

How You Should Pray for People in Authority

We all know that Scripture tells us to pray for those in authority. To those who possess the fear of the Lord, that is not to be taken lightly, even if we understand nothing else.

But *why* should we pray? *Who* exactly is our authority? And *what* should we pray?

Why Pray for Those in Authority?

Prayers for people who are in positions of authority have high priority in the heart of God.

We see this in scriptures such as 1 Timothy 2:1-4: “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” (NASB1995).

The prayers that Christians pray for those in authority matter; they are essential to the advancement of the kingdom. We cannot afford to leave them up to others.

Prayer for leaders must become one of the features of our lives as intercessors.

Why should we pray for those who are in authority? According to 1 Timothy 2:1-4, there are two reasons:

- So that “we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”
- So that God can bring those in authority – as well as those under their authority – to Himself (He “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the

truth”).

As the late Bible teacher Derek Prince has said, it doesn't matter what plans, systems or programs you devise; if you bypass prayer, you will not have the power to carry them out.

Prince compared prayerless intentions to a building that is wired for electricity – if it is not connected to a power source, nothing will work, even if the wires are in good order and the light fixtures are beautiful.

Our power source is prayer. The Bible commands us to pray in particular for “kings and all who are in authority,” for good government and wise leadership.

Why?

- So that we might have peace and order
- For the propagation of the gospel
- Because God desires all men to be saved

Who Should You Pray For?

Don't limit your thinking only to governmental leaders when you talk about praying for people who are in authority.

Of course, you should include the individuals who make most of the key governmental decisions in your nation's government.

In the United States this would include the following:

- President and vice-president
- The nine justices of the Supreme Court
- Senators and congressmen at the national and state levels
- The governor of your state
- Local mayors, aldermen, etc.

You can apply these same principles to your prayer for spiritual leaders on all levels – from your local pastor and church staff members to regional leaders, national leaders and

anyone who oversees an aspect of spiritual life in the church.

And you can also pray for marketplace leaders, for the “elders” who “sit at the gates” of your city, for those who drive the commerce where you live.

When you pray for those in authority, you are selecting – by name, if possible – people who oversee certain spheres and assignments.

What Should You Pray For?

We learn from many scriptures that God exalts rulers and people in authority if they exercise their authority with righteousness.

So, one of the first things we should pray for is that the authority figure will become righteous and will express righteousness, wisdom and justice in all that he or she does.

The Book of Proverbs expresses it best: “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people” (Prov. 14:34, NASB) and “If a king judges the poor with truth, his throne will be established forever” (Prov. 29:14, NASB).

Dr. Charles Stanley has suggested 10 ways to pray for the men and women who occupy the highest offices in your land:

1. Pray that they would realize their personal sinfulness and their daily need for cleansing of their sin by Jesus Christ.
2. Pray that they would recognize their personal inadequacy to fulfill their tasks and that they would depend upon God for knowledge, wisdom and the courage to do what is right.
3. Pray that they would reject all counsel that violates spiritual principles, trusting God to prove them right.
4. Pray that they would resist those who would pressure them to violate their consciences.

5. Pray that they would reverse the trends of socialism and humanism in their nation, both of which deify man rather than God.
6. Pray that they would be ready to sacrifice their personal ambitions and political careers for the sake of their nation, if yielding them would be in the best interest of their country.
7. Pray that they would rely upon prayer and the Word of God as the source of their daily strength, wisdom and courage.
8. Pray that they would restore dignity, honor, trustworthiness and righteousness to the office they hold.
9. Pray that they would remember to be good examples in their conduct to the fathers, mothers, sons and daughters of this nation.
10. Pray that they would be reminded daily that they are accountable to Almighty God for the decisions they make.

Today and every day, I invite you to join me in fulfilling God's command in Scripture to pray for those in authority.
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