

Praying for Elected Officials

By Gloria Robles

We are in no small need of prayers for our government. The president and the administration, the Supreme Court, and the Congress, along with our governors, legislators, judges, mayors, and state and local officials on every level—they all play a huge role in the decisions affecting our lives. They all have a part in keeping this country going.

What a monumental task! There's certainly an abundance of criticism for these officials—through letters, phone calls, and over social media.

But what if we were to counter all that criticism through prayer? What if we prayed for our elected officials with the same fervency we apply to other things?

Well, Scripture tells us prayers of righteous people will be powerful and effective (James 5:16). So, as we pray, let's make it *personal*. Let's lift our officials up before Him *by name*.

Pray, Not Prey

Praying and *preying*: two similar-sounding words—homonyms—but what a vast difference between them! *Preying* is *predatory* and savage in nature, while *praying* is *precatory* and submissive. We must submit ourselves to the Lord and to His will.

If we are honest, how many of us in our zeal will aggressively pursue rather than quietly trust—letting the Holy Spirit lead us in prayer? *Preying* is forceful and demanding, but *praying* is an act of love.

This is important in our prayers because certain leaders,

especially the plainly ungodly ones, can affect the way we pray. Our prayers can become critical and un-Christlike when we disagree with officials. To be sure, love is a powerful force, but it is also patient and kind.

Pray for Souls

We are told to pray for and make supplication for those in authority. We must stand in the gap for officials—and this is a humble call for help.

We can also offer thanksgiving to God for our elected officials. This is good and acceptable to our God, who desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).

Regardless about how you may feel about the president or your legislator, governor, or local official, God desires for that man or woman to be saved. When we pray with that in mind, God will give us His heart toward the official.

The following prayers are key ways to pray:

1. Lord, Give Them Integrity

Father, we lift our elected officials up to You. We pray according to Philippians 2:3–4, that they will not act out of selfish ambition or vanity, but rather out of a servant's heart, like Jesus. We pray that they will selflessly and to the best of their ability look to the interests of the people they are called to serve. We pray that they will serve with integrity and fulfill the responsibilities of their office with godly character.

2. Lord, Give Them Strength and Courage

Father, when they are feeling overwhelmed by the tremendous weight of the demands before them, may they find rest in Your presence. Impart Your strength to them in every area of their

lives. Raise their hearts up when they feel hopeless, so that they will be pointed back to You. Lord, You are the source of all strength and the God of all comfort. We pray that these leaders will lead by example, and that they will exhibit bravery in the face of evil. Grant them the courage to do the right thing, even when it's not popular. Help them to rely upon You and Your mighty power.

3. Lord, Give Them Wisdom

Father, we seek Your wisdom for our officials. Help them give careful thought to the path they are on and to remain steadfast in all things. We pray that they will recognize their need for wisdom and discernment to govern rightly. May our officials receive a double portion of discernment so that they will be able to distinguish clearly between right and wrong. Your ways, Lord, are true and right, and we desire for our leaders to exhibit humility and do Your will.

4. Lord, Give Them Guidance

Father, please instruct our officials in the way that they should go. And we pray that they will listen. Counsel them and watch over them. We pray for their staff members too, that they will offer the officials they serve only counsel that is good and godly. We pray that our officials would not follow wicked advice, stand with sinners, or remain in the company of mockers. May our officials never lean on their own understanding. Instead, please direct their paths as they acknowledge You.

Partner with the Lord

Ask the Lord to show you how to be effective intercessors for those in leadership. And invite Him to give you a heart for elected officials so that you can remain faithful in standing in the gap on their behalf.

INTERCESSORS FOR AMERICA has mobilized prayer for this nation

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