

ENGAGE

**Gospel Partnership - 1 Peter
Small Group Session Twenty
Week Beginning 6th April**



THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

This week's Engage session is the final session before our Easter break. 1 Peter has reminded us that suffering for following Jesus is not something strange or unusual. We should not think that something has gone wrong. It is to be expected. Jesus provocative words in the Beatitudes tell us it is even a blessing.

In our series so far we have looked at 1 Peter 'verse by verse' and we have thought about the 'low level' opposition we might face in the UK for following Jesus. At the end of our series, we are now taking a step back and thinking about the much more significant suffering faced by Christian brothers and sisters across the world. Our focus this last Sunday was on Nigeria and in this week's shorter Engage session we have a chance to **remind, reflect, respond and to pray**.

Take a moment to remind the group about the situation in Nigeria.

- You could look together at the information sheet on the following page (information from Open Doors).
- You might like to watch again the video we shared on Sunday using this link: <https://bit.ly/42fG7Kn>
- You might like to watch this alternative shorter video, a prayer update from Open Doors about the situation in Nigeria from 2024: <https://bit.ly/3FY5kli>

Now take a moment to reflect.

- Given what we have seen from 1 Peter, what might you want to say if you met someone who is facing significant persecution for following Jesus?
- What different things might we be able to learn from our Christian brothers and sisters in Nigeria as we seek to follow Jesus?
- Is there anything you might want to do to support Christians who are facing persecution?
- What different things might you want to pray?

Respond. Open Doors are currently building a petition to raise awareness of the situation in Nigeria. If you did not sign the petition on Sunday and would like to find out more, you can follow this link: <https://bit.ly/42xdR7n>

Pray. Why not turn to pray together about the things you have shared this week.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

NIGERIA

What does persecution look like in Nigeria?

Jihadist violence continues to escalate in Nigeria, and Christians are particularly at risk from targeted attacks by Islamist militants, including Fulani fighters, Boko Haram and ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province). These increased under the rule of former president Muhammadu Buhari, putting Nigeria at the epicentre of targeted violence against the church. The government's failure to protect Christians and punish perpetrators has only strengthened the militants' influence.

While Christians used to be vulnerable only in the Muslim-majority northern states, this violence continues to spread into the Middle Belt and even further south. The attacks are shockingly brutal. Many believers are killed, particularly men, while women are often kidnapped and targeted for sexual violence. More believers are killed for their faith in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world. These militants also destroy homes, churches and livelihoods. More than 16.2 million Christians in sub-Saharan Africa, including high numbers from Nigeria, have been driven from their homes by violence and conflict. Millions now live in displacement camps.

Christians living in northern Nigerian states under Sharia (Islamic law) can also face discrimination and oppression as second-class citizens. Converts from Islam often experience rejection from their own families and pressure to renounce their new faith. They often have to flee their homes for fear of being killed.

In 2023, Bola Tinubu was elected as the new president of Nigeria. Although both he and his predecessor are Muslim, the new president has carried out a major reshuffle. This has provided a better representative balance of the two faiths in leadership positions than under President Buhari. It was hoped this would lead to acknowledging the human rights violations against Christians, and to more effective intervention by security forces to protect Christians. However, this did not happen to a tangible extent during the World Watch List 2025 reporting period.

How can you pray for Nigeria?

- Please pray for Christians whose loved ones have been killed or abducted.
- Pray that God will work in the hearts of Nigerian leaders to protect Christian citizens and communities.
- Pray for the millions of Christians and others who have been displaced by violence.





SPRING TERM

Small Group Session 3.1

Week beginning 5th January

Small Group Session 3.2

Week beginning 12th January

Prayer Meeting Week

7:30pm 22nd (Kea) 23rd (Christ Church) January

Small Group Session 3.3

Week beginning 26th January

Small Group Session 3.4

Week beginning 02 February

Small Group Session 3.5

Week beginning 9th February

Half Term Break

Week beginning 16th February

Trinity Update and Fellowship evening

7:00pm Monday 24th February

Small Group Session 3.6

Week beginning 2nd March

Small Group Session 3.7

Week beginning 9th March

Prayer Meeting Week

7:30pm 19th (Kea) 20th (Christ Church) March

Small Group Session 3.8

Week beginning 23rd March

Small Group Session 3.9

Week beginning 30th March

Small Group Session - Partnership Perspective

Week beginning 6th April



SUMMER TERM

APCM

7:30pm 30th April

Small Group Session - Word 1:1 4.1

Week beginning 4th May

Small Group Session - Word 1:1 4.2

Week beginning 11th May

Prayer Meeting Week

7:30pm 21st (Kea) 22nd (Christ Church) May

Half Term Break

Week beginning 25th May

Small Group Session - 5.1

Week beginning 1st June

Small Group Session 5.2

Week beginning 8th June

Small Group Session 5.3

Week beginning 15th June

Trinity Update and Fellowship evening

7:00pm 25th June

Small Group Session 6.1

Week beginning 29th June

Small Group Session 6.2

Week beginning 6th July

Small Group - ENGAGE Final Meeting

Week beginning 13th July

Prayer Meeting Week

7:30pm 23rd (Kea) 24th (Christ Church) July

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH



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