Just as Muslims faithfully observe the fast, so should we, as followers of Jesus Christ, make this an important part of our prayer life. Jesus set the example of fasting for us, telling us that prayer and fasting were essential to accomplish the supernatural.

Today we are asking you to join us during the Muslim’s month of Ramadan. As these people observe this fast to pay a debt to God and partially atone for their sins, let us also fast and pray that God will supernaturally reveal Himself to these millions of Muslims around the world—these spiritual sons of Ishmael. Ask God to open your spiritual eyes so you might see through His eyes of compassion the great number of Muslims who so diligently seek Him. Without the mercy of God we know that these people are indeed lost and headed for eternity without Him.

As the Muslims end their month of Ramadan with days of celebration and giving, we ask that you prayerfully consider a celebration of giving—giving whatever God would lay upon your heart to give for reaching Muslims with the gospel. You can be part of touching millions in the Muslim world with the message of Christ by directing your gift through the ministries of Global Initiative: Reaching Muslim Peoples.

God has opened many doors for ministering to Muslims around the globe. Help us to enter these open doors with His message of love, hope, and salvation. Please join us with your prayers and your gifts as we reach out together in love to Muslim people, the greatest bloc of unreached people in the world today.

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Sawm (fasting) in the month of Ramadan is to be observed by all adult Muslims–both male and female–who have reached the age of puberty. Sick people, nursing mothers, pregnant women, and travelers are exempted from the fast during the month of Ramadan, but must make up the fast when the exempting circumstances are over.

Observing the Muslim fast means to totally abstain from all food, drink, and conjugal relations from sunrise to sunset each day for the whole month's duration. Muslims are also expected to read 1/30th of the Qur’an each day so that by the end of the month-long fast they will have completely reread their holy book.

The month of Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. This means that Ramadan moves slowly around our calendar, beginning 11 days earlier each year and taking approximately 33 years to complete its cycle.

Even though Sawm is not a complete 24-hour fast each day (Muslims are allowed to eat, drink, and have conjugal relations between sunset and sunrise), it still requires a lot of self-discipline for everyone to observe the fast, particularly in the hot tropical climates.

Fasting is seen as an important part in building one’s spiritual character. One noted Muslim scholar, Mawlana Mawdudi, writes in his book, Towards Understanding Islam:

Rigor and discipline during this month bring us face to face with the realities of life and help us make our life, during the rest of the year, a life of true subservience to his (God’s) Will.

Mawdudi goes on to say that fasting has an immense impact on society, for all Muslims irrespective of their status must fast during the same month. This emphasizes the essential equality of men and thus goes a long way towards creating in them sentiments of love and brotherhood.

While there are many nominal Muslims who may not practice the strict regulations of their religion, such as praying five times each day, the observance of the Ramadan fast is nearly universal and is generally very strictly observed.

In the minds of most Muslims, the fast is paying a debt they owe to God. It is often said that the fast also partly atones for their sins.

At the close of Ramadan a time of celebration is held. This celebration is called Eid al-Fitr, and often lasts for several days. Homes are visited, sweets are served, and gifts and greeting cards are exchanged. It is much like our Christmas celebration.

The importance of fasting in the lives of Muslims worldwide cannot be overstated. And the unrelenting fervor associated with the observance of the fast of Ramadan is indeed impressive!

As Christians we need to once again search the Scriptures and deeply reconsider the exercise of fasting. Jesus said that anyone who would be His disciple should deny himself. Fasting is one important way to demonstrate this self-denial. For in this self-denial does the Kingdom of God supersede our own personal kingdoms.

In Matthew 6, Christ, who Himself fasted 40 days and 40 nights, describes for us the manner in which we should fast. Then in Luke 5 (vv. 34, 35), He answers a question asked of Him by the scribes and Pharisees concerning why John’s disciples fasted often and made prayers while Jesus’ disciples ate and drank. Christ said to them, “Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.”

Joel’s call for a time of fasting is only 16 verses before his declaration that God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh. In Joel 2:12, the Holy Spirit, speaking through Joel, emphasizes the importance of fasting by declaring, “Return to me with fasting.”