

How Christians Should Respond to the Zimmerman Verdict

All of us have watched the trial of George Zimmerman with mixed emotions. As a local pastor near Sanford, Fla., this is personal to me since I've been involved behind the scenes. However, the principles I'm about to share with you apply not only to Christians in our area but to all, because the eyes of the nation have been riveted on this trial.

Whether you believe the death of Trayvon Martin was the result self-defense or not, the loss of human life is always a tragedy. Where are we to stand as believers, and how should we respond to what is now a global event?

I believe the admonition of the apostle Paul to Timothy is totally appropriate at this time:

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way" (1 Tim. 2:1-2, ESV).

In the first verse, Paul makes it clear that the starting point and the finish line is always prayer. He also says the focus of prayer should be mankind.

So, first we need to be praying for the Martin family and the Zimmerman family. Regardless of the outcome of the trial, this sad event has forever altered the lives of these families. We as believers should be lifting up our voices to God on their behalf. Pray that God will comfort the heart of the grieving and give peace to the troubled. Pray that, even in this terrible tragedy, God will bring good out of it. Pray that these families will be able to carry themselves with dignity and grace and will be able to model Christ, remembering that

we could be in their shoes.

Second, we need to be praying for those in authority. Our law enforcement community needs our prayers at this time. We need to pray that God will grant both wisdom and protection to the ones who are on the front lines to protect us. These officers lay their lives on the line every day to simply maintain order in our communities. They need to know they are being carried in prayer.

And last, we need to be lifting up our nation to the Lord. Through this event, we have again been brought face to face with how deep the racial divide is in our land. Today we find ourselves in a highly charged emotional situation. It would be easy for our streets to explode in racial unrest. If ever we needed God, we need Him now. God can heal this pain, but He uses us. Isaiah 58:12 says we will be called "Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings" (NIV).

It is my sincere desire that each of us will take a few minutes to lift these three areas up in prayer, and may the Lord be gracious to us and make His face to shine upon us.

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