

Prayer Becomes a Key Component of Campaigns

Invoking prayer in politics is nothing new in America. It's been an integral part of the process for Christians since long before George Washington went on bended knee on the banks of the Potomac.

But, in recent history, it's been a lot more difficult to find, usually reserved for events where the audience is predominantly Christian. And it is frequently met with backlash from atheists and groups who are outwardly hostile toward people of faith.

One sign that the mindset about prayer, at least among the current crop of presidential candidates, is changing is the fact that, in the span of an hour Tuesday afternoon, three of them urged their supporters to pray with them. The first to call for prayer was Dr. Ben Carson:

"Earlier today in Iowa, a van transporting three campaign volunteers and one of our campaign employees hit a patch of ice and flipped on its side where it was struck by another vehicle. Three of the passengers, including the campaign staffer driving, are currently being checked out in Atlantic, Iowa. One volunteer is being transported to Omaha, Nebraska to receive additional treatment.

"I have spoken with the family of the volunteer being transported to Omaha, as well as the attending physician. I have also cancelled all remaining campaign events today and will be traveling to Omaha this afternoon to be with the family during this difficult time.

"I am asking for you to join me in prayer for all the individuals and families involved."

According to published reports, the volunteer transported to Omaha is in “grave” condition. Carson’s call to prayer was quickly followed by a repeated by one of his opponents for the GOP nomination, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz:

“Heidi and I are lifting up in prayer the Dr. Ben Carson staffers injured in a car accident in Iowa.

“‘By His stripes, we are healed.’ Isaiah 53:5.”

Judging from the social media reaction, his supporters are following suit. And as the other campaigns have heard the news, they, too, have answered the call to prayer. The crash was likely to be brought up at another prayer call later in the evening.

Beginning Tuesday, former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum was holding evening “prayer calls” with his supporters at 10:30 p.m. EST. The prayer calls will be held nightly through the Feb. 1. Iowa Caucus.

Santorum routinely asks those who attend his campaign functions in Iowa to pray not just for him, his family and his campaign, but also for those of his opponents. He also has a prayer team of Christian volunteers who have offered to receive prayer requests throughout the course of the campaign.

“Sen. Santorum is a big believer in the power of prayer,” Matt Beynon, a spokesman for the Santorum 2016 campaign, told *National Journal*. “There are folks who ask how they can help, and the senator always tells them that the No. 1 thing they can do is pray for him and his family and for the other candidates.”