

Is There Any Excuse for Not Praying for Our President?

Inauguration Day has come and gone. I'll end up feeling guilty. Add the post-Inauguration media coverage, and it's going to be a pretty crummy week. I don't think my self-esteem can take it. Maybe I'll move to Myanmar and take my chances there.

I feel this way every four years when Inauguration Day rolls around. Why? It's because I don't pray for the president. During the election, I pray for my candidate. But when a candidate is elected—mine or the other one—I stop praying. I'm good at praying for candidates, but bad at praying for the president.

This is why I feel guilty. As a Christian, it's my responsibility to pray for the president regularly. The Apostle Paul wrote, "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

But just because the Bible says so doesn't mean I do it. I've got five excuses to fall back on. They keep me from taking a knee for the Commander in Chief. Maybe they keep you from praying for the President, too:

- **I'm too busy to pray for the president.** Of course you are. You're too busy enjoying the freedoms that our country provides. The freedom to watch television, play video games, read romance novels, shop in peace and safety. You can even get married over the weekend if you want to. All of these freedoms are possible because leaders put them in place. But if you have time to grab

a Starbucks, you have time to thank God for the president.

- **I don't agree with his politics.** If you don't agree with his politics, it's all the more reason to pray for him. Pray for wisdom and understanding. Pray for good counsel. Pray for the fear of God. Unless you're a White House insider, prayer is your greatest opportunity to influence his politics. And if you *really* don't agree with him, you're not off the hook. Jesus said to pray for your enemies (Matthew).
- **My prayer life is already boring.** The Apostle Paul listed different types of prayer—petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. This means you don't have to pray just one way. Just because an old lady you know prays a particular way doesn't mean you have to. Find a type of prayer that works for you—there are 12—and pray that way. If you do, prayer can become exciting and enjoyable, the way prayer was meant to be.
- **I'm only one person; I can't make a difference.** If your prayer didn't make a difference, why would God ask you to pray? Now that would be a cruel thing to do. Plus, when you pray, you're not really on your own—you're with God. And with God, you form a majority.
- **Other people are praying for him.** You assume other people are praying for the president, so why should you? Maybe praying for the president isn't just about the president, maybe it's also about you. That's because prayer doesn't just change the person being prayed for, prayer also changes you.

So what do you say? Let's put these excuses aside and pray for the President. Guilt be gone, in Jesus' Name!

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