



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Evangelistic Prayers For Politicians: (1 Timothy 2:1-6)

FEBRUARY 20, 2013

Jason Palermo / PO Box 3513, Little Rock, AR 72203 / Jason.Palermo@capitolcom.org

*1 Timothy 2:1-6: "First of all, then, I urge that requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanks be offered on behalf of all people, 2:2 even for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 2:3 Such prayer for all is good and welcomed before God our Savior, 2:4 since he wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 2:5 For there is one God and one intermediary between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human, 2:6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God's purpose at his appointed time." (NET)'*

In this section of Scripture the church is urged to pray regularly for the salvation of the lost, including prayers for the salvation of our political leaders and magistrates. Based on conversations I have had with numerous pastors and lay leaders, I find very few churches actually do this as a matter of regular practice. If this is true, then it seems odd to me that so many churches wishing to grow numerically, and spiritually, fail to pray for the salvation of those in their community as a matter of regular practice (i.e. during times of corporate worship on the LORD's Day, during mid-week meetings, family worship, and times of private prayers and study).

This brief section of 1 Timothy chapter 2 is packed with great truths that ought to motivate the church toward evangelistic praying. In fact, here the Apostle Paul makes clear that evangelistic prayer ought to be a first priority for the church. It would be great gain by Scriptural standards if more churches applied this passage to their personal, family and corporate worship. Church leaders ought to lead by example in this area, and reflect the heart of God in this matter. Notice God cares enough for the lost to send His own Son to be a propitiation for sin, and to give His life as a ransom for many. The Apostle Paul express a genuine heartfelt desire to see the lost come to faith in Jesus Christ, and be saved from the just penalty for their sin against a holy God. If church leaders and congregations have grown cold with regards to soul-winning, the perhaps a fresh study of 1 Timothy 2: 1 - 6 would help. I believe this passage needs to be studied afresh in our generation, and heeded by church leaders and congregations alike. American churches could use a genuine revival and America could use another great awakening. Perhaps a deep study and meditation of 1 Timothy 2: 1 - 6 by our church leaders is what is needed. May God, through His Word provoke pastors, church leaders and congregations to prayer for the lost, including prayers for political leaders and all who are in authority. I regularly ask pastors and congregations if this passage is alive and well in their hearts and represent what takes place in their life and church culture. In regular calls to

worship God are 1) prayers regularly taking place for the salvation of people's souls, and 2) are political leaders included in these prayers for "all people?" If not, why not? The Apostle Paul expected this to be normative, and urged the church to make evangelistic prayer their first priority.

In this passage we get a glimpse of the heart of God with regards to the lost, and the Apostle Paul's desire to make sure the church is regularly, habitually praying for unbelievers to be saved. Let's examine some of the truths in this passage, and allow God's Word to examine our heart, and practice.

### BELIEVERS MAKE EVANGELISTIC PRAYERS A FIRST PRIORITY

#### FIRST MEANS FIRST

"**First of all.**" Notice in 1 Tim 2:1 "First of all, then," some passages read "I *exhort* first of all." There is a clear emphasis is on the word "**First.**" The Greek word for first is "protos," which contextually emphasizes "first" in importance, or "first" in priority. Thus from God's perspective, evangelistic prayers ought to be a very important part of what is taking place when believers gather together. Paul is saying essentially, "make evangelistic prayers a first priority, including praying for the salvation of top political leaders and magistrates. Is this a first-priority in your life?"

#### BELIEVERS UNDERSTAND WHAT UNBELIEVERS LACK

The Apostle Paul "**urged**" believers to pray evangelistically for the lost, who apart from God's forgiveness will die in their trespasses and sins, and suffer apart from God's blessing for all eternity. Paul could have simply commanded believers to make it their first priority, to pray for the salvation of the lost, but instead he appealed to them on the basis of their understanding of the riches of God's great mercy on them, and their knowledge that unbelievers lack something that they desperately need. Unbelievers have need of being forgiven and reconciled to God. Everyday unbelievers do themselves harm by resisting the riches of God's mercy, grace, truth, and love in their life. Therefore believers are urged to call upon God to meet the true spiritual need of unbelievers through the one true mediator between God and men, the same one who gave himself a ransom for many—the Lord Jesus Christ. This is indicated by the numerous thought not exclusive list of the ways believers are to pray by way of "**requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanks.**"

### BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY AT 7:30AM, ARKANSAS STATE CAPITOL,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RM 19

# Arkansas

## Evangelistic Prayers For Politicians: (1 Timothy 2:1-6)

To summarize, unbelievers lack what they need, and 1 Timothy 2 calls the church to pray for “all people even kings and all who are in authority” as a matter of FIRST priority. This is part of doing the work of an evangelist, and part of making disciples, namely to pray for them according to their known needs.

Does prayer for God’s redemptive work in the hearts of all people even political leaders course through your spiritual veins? It did for the Apostle Paul who did not only pray for political leaders, but also proclaimed the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ to them.<sup>2</sup>

If this concept sounds slightly foreign to you then I encourage you to study this passage more deeply on your own, and meditate upon it, remembering it as you consider so many other passages related to prayer and ministry and to ministry to political leaders and those in authority. You will find, as I have, that it opens up many different passages for you.

