

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 to do this. However, there is a better way. The Bible instructs us to *pray* for them instead.

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 many suggestions based on this passage and other scriptures as well as upon private conversations I have had with many lawmakers.

1. Pray for them Thankfully

1 Timothy 2:1 “entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings … for kings and all who are in authority”

Political leaders are fallible people who do a difficult job that was instituted by God for our benefit (Romans 13:1). When the Apostle Paul wrote *1 Timothy*, Nero, an evil and immoral man, was world leader. Even in a situation like this, Paul said we should pray thankfully, grateful to God for any good the government provides.

Legislator Quote: “I know firsthand that the halls and offices of the Capitol can be the loneliest places around.”

2. Pray for their Salvation

1 Timothy 2:4 “God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved …”

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 is closely connected to the Lord!

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.”

3. Pray for their Spiritual Maturity

1 Timothy 2:4 “… and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Spiritual maturity happens gradually after one has trusted in Christ and then humbly grows in their knowledge and application of God's word in every situation they face.

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.”

4. Pray for them to have Humility

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?”

Political leaders have great power, deal with huge sums of money, work in opulent facilities, and are treated like royalty, all of which often leads to pride and arrogance that God hates. (Proverbs 16:18)

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

5. Pray for them to have Wisdom

1 Kings 3:9 "Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"

Political leaders are regularly called upon to make difficult decisions that affect many people. They can only do this well with wisdom and discernment from above.

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."

6. Pray for them to have Courage

Psalm 27:14 "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage"

Political leaders are often expected to make compromises, and not doing so can cost them their careers. They need God to give them the courage to do the right thing no matter what the personal result.

Legislator Quote: "I don't like my decision, but how could I do otherwise and lose my opportunity to serve in elected office?"

7. Pray for them to have Strength

Luke 22:46 "pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Political leaders regularly encounter many strong temptations. Pray for them to have the strength to resist these traps that threaten to destroy their lives, families, and effectiveness as leaders.

Legislator Quote: "I have never seen or felt temptation as strong as it is here in the Capitol."

8. Pray for their Campaign

Daniel 2:21 "He removes kings and establishes kings"

Political leaders are constantly preparing for their next election. Pray for them to campaign truthfully, respectfully, and decently, and for God to guide the votes and outcome according to His will.

Legislator Quote: "Look at this new campaign mailer about me. It sure makes me sound good doesn't it?!"

9. Pray for Those Reaching out to Them

Romans 10:14 "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?"

Political leaders are often isolated from others who might share the Good News of Jesus and the Word of God with them. Pray for the Lord to surround them with His people to speak to them about Him.

Legislator Quote: "Pastor Frank Erb allowed me to keep Jesus first and foremost in my heart and mind while at the Capitol."

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

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