



## History

Qatar's history can be traced back to the 5th millennium BC, during which its inhabitants traded regularly with the civilizations along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, in modern day Iraq. In the 1500s Qatar was ruled by Portugal, and then by the Ottoman Turks. The area was also under the authority of the Al-Khalifa Royal Family, in modern day Bahrain, who were later expelled by a joint British-Qatari diplomatic mission in 1978.

## Government

Qatar has been ruled by a monarchy since the 19th century, despite only declaring independence in 1913 from Britain. The country continues to be ruled by Emirs. A referendum in 2003 instituted a new constitution in which women were granted equal legal rights to men, as well as the formation of a new council which could propose laws and amendments to existing laws. 1. The judicial system is based on Sharia law.

## Social Issues

Qatar is one of the most liberal of the Gulf States towards women, legally permitting them to drive as well as vote. Male and female adult literacy rates are almost equal at 89.5% and 88%, respectively.

## The Way TV Viewership

Precise figures are unknown but The Way TV's Audience Relations staff occasionally receive messages from viewers in Qatar.

## **Religion**

Freedom of religion was granted in the new constitution in 2005. The first church building officially sanctioned by the government was built in Doha in March 2008, and a second one was opened in 2009. There are, however, no crosses or paintings on the outside walls, as it is forbidden to display non-Muslim symbols. There are an estimated 11,900 Christians in Qatar, which accounts for roughly 8.5% of the population. 2. The majority of the population is Sunni Muslim.

## **Prayer Points**

Praise God for the agreement of the Qatari government to the construction of places of worship for Christians.

Pray that the freedom of religion granted in the constitution of 2005 will be adhered to and respected by all.