

How to Pray for Leadership

The most underutilized source of spiritual power in our churches today is the intercession for Christian leaders.

In his book, "The Prayer Shield", C. Peter Wagner states that, "The most underutilized source of spiritual power in our churches today is the intercession for Christian leaders." He further states, "No question exists in the minds of those who have experienced it; committed, faithful intercession brings increased spiritual power to Christian ministries."

John Wesley is frequently quoted as saying, "God will do nothing on earth except in answer to believing prayer." You and I help to determine what happens to our leadership—blessing or cursing—whether God's goodness is released in their ministries or whether the power of sin and Satan is permitted to influence them!

The apostle Paul knew the importance of praying for leaders. He requested prayer five different times in his epistles.

"Brethren, pray for us" (I Thessalonians 5:25, NKJV). Paul told the Thessalonians that he was praying for them and affirming their gifts of faith, hope, and love (I Thessalonians 1:2-3). At the end he asked them to pray for him, probably expecting them to pray for his faith, hope, and love to be increased.

"Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Romans 15:30, NKJV). This is a more specific request for personal intercession. He asked them to pray that his trip to Jerusalem would be successful and that he would be protected from enemies waiting for him there.

"You also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many" (II Corinthians 1:11, NKJV). In the preceding verse of Scripture Paul spoke of being delivered from death. As Paul asked the Corinthian believers for prayer, he knew intercession could be a matter of life and death.

"For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:19, NKJV). Paul depended on the prayers of others for justice to be done and for him to be released from prison.

"I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you" (Philemon 22, NKJV). This reference could easily be overlooked, but Paul again wrote from prison and wanted to visit his friend Philemon. He had faith that God would answer Philemon's prayers to that effect.

Prayer for leadership is not an option, but rather a necessity!

Christian leaders need a greater concentration of prayer and intercession because:

- *They have more responsibility and accountability.
- *They are more subjected to temptation.
- *They are more targeted in spiritual warfare.
- *They have more visibility and are subject to gossip and criticism.

Prayer and intercession for leadership are important to release God's plan for the church to reach its potential. Praying for leadership will cause a positive change in their effectiveness and in the effectiveness of their ministries.

A 1990 survey says, "There exists a tremendous reservoir of untapped prayer power in every church which can be affirmed, trained, and deployed to see the lost won, the apathetic revived, the backslider restored, and the committed made more effective."

Our leaders are chosen by God to move His kingdom forward. Faithful, specific prayer and intercession will release them to be all God wants them to be. To the degree the intercessors pray, the leaders gain protection against the fiery darts of the wicked one, over and above the whole armor of God they are responsible for using. Prayer is one of the most important elements of a successful ministry today!

Seven Ways to Pray for Our Leadership

In her book "The Mighty Warrior", Beth Alves, president of Intercessors International suggests seven ways to pray for our leadership:

Day 1--Favor with God

- *Pray for leaders to walk in the Spirit, pleasing to the Lord.
- *Pray for the Holy Spirit to give personal direction, teaching, vision.
- *Pray for ever-increasing knowledge of God.
- *Pray for leaders' work to be the best.
- *Pray for leaders to have strength to withstand fiery tests. *Pray for leaders to be sensitive to God's voice, to have spiritual ears and hearts.
- *Pray for leaders to speak the Word with boldness wherever they go.

Day 2--Favor with Man

- *Pray that people will be sensitive to financial needs of spiritual leaders and support them.
- *Pray that there will be no gossip, deceit, or unbelief.
- *Pray that God will send His ministering angels to guard the leaders. *Pray that all leaders will be in unity and attuned to the Holy Spirit for direction, that they will be supportive of one another. *Pray for God to give leaders a spirit of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, strength, and obedient and reverent fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2). *Pray that the leaders will witness effectively and boldly to the lost. *Pray for God to prepare the hearts of those with whom the leaders share the gospel.

Day 3--Pure Vision

- *Pray for God to clarify His vision for ministry to the leaders.
- *Pray for helpers in carrying out the vision.
- *Pray for keen discernment between God's wisdom and human wisdom. *Pray for pure motives, purged by God through the Word and their personal prayer time.
- *Pray for discernment against impure motives.
- *Pray for God to lead and direct their paths.

Day 4--Spirit, Soul, and Body

- *Pray for divine health—physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. *Pray for all effects of tiredness and discouragement to be loosed from the leaders' minds and bodies.
- *Pray for fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
- *Pray for total submission to the Lord in every aspect of life. *Pray for a spirit of unity, not competition; humility, not superiority; cooperation, not defensiveness.
- *Pray for leaders to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. *Pray for leaders to feed daily on the Word of God and maintain a faithful prayer life.

Day 5--Warfare and Protection

- *Pray that God would send angels to guard our leaders, their families, and property, to put a hedge of protection around all that is going in, coming out, the air above, and the ground below.
- *Pray that the angels would go before them and do battle in their behalf.
- *Pray that God foils all attacks and traps of the enemy.
- *Pray against all occult activity—curses, witchcraft divination, sorcery.

Day 6--Priorities

- *Pray that the Lord will cause the leaders to abound in prosperity—body, soul, and spirit.
- *Thank God for providing all the needs—personal, family, ministry.
- *Pray for leaders to learn to be wise stewards of time, to become disciplined.
- *Pray for leaders' relationship with God to always remain the top priority.

Day 7--Family

*Pray for unity and understanding among the family members.

*Pray that there would be no resentment when sacrifice is required.

****Pray for God to meet the emotional needs***

*Pray that leaders will spend quality time with their families—both leisure time and spiritual time.

*Pray for the family to discern each other's needs—emotional, physical, material, and spiritual.

*Pray for them to overcome pressures and stress. *Pray that the children will be free from expectations put on them that are not in line with God's will.

Produced by World Network of Prayer, United Pentecostal Church International.