

How to Pray for Political Leaders

by Frank Erb

It is easy to criticize our political leaders and complain about their decisions. In fact, some of them make it *extremely* easy for us to do this! However, there is a better way. The Bible instructs us instead to *pray* for them:

1 Timothy 2:1-2a "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority..."

But, what should we pray? Here are five suggestions based on selected scriptures and private conversations I have had with many Legislators in my state.

1. Pray for their Salvation

Political leaders, like all people, need the forgiveness of sins and new life that come through trusting in Jesus Christ. We can infer from 1 Timothy 2:1-4 that praying for the salvation of our leaders should be a top priority for us. Imagine how much better an elected official leads when he or she becomes a child of God!

Legislator quote: "All of us who have experienced inviting Christ into our lives know that this is what will put our state back on the right track faster and better than any other action."

1 Timothy 2:1-4 "First of all, then, 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."

2. Pray for them to have Wisdom

Political leaders are regularly called upon to make difficult decisions that affect many, many, people. How can we expect them to do this well without wisdom and discernment from above?

Legislator quote: "With past decisions, we knew what to do and we just needed the boldness to do it. Now it is different, because we are not even sure what to do."

James 3:15-17 "This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy."

3. Pray for them to have Courage

Political leaders are often called upon to make compromises. Not doing so can cost them their careers. They need God to give them the strength of conviction and courage to do the right thing no matter what the personal cost.

Legislator quote: "This job is nothing like I thought it would be. I thought I could come here (to the Capitol) and make a difference, but instead I feel like I'm wasting my life because I have to do what I am told by others."

2 Samuel 10:12 "Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God."

4. Pray for them to have Humility

Political leaders have great power, deal with immense sums of money, work in lavish facilities, and are often treated like royalty. All this can quickly go to their heads and lead to arrogance and pride. Pray that God will keep them on their knees before Him, so that they can be led by Him before they attempt to lead us.

Legislator quote: "When I was elected to political office, all of a sudden I instantly became smarter, funnier, and better looking."

Micah 6:8 "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

5. Pray for them to have Strength

Political leaders regularly encounter many strong temptations, including pride, abuse of power, greed, deceitfulness, discouragement, sexual sin, and alcohol abuse. Pray for them to grow in maturity in Christ so that they will have the strength to resist these traps that can destroy their lives and their effectiveness as leaders.

Legislator quote: "I have never seen or felt temptation as strong as it is here in the Capitol. Every kind of temptation is here and it is destroying people."

Luke 22:46 "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Sometimes praying might feel like a waste of time when there are so many other things we could be doing. Consider this though -- man's best efforts to govern our land are proving to be far from effective. To persist in seeking exclusively manmade solutions to the problems of our day is futile. It is time for us to do it God's way, and seek the assistance that only He can provide. If we do this, I believe our state and our nation, and we as citizens thereof, will be blessed.

Frank Erb is the California State Director for Capitol Commission, a ministry to political leaders and their staff in state capitols throughout the United States. You may sign up for a monthly newsletter at www.capitolcom.org or contact him at frank.erb@capitolcom.org.

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