Let me go further the church would do well to not only pray for the God’s redemptive work in every area of a political leaders heart and life, they would also do well, to meet the very political leaders who represent them, and whom they are praying for. They might even ask them how they can pray for them, and ask God to open a door for further ministry to them, if He is willing. May God give us insight into this passage, and help and lead us into praying for all men, even for kings, and all who are in authority.

If the Apostle Paul wanted the church in his day to change their mind, heart, and attitude about praying for the political leaders of their generation, then why would it be any different today?

### **PRAYING FOR POLITICAL LEADERS IS VERY PRACTICAL**

Notice in verse 2b, “...that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

God gave the church practical reasons for praying for political leaders. Prayer really makes a difference, and the early church prayed like it did. Remember through prayer and a ministry of the Word of God the early church changed the Roman Empire.

It might be the case that some in the church are not praying for political leaders because they feel embittered against them. Hopefully God has not hardened your heart in this way, but I have spoke to some whom I know

love the LORD, but who have allowed their heart to grow so hard toward political leaders that they cannot even bring themselves to pray for political leaders. If this is the case in your life you must repent of this, you must ask God to help change your heart and attitude so your bitterness is turned away so that you do not defile others with it. God wants us to have hearts that are filled with love and are quick to forgive. He tells us not to let the sun go down on our anger, He reminds us that the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God, and in this passage God wants us to be able to pray with thankfulness in our hearts to God as we are praying for the salvation of political leaders (1 Tim. 1:1).

If the early church could pray for their leaders, then we can too. Paul did not want the church to become embittered with their persecutors. Rather he wanted them to love those who treated them like enemies, and pray for those who were persecuting them. He wanted them and to be faithful citizens of heaven and as ambassadors of God’s kingdom. Therefore as good citizens, and faithful ambassadors of God’s kingdom, we ought to pray for political leaders, with the understanding that the prayer of the righteous accomplishes much.

During the days of the early church, which suffered persecution the churches were instructed to pray for political leaders so that they might lead “a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:2). Therefore it was understood that their prayers had a purpose, and that purpose would impact their day to day life both externally and internally. However, it also ought to be noted that there is more persecution facing the church today than at any other time in human history. Also, prayer for political leaders should not be based upon whether we personally are suffering death at the hands of our government, as was the case of the early church. Our prayers for political leaders ought to be motivated by the fact that God “Such prayer for all is good and welcomed before God our Savior. Since he wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). Thus, prayers for political leaders accomplish much, and also bring pleasure to the heart of our God.

### **THE GREAT COMMISSION INCLUDES POLITICAL LEADERS?**

Prayer for political leaders harmonizes with the Great Commission. Consider the rest of the verses in this passage:

# Arkansas

## Evangelistic Prayers For Politicians: (1 Timothy 2:1-6)

Verses 3 – 6: “Such prayer for all is good and welcomed before God our Savior, 2:4 since he wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 2:5 For there is one God and one intermediary between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human, 2:6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God’s purpose at his appointed time.” (Net)<sup>3</sup>

Given the context of prayer for political leaders, and given the evangelistic and disciple-making terminology, I think we can understand that God wants the church to regularly pray for ALL men because God desires ALL men to be saved, to this end Christ gave Himself a ransom for ALL.

If this be true what difference is it making when we gather together?

In my effort to include political leaders in my spiritual discipline of daily prayer, I have found that the following aids have helped me pray.

- I have a Capitol Coffee Mug. Every morning I try to drink from it to remember to pray for political leaders, staff and lobbyists who have asked me to pray specifically for them.
- I have signed up on the [www.pray1tim2.org](http://www.pray1tim2.org) website. If you sign up it will help you to remember to pray daily for political leaders. I tell folks to take the “5 for 6” challenge. Pray 5 minutes, for 6 political leaders, every day for the rest of your life. All 50 states are up and running and anyone can sign up to receive daily email reminders to pray for political leaders at the national and state level.
- I am trying to include prayer for political leaders in my regular prayer i.e. in the morning, at meals, at night, during various times of fellowship, and special prayers at the state capitol.
- Sometimes I will look through the legislative yearbook which you can get at any state capitol, or at a state web site, and it will help me pray for our state legislators, and constitutional officers.

Let us begin making the change in our own life first. Then, with our family if we have one, then within our church community and fellowship groups when we pray. Let us also encourage as many as we can to do the work of evangelism, beginning first on our knees before our holy and awesome, LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ who desires all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and

offered Himself as a ransom for many. We know that the Father was well-pleased with the death of His Son, and that He rose from the grave, ascended to heaven and makes intercession for us even as we are making intercession for others. What a great honor and privilege we have been given to be invited by God to have an audience with Him in prayer. Let us not waste our time, but rather let us draw near to God in faith, and come boldly before the throne of grace! It is there that we will find the spiritual strength we need to resist sin, and it is there that we will find His strength of grace for all He has for us to do, and mercy in time of need.

Thank you for lending me your ears, now may God through His Word and Spirit strengthen and establish your hearts to know Him, and love Him, and serve Him, giving Him first place in everything—AMEN!

---

<sup>1</sup> Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://bible.org> All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> A brief study of the Apostle Paul’s ministry in Acts clearly reveals this, as does the first and last chapters of Philippians.

<sup>3</sup> Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://bible.org> All rights reserved