

Pray for Our Country

Keep in mind that I'm writing this on Monday before the Tuesday election. I have no idea at this moment who will be elected tomorrow. You will be getting this later in the week, days after the presidency has been determined. So—this plea for prayer for our country is in spite of the outcome of the election. Regardless of who the winner turns out to be, we as a nation need God's intervention in order to bring about positive changes. Praying for our leaders (all of them) and praying for ourselves so that we will accept God's will in all of this will help bring about the changes needed.

Prayer is an important weapon in our arsenal against Satan. In **Ephesians 6:18-20**, Paul points out three very important aspects of Christian prayer:

1. Prayer is to be constant. All too often, we “resort” to prayer only in times of distress. Although it is promised in Scripture that we will be heard, **ONLY** praying on those occasions does not help us develop the close relationship with God that He wants us to have. Paul says that we are to **“pray in the Spirit on ALL occasions with ALL kinds of prayers and requests”** and **“ALWAYS keep on praying for all the Lord's people.”** The idea is reemphasized in **I Thessalonians 5:17** when Paul tells the Thessalonians to **“pray CONTINUALLY”** and **“give thanks in ALL occasions.”** **Romans 12:12** tells us to be **“faithful in prayer.”** **I Corinthians 7:5** and **Colossians 4:2** says we are to **“devote”** ourselves to prayer. Ours is to be an open avenue—an open letter to God. There are three elements of prayer: PRAISE, PETITION, and THANKSGIVING. (see **Philippians 4:5-6**)
2. Prayer should be intense—deserving of our concentration. Paul here says to **“be alert”** – constantly aware of the need for prayer and the occasions in which prayer it is most needed. Peter says much the same thing in **I Peter 4:7**. A rote, thoughtless prayer is not sufficient. In **Matthew 6**, Jesus says this about prayer: **“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”** In the KJV, the word “babbling” is translated “vain repetitions.” I believe that makes it easy to understand. Jesus prayed so intensely in the Garden of Gethsemane that he burst small capillaries in his forehead and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood. I'm not sure that kind of intensity is required, but total concentration is. You are speaking to God.
3. Prayer is selfless – We are to pray for others. Intercessory prayer is an important part of our daily prayer life. Jesus prayed for his disciples in **John 17**. Paul in his writings was always mentioning that he prayed for those to whom he was writing. (**Romans 1:10, 1 Corinthians 1:4, 2 Corinthians 13:7-9, Ephesians 1:15-18 and 3:14ff, Philippians 1:3,4,9, Colossians 1:3,9, 1 Thessalonians**

1:2, 3:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, 2 Timothy 1:3, Philemon 1:4,6) He constantly asked for prayers of them on his behalf.

James says the ***“fervent prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”*** (**James 1:16**) He also says the prayer must be asked in faith. (**1:5-8**). So in this, the beginnings of a new administration, keep in mind the power that prayer has. Pray for our leaders that they might turn from the direction we’re going and turn to God, the only “Leader” we can depend upon. ---Johnny Stephens