

Praying for the Persecuted Church in Lent - Women

Project(s): 11-706, 41-697, XX-096

“These women were helping to support them out of their own means.”(Luke 8:3)

The Lord Jesus shocked his contemporaries by showing that He considered women of equal worth to men. His readiness to break down gender barriers and invite women into His circle of followers often offended those around Him. He talked to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). He commended Mary for listening to Him rather than joining Martha in her “womanly” task of preparing food and waiting on the men (Luke 10:38-42). He defended a woman when she anointed Him with expensive perfume, saying that she had done “a beautiful thing” and that her story would be told all around the world, “in memory of her” (Matthew 26:6-13). After His resurrection, He showed Himself first to a woman, Mary Magdalene (John 20:10-18).



Yet 2000 years later women in some countries are still considered as second-class citizens. This is particularly true in Islamic societies, because sharia teaches that women are of less worth than men. When, in addition, the woman belongs to the despised Christian minority, her life can be very hard. In Northern Nigeria, North Sudan and Iraq, women can find themselves attacked or arrested if they fail to follow the sharia dress code, even if they are Christians.

Christian girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to being kidnapped by Muslims, raped, forcibly converted to Islam and forced to marry Muslims. It is rare that the police will exert themselves to help in such cases. In Egypt, there are dozens of cases like this every year, for example Marian Bishay and Amal Estephanos in 2009. The same happens in Pakistan. For example, a 13-year-old Christian girl, Ambreen, was kidnapped and gang-raped at gunpoint by Islamic extremists in February 2009. Three Pakistani men were arrested, but despite eyewitness accounts and medical evidence indicating their guilt, police declared them innocent.

Please Pray:

- Pray for the protection of all Christian girls and women in countries where they are vulnerable because they love the Lord Jesus.

Helped by food aid supplied by Barnabas Fund, this Christian woman in Pakistan was able to save money to pay for her daughters' weddings

- Pray that they will know that they are dearly loved by God and that they are precious in His sight.

- Pray especially for those who have suffered persecution, that they will know the Lord's

Barnabas Fund projects include:

Women's training centres, Egypt (Ref. 11-706)

Women's refuge, Arab world (Ref. XX-096)

Women's health education and clinic, Pakistan (Ref. 41-697)

blessing and comfort and that they may be healed from their physical injuries and emotional trauma.

- Pray too that the attackers may be brought to justice in all cases.