

How to Pray for the Upcoming Election

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In Paul's teaching on prayer in 1 Timothy 2:1–4, one of the major thrusts is praying for those in authority. According to Paul's reasoning, we want good government that allows us to live "peaceful and quiet lives"—ultimately freeing us to evangelize those who are lost.

Paul would have been amazed that Christians could someday actually take part in selecting those leaders. I believe he would have been even more amazed (and appalled) that many of those Christians didn't even bother to get involved in selecting those leaders for the purposes of God to be fulfilled.

Praying for the electoral process is the first step in seeing the fulfillment of what Paul is writing about to Timothy. I don't believe we should wait for a leader to be selected before we move into obedient prayer for those in authority. In prayer, we invite the Lord into the process of electing those leaders who will ultimately allow us to lead "peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (v. 2).

So why pray for the elections? There are a number of compelling reasons:

- * The Bible commands us to pray for those who are in leadership, which would include those who are vying to become leaders.
- * Godly leaders can help slow the erosion of religious liberties in our land, providing an increased window of opportunity for the Church to pray and evangelize.
- * The selection of leaders who understand and lead according to God's righteous standards can bring great blessing to a nation (Prov. 14:34).
- * Scripture also says, "For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers" (Prov. 11:14). The determination of who leads our nation will also determine who advises that leader and how we are guided.

How to Praying for Our Nation, the Elections, and the Church

The following prayer points cover seven major areas that relate to our national elections.

1. Our Nation and the Issues It Faces

- * Pray for the judges of this nation, that they will seek the wisdom that comes from above. "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere" (James 3:17).
- * Ask the Lord to thwart the efforts of those who would remove religious freedom from our nation. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1).
- * Pray for truth to become valued again in American society. "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).
- * Pray that our nation will increasingly see that God is our only refuge in the midst of the troubles of this world. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1).
- * Pray for our judicial system and lawmakers—that justice for all, tempered by mercy and compassion, will guide our nation. "This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another'" (Zech. 7:9).
- * Repent on behalf of our nation, because we have turned from making Scripture the basis of law, leaving behind wisdom and instead, looking to ourselves for truth. "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6).
- * Ask the Lord to pour out a spirit of repentance on our nation, that we might become a nation committed to following His ways. "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).
- * Pray that the United States will repent of its corporate rejection of the Word of God as the basis of law. "How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How

long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? Repent at my rebuke! Then I will pour out my thoughts to you, I will make known to you my teachings" (Prov. 1:22–23).

- * Pray that a holy fear of God will sweep across our nation, leading us back to a place of wisdom and walking in the Lord. "Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on their God" (Isa. 50:10).

2. The Election Process

- * Pray for wisdom for voters and a safe and fair election. "My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble" (Prov. 3:21–23).
- * Ask the Lord to remove those who might try to unjustly and illegally change the outcome of the voting. "I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place" (Isa. 28:17).
- * Pray for a huge turnout of voters who use wisdom in their decisions. "Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you" (Prov. 4:5–6).
- * Pray for protection from any attacks from enemies that would prevent or delay the election. "Do not be afraid of them; the Lord your God himself will fight for you" (Deut. 3:22).

3. Candidates and Leaders

- * Pray for the salvation of those who are in leadership of our nation. Ask the Lord to remove all envy and selfish ambition. "For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice" (James 3:16).
- * Pray that candidates will take brave stands for righteousness, even when it may not be well received. "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all" (Isa. 7:9).
- * Pray that their families will be protected from harm and unnecessary scrutiny. "You, Lord, will keep the needy safe and will protect us forever from the wicked, who freely strut about when what is vile is honored by the human race" (Ps. 12:7–8).

- * Ask the Lord to surround them with godly advisors. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise" (Ps. 111:10).
- * Pray that each candidate will focus on the issues we face as a nation—and not on personal attacks on other candidates. "If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other" (Gal. 5:15).

