

How to Pray for an Election

2016 Election Prayer Guide

By Dave Butts

In every election cycle, American Christians face both amazing opportunities and grave dangers. We are privileged to be a part of those who can choose their own leaders. As people who believe that godly leaders are a source of blessing to a nation, this provides us with great opportunity. The dangers arise, however, when we begin to put our hope in leaders rather than the Lord.

God's Word is very clear that we should have an undivided heart and trust only in the Lord. The psalmist tells us: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7, NIV).

Awareness of this can create a tension in thinking Christians, and some have overreacted and rejected the political process completely. If that is the case, it will be difficult to be motivated to pray about the elections. A balanced and biblical approach, however, allows us to fully participate in the electoral process without falling into improperly placed trust.

In Paul's great teaching on prayer in 1 Timothy 2:1-4, one of his major thrusts is praying for those in authority. According to Paul's reasoning, we want good government that allows us to live lives that ultimately free us to evangelize those who are lost.

Paul would have been amazed that Christians could one day actually take part in selecting those leaders. He would have been even more amazed (and appalled) that many of those Christians who had this privilege would not even bother to get involved in selecting those leaders for the purposes of God to be fulfilled.

Praying for the electoral process is the first step in seeing the fulfillment of what Paul wrote in 1 Timothy. We should not wait for a leader to be selected before we move into obedient prayer for those in authority. In prayer, we invite the Lord into the process of electing those leaders who will ultimately allow us to "lead peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:2, NIV).

So why pray for the elections? There are a number of compelling reasons:

1. The Bible commands us to pray for those who are in leadership. This should certainly include those who are vying to become leaders.
2. Godly leaders can help slow the erosion of religious liberties in our land. This can provide an increased window of opportunity for the Church to pray and evangelize.
3. According to Scripture, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Prov. 14:34, NASB). The selection of leaders who understand and lead according to God's righteous standards can bring great blessing to a nation.

4. Scripture also says, “For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisors” (Proverbs 11:14, NIV). The determination of who leads our nation will also determine who advises that leader and how we are guided.

Prayer Guide

The prayer points below cover seven major areas that relate to our national elections, as well as some current flashpoints of important issues.

The suggested topics to pray should be chosen according to your interest and the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is interesting to note that there are more prayer points regarding the Church than any other area. That is because “as the Church goes, so goes the nation.” The scriptures indicate that judgment begins in the house of God (See 1 Peter 4:7).

This prayer guide is loosely structured for multiple usage. An individual might pick out a few prayer points from each category and pray those daily. A group might choose to divide the points among its members and cover the entire guide at one prayer gathering. Some families or individuals may want to pray from this guide for months leading up to the election and perhaps even beyond. Ask the Lord to show you how you best should pray. We encourage you to look up the verse with each prayer point; perhaps pray that verse as part of your prayers.

Prayer Points

1. The Nation and the Issues It Faces

Pray for the judges of this nation, that they would seek the wisdom that comes from above. (Deut. 4:8)

Ask the Lord to thwart the efforts of those who would remove religious freedom from our nation. (Gal. 5:1)

Pray for truth to become valued again in American society. (John 8:32)

Pray that our nation will increasingly see that God is our only refuge in the midst of the troubles of this world. (Jer. 33:6)

Pray for our judicial system and lawmakers, that justice for all, tempered by mercy and compassion, would guide our nation. (Isaiah 1:17)

Repent on behalf of our nation, because we have turned from making Scripture the basis of law, leaving behind wisdom, and looking to ourselves for truth. (Zech. 7:9)

Ask the Lord to pour out a spirit of repentance on our nation that we might become a nation committed to following His ways. (Jer. 29:13)

Pray that the U.S. would repent of its corporate rejection of the Word of God as the basis of law.

Pray that a holy fear of God will sweep across our nation, leading us back to a place of wisdom. (Isaiah 50:10)

2. The Election Process

Pray for a safe and fair election. (John 14:1)

Ask the Lord to remove those who might try to unjustly and illegally change the outcome of the voting.

Pray for a huge turnout of voters. (Prov. 4:6)

Pray for protection from any attacks from enemies that would prevent or delay the election. (Deut.3:22)

3. Candidates and Leaders

Pray for the salvation of those who are in leadership of our nation. Ask the Lord to remove all envy and selfish ambition. (James 3:16)

Pray that candidates will take brave stands for righteousness, even when it may not be well received.

