

Why You Must Pray for Donald Trump

When President-elect Donald Trump is sworn in this Friday as our nation's 45th president, he will stand in front of the U.S. Capitol and place his hand on two Bibles: One that was used for Abraham Lincoln's inauguration in 1861, the other a gift from Trump's mother when he graduated at age 9 from Sunday school at the First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, New York.

Trump won't be hiding his affiliations with evangelical Christians at the ceremony. He will be surrounded by religious leaders, some who supported his campaign and others who criticized his rhetoric. They include Paula White, a Pentecostal pastor from Florida who is sometimes credited with bringing Trump to faith; evangelist Franklin Graham; Hispanic minister Sammy Rodriguez (who denounced Trump's anti-immigrant comments) and African-American preacher Wayne T. Jackson of Detroit. A rabbi and a Catholic cardinal will also join Trump on the stage.

Yet in spite of the two Bibles and the six ministers on the platform, many Christians aren't fully supportive of our next president. Most African-American and Hispanic Christians did not vote for Trump, younger Christian voters were skeptical of his campaign, and other believers opposed him because his views on women and immigrants seemed incompatible with Christianity.

So when Trump lays his hand on those Bibles and pledges to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States," he will lead a divided nation. But if you are a Christian, you have an obligation to pray for your president no matter how you voted in November. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 commands us to pray "for kings and all who are in authority, so that we

may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty.”

Praying for our leaders is not optional. It does not depend on your mood or your opinions. Here are eight ways I plan to intercede for President Trump regularly:

1. Pray for his protection. There will be more than 28,000 security officials at the inauguration on Friday, and Trump’s decision to spend some of his time at his home in New York City will increase the security threat during his time in office. Pray that he and his family will be protected from assassins’ bullets and terror attacks. May civility triumph over violence.

2. Pray that Trump will govern with God’s wisdom. God rewarded Solomon because he asked for wisdom instead of wealth, long life or vengeance on his enemies (see 1 Kings 3:11-12). Pray that Trump will order his priorities like that. Despite Solomon’s tragic character flaws, his legacy was wisdom. We can ask God to give our president the same grace.

3. Pray that God will set a guard over Trump’s mouth. It is no secret that Trump often speaks (or tweets) before he thinks. He can be impulsive and short-tempered. Yet a man in his position must use discretion, or else his impetuous words can close doors and ruin diplomacy. The psalmist prayed: “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Ps. 141:3). Pray this on behalf of our president.

4. Pray for wise and righteous advisers to surround him. Godly leaders cannot do their jobs alone. Even the best leaders have failed because they trusted the wrong people. Pray that Trump will not select his counselors based on party, race, pedigree or political cronyism but on godly character and proven wisdom. Pray especially that Vice President Mike Pence, who is an evangelical Christian, will rely on the Holy Spirit to advise the president.

5. Ask for the spirit of reconciliation. Some segments of our divided society want nothing to do with Trump now that he has won the presidency. Some media outlets have become downright hostile, breaking all rules of journalistic objectivity. Even some Christians will be tempted to harbor resentment and nurse political grudges throughout his term in office. Pray that God will grant forgiveness and healing so that leaders on all political levels can have constructive dialogue. And pray that Trump will reach out with kindness to Democrats, the media, minorities, immigrants, foreign leaders and Republicans who opposed him.

6. Bind all evil forces assigned to manipulate our president. The specter of Islamic terrorism looms over the United States, and dark forces have already infiltrated. On the other side, it is obvious that Russia desires to manipulate our nation. Our only hope lies in prayer to the God who is able to expose and outwit the schemes of the wicked. This is truly a time for spiritual warfare, and intercessors must not come off the wall in this hour. Pray that no foreign government, terrorist organization, multinational corporation or demonic principality will use Trump as a tool. We must stand strong against the spirit of anti-Christ that promotes dictatorship, persecution of Christians and hostility toward Israel.

7. Pray that Trump's door will always be open to the church. The loudest voices of secular culture—from Bill Maher in Hollywood to atheists in academia—would be happy if religion were removed from public life. Pray that Trump, who claims to have a personal faith in Jesus Christ, will unapologetically welcome Christian leaders into his company and seek their counsel.

8. Pray that our nation will enjoy God's peace and blessing during the Trump administration. God's will is for America to experience peace and prosperity so we can continue to export the gospel to the nations. This must happen whether a Democrat or a Republican is in the White House. As we cry out for God's

mercy on our nation, pray that He will allow us to be a light to the world as we finance global missions, feed and heal the world's poor and share Christ's love at home and abroad. {eo}