4. The Church

- * Pray for a spirit of humility in the Church and an outreach toward those whom the Bible calls the least among us. "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'" (Matt. 25:40).
- * Pray that the churches in your community and area will preach the gospel of Christ powerfully. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile" (Rom. 1:16).
- * Thank the Lord for the freedom we have in Him and for the wisdom to understand that freedom. "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love" (Gal. 5:13).
- * Pray for a spirit of consecration and holiness to come upon the Church in America. "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do" (1 Peter 1:15).
- * Pray for a spirit of compassion to come over the Church in this nation so that we will begin seriously to live out the lifestyle of Jesus in our communities. "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others" (Phil. 2:1–4).
- * Ask the Lord to help strengthen the trumpet call to intensive prayer, so that it is heard throughout the Church in the United States. "Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing" (1 Tim. 2:8).
- * Ask the Lord to equip the Church to rise up with a strong prophetic voice for America. "Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 6:19).

- * Pray for a spirit of repentance to fall upon the Church in America that would cause believers to turn back to God and seek Him. "God looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God" (Ps. 53:2).
- * Pray for a spirit of courage to rise up within the Church, a commitment to enduring whatever it takes to see the fulfillment of God's purposes in our nation. "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).
- * Pray that the Church in America will so noticeably live in Christ's peace that His peace comes into the councils of our nation. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful" (Col. 3:15).
- * Pray for a movement of the Spirit that creates a dramatic cultural transformation in the United States, bringing about a nation that has learned to put its hope in the Word of God. "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:2).
- * Ask the Lord to awaken the Church to the temporary nature of the nations and to the eternal nature of the reign of God. "But the wicked will perish: Though the Lord's enemies are like the flowers of the field, they will be consumed, they will go up in smoke" (Ps. 37:20).
- * Pray that courage born of wisdom will be given to Christians in places of leadership in government, the courts, and law schools across the nation so that they will stand for a godly basis for law. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9).

5. Media

- * Pray for truth to be an established standard in our news media. "In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility and justice; let your right hand achieve awesome deeds" (Ps. 45:4).
- * Pray that media bias will be replaced by fairness. "The King is mighty, he loves justice—you have established equity; in Jacob you have done what is just and right" (Ps. 99:4).
- * Ask that Christianity will receive fair coverage in all reports. "Have I not written thirty sayings for you, sayings of counsel and knowledge, teaching you to be honest and to speak the truth, so that you bring back truthful reports to those you serve?" (Prov. 22:20–21).

6. Spiritual Warfare

- * Ask for great awareness and discernment as we pray over the election. "Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is" (Eph. 5:15–17).
- * Pray for physical protection for all candidates and their families throughout this campaign season. "May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you" (Ps. 20:1).
- * Beseech the Lord for a strong hedge of protection around the nation itself during this time of decision. "May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you" (Ps. 33:22).

7. Revival

- * Pray for another Great Awakening to sweep the nation as the Lord's people learn to humble themselves with a contrite spirit, and to tremble at the Word of the Lord. "'Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?' declares the Lord. 'These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word'" (Isa. 66:2).
- * Ask the Lord to bring revival to the Church in America. "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him" (Isa. 64:1–4).
- * Pray for the preachers of America to fearlessly proclaim the Word of God regarding sin and God's love. "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (2 Tim. 4:1–3).

Amen Is Not the End

Prayer rarely stops after the "amen." When we passionately cry out to God over any issue, we should, with integrity, also find ourselves praying, "and Lord, if there is any way You can use me to be an answer to this prayer, here I am." When we pray for an election, simple honesty will then require us to follow up our prayer by actually voting.

What about broadening the prayer effort beyond your own prayers? Why not start a short-term prayer gathering in your home for the thirty or forty days before the election? Invite friends or those with similar passion to join you each week for a focused prayer meeting that asks God to intervene in our electoral process.

In a country with nearly 350 million people, it is very easy to feel as though one person is incapable of making a difference. That is false on many levels, particularly when we consider the power of prayer.

As we pray—even as one solitary person—we are teaming up with the Creator of the universe to change situations. The only way that positive change is not possible is when Christians refuse to pray!

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