

Stand in the Gap This Independence Day With This Prayer Focus

My, how time flies! The older we get, the quicker it seems to go. Here we are ready to celebrate another Independence Day, complete with family and friends gathering for summer festivities, cookouts, patriotic songs, parades, fireworks and other traditions.

It also marks the midway point through the year. Can you believe it? Seems like we just had an election and a change in administration, and here we are, halfway through 2017. Every day this year has been an adventure! Every day has brought its own challenges.

You never know what you'll find when you wake up each morning, so I make sure I greet the Lord first with, "Good morning, Lord. Thank you for this new day and that I am still here and You are with me." I have purpose. There is renewed purpose every day we remain on the planet. Part of that purpose involves our place in the world. Where should our prayer focus be today?

Our nation is a melting pot of many cultures, creeds and creatures. There is no other nation like it. It's a composite of many peoples, religions and conflicting philosophies, yet to our amazement, it has worked for over 200 years. To bring it all together in harmonious unity is nothing short of miraculous.

It had a turbulent beginning, struggled through the years with expansion, economic pressures, wars, diversity, cultural challenges and crime. Yet it stands as the greatest nation in the world. Whether we agree on election results, foreign policy, the environment, use of our resources or position in

the world market, it still stands. I believe it is so because it still has a divine purpose.

God is not through with America. As the “land of the free and the home of the brave,” its biggest challenges lie ahead. That’s why we need to look beyond our own little circles and expand our vision toward the bigger picture. It’s not just about “me and mine” anymore. It’s a global mandate.

Our Founding Fathers came seeking a new life and new opportunities but faced horrendous challenges. Many died even as they journeyed across the sea. Others did not survive the harsh winters. Still others came by force having been sold into slavery, and stripped of their own choices. But God sees the end from the beginning and knew the strength of the people who would become part of this land. They risked their lives, shed their blood and emerged as a vital part of this great country.

We read in Scripture that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Jesus did not stay in the security of His Father’s house, but left it to fulfill His global mandate. He expects us to do the same: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ...” (Matt. 28:18-20).

In the book of Revelation, John pens these words, “And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests unto our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:9-10).

God’s kingdom is made up of all peoples. So too is our nation. Because it is, it has a unique purpose, and you and I have a purpose in it. As conscientious people of God, we have a responsibility to fulfill that purpose. What could it possibly be?

We are a composite of many nations, peoples, tribes, colors, languages and creeds. Although this creates challenges, it also provides opportunity to share God's great love for all mankind. The gospel is a catalyst for love, understanding, harmony and unity. We can reach out with the love of God, carry His presence and be used to heal, deliver, set people free and bring the good news of His forgiveness and eternal life. Right here. Right now. The mission has come to our own doorstep. How do we do this?

We can start by joining the many intercessors who stand in the gap and pray for the nation to be all it can be—for the leaders, whether you like them or not. The Bible does not tell us to pray for the leaders we like, but for all those who have authority over us (See 1 Tim. 2:1-3).

You can look for opportunities to serve in your community. Every community has dire needs screaming for attention—whether it's the homeless, drug addicted, abused or abandoned children, unemployed or those seeking a better life in our country. Ask God to position you where you can do the most good to expand His kingdom.

Seek to find a group of like-minded believers with whom to fellowship and combine resources to spread worldwide revival. Be part of the solution, not the problem.

Continue to pray for more laborers for His harvest field and that the knowledge of God would spread as the waters cover the seas.

Finally, celebrate our freedoms this week, and while you enjoy the festivities, thank God that you can fulfill His purpose in this "land of the free and home of the brave." Right here. Right now.

Prayer Power for the Week Beginning July 2, 2017

This week, if you have joined the ranks of those who complain

and criticize our nation and its leaders, repent. Ask God to forgive you and set your heart and soul to walking in harmony with His will for you and our nation. Continue to pray for our leaders, our allies, our military, our nation's youth, your neighbor, your family and God's kingdom to expand and bring revival around the world. Read Revelation 5:5-10, Matthew 28:18-20.