

Prayer Diary: Pakistan

29 September- 5 October 2024



The situation for religious minorities in Pakistan remains challenging. We grieve for those who are suffering the loss of loved ones, like the family of 73-year-old Lazar Masih, a Christian who died after being violently attacked by an extremist mob. As we continue to pray for change, we also want to praise God for some positive developments we've witnessed in Pakistan in recent months. Even in our sorrow, we thank God for the small victories we've seen and for all the individuals whose lives will be changed for the better as a result. We trust that our Lord will multiply these glimmers of hope, and ultimately bring about a full and lasting change for all of Pakistan's citizens.

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Sunday 29 September

During the country's general elections in February, nearly a dozen candidates from religious minority communities were nominated by their respective parties to stand in the elections. Although not all were successful, analysts believe that the 2024 general elections mark a positive shift for the country and pave the way for a more inclusive political landscape. Praise God for this.

Monday 30 September

A 'fatwa' (an Islamic ruling or opinion) was circulated on social media ahead of the polls, which called for all votes to be cast only in favour of Muslim candidates. Despite this, a number of religious minority candidates won seats in the elections. Thank God for this opportunity to represent their communities and model peaceful co-existence.

Tuesday 1 October

On 26 February the outgoing Senate passed the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Bill 2023, which increases the minimum age of marriage for both Christian men and women from 16 to 18. The Christian community has long been pushing for this change in law to protect underage girls from abductions, forced conversions and forced marriages. Give thanks for this positive outcome.

Wednesday 2 October

On 1 March, Christian brothers Rocky Masih and Raja Masih were both acquitted of blasphemy charges that were levelled against them on 16 August 2023. Thank God for this victory! The court ruled that both brothers had been framed by two other individuals who had a personal grudge against them.

Thursday 3 October

Notan Lal, a Hindu principal, was also acquitted of blasphemy on 1 March. In February 2022 he'd received a 25-year prison sentence following a false accusation of blasphemy, which was levelled against him by a student. Thank God that the Sindh High Court ruled in Mr Lal's favour.

Friday 4 October

Praise God for the encouraging display of goodwill shown towards the country's Christian community over this year's Easter weekend. The newly-elected Chief Minister of Punjab attended Easter Sunday Mass in the town of Mariamabad, where she praised various distinguished Christians for their past contributions to Pakistan. Other parliamentarians also took part in Easter celebrations throughout Punjab.

Saturday 5 October

Heavenly Father, we thank you for each of these individual breakthroughs we've seen in Pakistan in recent months. May these positive changes be replicated and multiplied throughout the country, and may we see greater representation and greater freedom for the country's religious minorities. Amen.