

Lord, Teach Us to Pray – Part 9
How to Pray for Our Community and Country – 1 Timothy 2:1-4
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – June 26th, 2022

Intro:

- I hope we can all agree that prayer makes a difference and prayer matters. I hope that your prayer life has deepened and widened, that we would be a people who pray and, through God answering our prayers, that we see His kingdom come among us.
- This morning we are turning to a passage of scripture where Paul the Apostle is writing to pastor Timothy about how he is to shepherd and lead the church. This was written for this man and that church, and it is also written to every church leader and every church.
- We are instructed in this passage to pray for our community and country. We are told what we are to pray for and why we are to pray this way. Christians who do this will stand on solid ground, seeing God work in both community and country, being at peace, and seeing people come to faith and the knowledge of the truth, which is the ultimate goal.

1 Tim 2:1-2a NIV

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2 for kings and all those in authority,

Pray first

- Prayer is to be the first priority and the place where we give time and attention. In most of my meetings, we have an opening prayer and then move into the business. However, I am beginning to think that prayer *is* the business. More happens in the prayer time than in the planning or prep time. We are to petition our Father, stand in the gap for others (intercession), and give thanks for people (which we need to do more of). We will be more effective in causing change both in and around us by doing this than by anything else we do.
- *Everyone* – We are to pray for all people in this way. Our families, our church, our neighbors, our co-workers, our communities, our country, and our world. We are to petition God for them, pray for them, intercede for them and give thanks for them. All people without exclusion. And Jesus would add, especially our enemies.
- *Governmental Leaders* – The Holy Spirit especially wants us to focus on governmental leaders (for kings). We are to do this for every leader of our country—regardless if you voted for the person or not—because our Father calls His children to pray for our governmental leaders. Period. It is important to pray for leaders because the conditions they create either advance or impede the gospel.
- *Those in authority* – These would include all people in authority, including your boss, including the teachers in school, and those in administration, including the local leaders, all people who have authority. You would be best served by them if you pray for them, not complain about them. If you were to add up the words and time you spend in complaint versus prayer, what would the record show? We would be more effective in causing change if we prayed versus complained.

1 Tim 2:2b NIV

that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

Pray that

- *We may live peaceful and quiet lives* – This is why we are praying for people and these people specifically. This is the result that we are looking for. Some of you don't want this. You love being all worked up about one thing or another. It is like you thrive on chaos and controversy. “Did you hear the latest? And this is what those people are really doing, and this is what is really happening. . . .” Why don't you focus on praying so that the result will be that you will live a peaceful and quiet life. Would not this be better? Would you not be better? We pray for people so that we can live this way. Living peaceful and quiet lives is better. It seems like the loudest lives get the most attention, but which is better? Scripture would say peaceful and quiet is better, and we will see why.
- *We may live in all godliness and holiness* – This is living lives that respect and honor God, and living in a way so that people will respect how we live. We pray that we can live lives in peace, respecting God. This is not the case in our country on some levels, especially when it comes to issues of morality and sexuality. We should look to live in a way that respects God and His Word, that is respectable, and that is worthy of respect. We do this by working hard, being people of our word, loving others, and caring for our community in a self-sacrificial type of way.

1 Tim 2:3-4 NIV

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Pray for

- This is the end result of what we are praying for. John Piper, reflecting on this passage, says, "God approves of our prayers for peace and tranquility because he approves of the advance of the gospel. Peace is not the main thing; salvation is the main thing. Tranquility is not the goal; the knowledge of the truth of God, that's the goal." We forget what the real goal is. The goal is not forwarding our agenda. The real goal is forwarding the gospel. We fight so hard for things that are not eternal. Why don't we work toward what will make a lasting difference? Why don't we work for what really matters?
- *People to be saved* – God wants people to be saved. This is the end result of all this prayer. This is what we are looking for, that eternity will be changed and those in our generation will be impacted. This is what matters most. We lose sight of this sometimes. Let this be our aim. We do so by praying to this end, and we do so by living to this end.
- *People to come to a knowledge of the truth* – We want people to come to the knowledge of the truth. These are truths that are presented in scripture. These are the big truths, about our origins, about the nature of God, the nature of humans, eternal destinies, what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong. This is not about having "my truth" but "the truth," and there is a difference.

Conclusion

- I am deeply grateful for our country and the freedoms we have. I am grateful for the sacrifices of those who lived and died for these principles and values. I am thankful for the wisdom and focus of the founders of this country.
- I also know that this is a temporary country. And that, in reality, you and I belong to an eternal kingdom that spans all countries and all times. This kingdom will supersede all kingdoms and

countries, and my first and most important citizenship is in heaven. While we are living in the countries of men, we are to live by the principles and values of the kingdom of heaven.

- Please think about this passage and its implications for your life. Will you pray along these lines in a regular fashion for our nation and our community?
- Prayer