Pray that their families will be protected from harm and unnecessary scrutiny. (Psalm 9:9)

Ask the Lord to surround them with godly advisors. (Prov. 1:7)

Pray that each candidate would focus on the issues we face as a nation and not on personal attacks on other candidates. (1 Tim. 1:6)

4. The Church

Pray for a spirit of humility and an outreach in the Church toward those whom the Bible calls the least among us. (Psalm 9:18)

Pray that the churches in your community and area will preach the gospel of Christ powerfully.

Thank the Lord for the freedom we have in Him and for the wisdom to understand that freedom. (Gal. 5:13)

Pray for a spirit of consecration and holiness to come upon the Church in America. (Joshua 3:5)

Pray for a spirit of compassion to come over the Church in the United States so that we will begin seriously to live out the lifestyle of Jesus in our communities. (Philemon 1:6)

Ask the Lord to help strengthen the trumpet call to intensive prayer so that it is heard throughout the Church in the United States. (1 Tim. 2:8)

Ask the Lord for the Church to rise up with a strong prophetic voice for America. (Eph. 6:19)

Pray for a spirit of repentance to fall upon the Church in America that would cause us to turn back to God and seek Him. (2 Cor. 5:10)

Pray for a spirit of courage to rise within the Church. Commit to enduring whatever it takes to see the fulfillment of God's purposes in our nation. (1 Thess.1:6)

Pray that the Church in America will live in such a way that the peace of Christ comes into the councils of our nation. (Rom.12:2)

Pray for a movement of the Spirit that creates a dramatic cultural transformation in the United States, bringing about a nation that has learned to put its hope in the Word of God. (Matt. 4:16)

Ask the Lord to awaken the Church to the temporary nature of the nations and to the eternal nature of the reign of God. (Matt. 6:33)

Pray that courage born of wisdom will be given to Christians in places of leadership in government, the courts, and law schools across the nation so that they will stand for a godly basis for law. (Joshua 1:9)

5. Media

Pray specifically for truth to be an established standard in our news media. (John 8:32)

Pray that media bias will be tempered by fairness. (Eph. 5:11)

Ask that Christianity will receive fair coverage in all reports. (1 Sam. 2:24)

6. Spiritual Warfare

Ask for great awareness and discernment for the Lord's praying people as they pray over the election. (Numbers 10:9)

Pray for physical protection for all candidates and their families throughout this campaign season. (Isaiah 54:1)

Beseech the Lord for a strong hedge of protection around the nation itself during this time of decision. (Deut. 31:6)

7. Revival

Pray for another great spiritual awakening to sweep the nation as the Lord's people learn to humble themselves with a contrite spirit, and to tremble at the Word of the Lord. (Isaiah 66:2)

Ask the Lord to bring revival to the Church in America. (Heb. 12:2)

Pray for the preachers of America to fearlessly proclaim the Word of God regarding sin and God's love. (Rom. 5:8)

Flashpoints

These are areas of controversy, disagreement, division and sometimes outright hostility in our nation. Some would pick others than the topics I have, but I believe these to be areas that must be prayed over with discernment and strength.

1. Life of the unborn
2. Nature of family and marriage
3. Religious freedom
4. U.S. relationship with Israel
5. The growing threat of terrorism and the fear and mistrust it brings
6. Racism and its growing divisiveness
7. The idolatry of tolerance and the resulting intolerance for those who disagree with prevailing ideas. (This prayer points greatly impacts the six flashpoints above).

Conclusion

Prayer rarely stops after "amen." When we passionately cry out to God over any issue, we should in integrity, find ourselves praying, "Lord, if there is any way you can use me to be an answer to this prayer, here I am." When we pray for an election, it seems that simple honesty will then require us to follow the prayer up by voting.

What about broadening the prayer effort beyond your own prayers? Why not start a short-term prayer gathering at your home for the 30 or 40 days before the election. You could even do that before the primary elections. Invite friends or those with similar passion to join you each week for a very focused prayer meeting that asks God to intervene in our electoral process.

In a country with 350 million people, it is very easy to feel as though you could not possibly make a difference. That thinking is wrong on many levels, but it is particularly false when we consider the power of prayer. As you pray, even as a single, solitary person, you are teaming up with the Creator of the universe to change situations. The only way that positive change is not possible is when Christians refuse to pray!

--Dave Butts is the founder and president of [Harvest Prayer Ministries](http://harvestprayer.com) and the chairman of America's National Prayer Committee. This prayer guide is taken from his new book, *Praying for America*, which releases in the Spring of 2016.

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