

How to Pray for Political Leaders

by Frank Erb

It is easy to criticize our government leaders and complain about their decisions. In fact, some of them make it *extremely* easy for us to do this! However, there is a better way. The Bible instructs us to instead *pray* for them:

1 Timothy 2:1-4 “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

What should we pray? Here are six suggestions based on this passage and other scriptures, as well as private conversations I have had with many state legislators and U.S. Congress members.

1. Pray for their Salvation

Political leaders, like all people, need the forgiveness of sins and new life that comes through trusting in Jesus Christ. Imagine how much better an elected official leads when he or she becomes a child of God and looks to Him for help!

1 Timothy 2:4 “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Legislator quote: “All of us who have experienced inviting Christ into our lives know that this is what will put our state back on the right track faster and better than any other action.”

2. Pray for their Spiritual Maturity

Salvation is just the beginning. Spiritual maturity happens gradually as they humbly grow in their knowledge and application of God's word in every situation they face.

1 Timothy 2:4 “God our savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Legislator quote: “The anchor of a Christ-centered Bible study ... has been a blessing to me and my colleagues in this sea of manmade turmoil.”

3. Pray for them to have God's Wisdom

Political leaders are regularly called upon to make difficult decisions that affect many people. They cannot do this well without wisdom and discernment from above.

James 3:15-17 “This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

Legislator quote: “With past decisions, we knew what to do and we just needed the boldness to do it. Now it is different because we are not even sure what to do.”

4. Pray for them to have Courage

Political leaders are often called upon to make compromises. Not doing so can cost them their careers. They need God to give them the strength of conviction and courage to do the right thing no matter what the personal result.

2 Samuel 10:12 "Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God."

Legislator quote: "This job is nothing like I thought it would be. I thought I could come to the Capitol and make a difference, but instead I feel like I'm wasting my life because I have to do what I am told by others."

5. Pray for them to have Humility

Political leaders have great power, deal with immense sums of money, work in lavish facilities, and are treated like royalty. This environment naturally produces arrogance and pride. Pray that God will keep them on their knees before Him, so that they will be humbly led by Him as they attempt to lead us.

Micah 6:8 "He has told you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Legislator quote: "When I was elected to political office, it was as if I suddenly became smarter, funnier, and better looking."

6. Pray for them to have Strength

Political leaders regularly encounter many strong temptations, including pride, arrogance, selfish ambition, greed, deceitfulness, hypocrisy, sexual immorality, alcohol and drug abuse, and discouragement. Pray for them to grow in maturity in Christ so that they will have the strength to resist these traps that threaten to destroy their lives, their families, and their effectiveness as leaders.

Luke 22:46 "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Legislator quote: "I have never seen or felt temptation as strong as it is here in the Capitol. Every kind of temptation is here and it is destroying people."

Sometimes it might feel like praying is a waste of time when there are so many other things we could be doing. Consider this though – man's best efforts to govern well have proven to be far from ideal. To persist in seeking Godless solutions to the immense problems of our day is futile. It is time for us to do it God's way, and seek the assistance and blessings that only He can provide.

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