What do Muslims believe about the month of Ramadan?

Ramadan is the 9th month of the Islamic calendar. Muslims observe a month of fasting in order to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad according to Islamic belief. The Word 'Ramadan' comes from the Arabic root *'ramida'* or *'ar-ramad'* meaning scorching heat or dryness.

Fasting in this month is obligatory on all adult Muslims with certain exceptions such as those who are ill, those who are pregnant or any on a journey etc. From dawn to sunset they must refrain from food and drink as well as other things such as smoking and sexual relations. They should also refrain from lying, insults, fighting etc. as these things can negate the reward of their fasting.

During this fast Muslims should also increase their prayers and recitation of the Quran and they should pay attention to acts of charity.

They believe:

- **The Quran was given as a revelation during this month.**
- **Evil spirits are bound in this month.**

They also believe that these 30 days of Ramadan are divided into 3 parts:

1. **The first 10 days is the time of forgiveness when God forgives sins.**
2. **The second 10 days is the period of mercy when God shows his mercy to the faithful Muslims.**
3. **The third 10 days is the period of escape from hell when God delivers those who do Ramadan well from condemnation in hell.**

Muslims try very hard to do the ritual prayers and fasting to obtain these rewards. Muslims do many things in the hope of going to heaven, but not out of a love for God. Muslims become faithful in the Muslim ritual prayers during Ramadan. They fast from the first light of dawn until sunset without eating or drinking anything all day. But, in fact, they spend more on food during this month than any other time of the year.

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar and changes by about ten days each year. Some years are very difficult – i.e. when Ramadan closely corresponds to a month when the temperature in some countries reaches 45° Celsius (113° Fahrenheit).

The Night of Power/Destiny – *Laylat al-Qadr*

Scholars say that this night falls on an odd-numbered night during the last 10 days of Ramadan. The 27th is a favoured night. It is seen as the holiest night of the year. It is observed by both Orthodox and Folk Muslims. The blessings and mercy of God are thought to be most abundant and sins are most likely to be forgiven. It is believed that Allah commands angels to write the fate of each person for the coming year. It is believed that this was when the prophethood of Muhammad was first revealed and when he had his first visitations of the angel Gabriel giving him the words of the Quran.

"Indeed, we sent the Quran down during the Night of Power … The Night of Power is better than 1000 months. The angels and the Spirit descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter. Peace it is until the emergence of dawn." (Sura 97:1-5)

It is also thought that the Night of Power is when the **Night Flight of Muhammad** by miracle to Jerusalem and to heaven took place. Some believe Muhammad went physically and others that he went in his spirit and his body remained in Mecca. It is an important time because it is when Muslims believe it was revealed to Muhammad that all Muslims should pray five times a day.

It is easy to see that the life of the believers in Christ who have come out of Islam is greatly impacted during this month of intense religious fervour on the part of their Muslim family and friends.