHED

Try to grasp the reality that from South Asia's population of 1.6 billion people, 35 million of them are considered unreached and unengaged. That's as if the entire population of Canada had no churches, no Christians, and no Christian workers sharing the gospel among them. A result of the gospel's absence among

these people means that there are very few, if any, known believers and no known strategy underway to reach them. God's Word says the fields are ripe for the harvest. His Word promises people from every nation, tribe, people, and language will be before the throne.

Discuss Revelation 7:9. Who will worship around the throne of the Lamb? What does this mean for the unengaged, unreached people groups of South Asia?

Pray for God to send laborers to the lost peoples of South Asia.



THE LOCAL CHURCH

Envision a few women sitting with heads covered in a one-room home, secretly reading the Bible on a phone. Picture families gathered in a home singing songs of praise and reading the Word. Visualize believers going door to door in their villages to pray for the sick

and teach the Bible. Imagine sanctuaries filled with believers worshipping God in their native language. This is the Church. It shines like stars in lands of darkness. It often endures persecution and difficulties due to the faith of its people, who press on in Christ.

Discuss the fact that we rarely, if ever, experience persecution on the level that many in other parts of the world experience. Why is it often difficult for us to express our faith in public?

Pray that the South Asian church would boldly follow Christ and know that he alone is its sustainer.

Thank you for joining us in praying for the peoples of South Asia.



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Rejoice in hope, be patient in
tribulation, be **constant in prayer.**

—Romans 12:12

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