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Release Women Email - April 2020

Hello Friend

Closer to God

A massive thank you to everyone who has taken part in Release Women's **40x40x40** Lent initiative. This came to an end with Easter Sunday on April 12. As you will be aware, the money you have saved or collected through this initiative will go to support women in Strength to Stand (S2S) groups in Pakistan and Egypt. The best way to send us these funds is by a telephone donation to the Supporter Relations Team at Release International on 01689 823491. Please specify that the donation is for 40x40x40. It is still possible to send donations through the post by cheque, made payable to Release International, with 40x40x40 written on the back and sent to **Release International, PO Box 54, Orpington, Kent, BR5 4RT**. Please bear in mind, however, that it may take longer than usual to process these payments. We also do understand that not everyone will be able to get out to a postbox at this time, so be assured that there is no time limit to sending us the funds.

As we have reported many times, the S2S groups help to build resilience to economic oppression, by giving the women the skills to start small businesses or micro enterprises; they also help to build resilience to persecution by helping members to understand their identity in Christ and to develop their faith in Him. However, it is always encouraging to hear stories from the women themselves of how the groups are changing their lives. Two such women in Pakistan are Rubina and Perveen.

Rubina was married with three children, but a few years ago her husband left her. Rubina, with her children, had to return home to her mother. She was very worried about her financial situation as she had no source of income and no resources to generate one to support her and her children. Rubina continues her story: 'I was fully



depressed, disappointed and hopeless. One day someone told me about the S2S group, and I joined the group. After two or three weeks I shared my problem with the women, and they all gave me courage and strength. In the weekly meetings I learned that I need to take a stand for my children. Then the women of my group told me that I can take a loan from the S2S group so that I can repair my sewing machine. I learned stitching before my marriage, but I didn't use this skill. Now I'm stitching ladies' dresses at my own home and earning money. This initiative has changed my life and I feel confident... I am very thankful to God Almighty for this group that gives me strength.' Rubina's S2S group is called 'Happiness'!

Perveen has four children - two sons and two daughters. She tells her own story: 'My children and my family members had no relationship with God. One day a lady from the S2S group told me about the S2S group and how S2S groups are influencing women of our community. Then she invited me to her S2S group. After some days I joined the S2S group named "New Way". I learned how it's important to have personal and family prayer time. In the weekly meetings I learned many new things which I have never learned before. One day our group facilitator asked me to bring my children in the meeting, so I brought them to her, and she guided them about prayer and the importance of God's word in our life. She also guided them that they must go to church. Her guidance left a great influence upon my children. After that day my children started their personal prayer and now we are also doing our family prayer daily. Moreover, I and my children are going to church regularly and we are doing regular Bible study at our home. Once a week my children are going for Bible study in the church. Now I'm very happy and I'm very grateful to the Strength to Stand groups for bringing us nearer to God.'

Thank you so much for helping to make a difference to the lives of Christian women such as Rubina and Perveen in Pakistan. Our partner in Pakistan reports that the S2S groups are unable to meet at this time due to Covid-19 restrictions. As we continue in partial lockdown in the UK, let us continue to pray for all of these sisters and their families in Pakistan and for many others like them in Egypt. May they continue to come closer to God and know the truth of Psalm 46:1; God is never 'locked down'.

'God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in trouble.' Psalm 46:1

Thank you for your prayers.

Blessings,

Release Women team

Please **CLICK** on the red button if you prayed.

I prayed!

Through our international network of missions, Release International serves persecuted Christians in 25 countries around the world by supporting pastors and Christian prisoners, and their families; supplying Christian literature and Bibles; and working for justice.

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