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How to Pray for Your President

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How to Pray for Your President

Abstract

"David's prayer can serve as a model of how we should pray for our political leaders, especially our newly elected president."

Posting about praying for our government officials from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/how-to-pray-for-your-president/>

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How to Pray for Your President

 [all in allthings.org /how-to-pray-for-your-president/](http://allthings.org/how-to-pray-for-your-president/)

January 4,
2017

Dave Schelhaas

Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 72](#)

[Exodus 3:1-5](#)

[Hebrews 11:23-31](#)

According to its final verse, Psalm 72 is the last prayer-poem written by King David. It is a prayer for his son Solomon, soon to be crowned King of Israel, and its focus is on the kingship of Solomon. David's prayer can serve as a model of how we should pray for our political leaders, especially our newly elected president.

Our mandate to pray for our leaders is made clear in verse 15: "May people ever pray for him and bless him all day long." Leaders of countries need the prayers of their citizens.

So what are David's concerns as he prays for the new king? Well, there are the traditional concerns of living in a fractious community of nations: "May his enemies lick the dust," and "May all kings bow down to him." And there are the standard honorary clichés: "Long may he live," and "May his name endure forever."

However, two kinds of petitions dominate the prayer. One is a concern for prosperity and flourishing, the other is a concern for righteousness and justice.

When he prays for prosperity, old man David is as extravagant in his imagery as he is in any of the poems of his youth: Verse 3: "May mountains bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness." Verse 6 & 7: "May he [the king] be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth. In his days may the righteous flourish and prosperity abound till the moon is no more." Verse 16: "May grain abound throughout the land; on the tops of hills may it sway. May the crops flourish like Lebanon and thrive like the grass of the field."

Even more pervasive than the theme of flourishing is the theme of justice. The very first words out of the old poet's mouth are "Endow the king with your justice." And he goes on in verse 2: "May he judge your people with righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice." Verse 4: "May he defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy." Verses 12-14: "For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight." Four times in these four verses he repeats the word *needy*.

Clearly, David's primary concern, as the first words out of his mouth, are "Endow the king with your justice." Before he prays for the prosperity of the nation, he prays for justice for the poor and the afflicted. It seems as if the psalmist recognizes that it would be hypocritical to pray for personal prosperity in a land (or world) where people live in poverty, oppression and affliction, without first praying that the king seek justice for those in greatest need.

How should we pray for our president and other government representatives? Psalm 72 suggests that our first thoughts, our first prayers, ought to focus on justice for the afflicted and the oppressed.

Let us ever pray that God will endow our leaders "with justice" so that they "take pity on the weak and the needy and rescue them from oppression."