

Pray for Those in Authority

Scripture Reading — 1 Timothy 2:1-7

I urge . . . that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. — 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Along with the Lord's Prayer, which we have been looking at in depth this month, many other Bible texts give us helpful insights for prayer in our everyday lives.

In his first letter to Timothy, for example, the apostle Paul urges prayer for "all people," accenting the need to pray for "those in authority" over us. Behind this direction lies Paul's conviction that God has placed our leaders in authority over us (Romans 13:1). Remarkably, Paul wrote these words during the reign of the Roman emperor Nero, one of the most anti-Christian rulers of all time.

But the advice to pray for -rulers, both good and bad, wasn't new. More than 600 years earlier, the prophet Jeremiah urged the exiles of Jerusalem and Judah to pray for the "peace and prosperity" of Babylon, where they were taken as captives (Jeremiah 29:7).

When we pray for people in authority, we recognize God's sovereign hand in our lives and our societies. We implore God to aid our rulers in governing with justice and equity so that everyone may live in the peace our Creator intended. By these prayers, we ask God to use us as his agents. Prayers for our rulers and leaders spring from our commitment to sharing Jesus' love and mercy with our neighbors.

Prayer

Father, we trust you as the righteous ruler over all. Bless and guide those in authority over us. Use us as witnesses to your goodness and mercy. Amen.

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