



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting

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PRAYING FOR THE NATION

September 11, 2001. This date is etched in the minds of Americans. It is a day that everyone will remember where he or she was when America was attacked by terrorists. It will be recorded as one of the darkest and bloodiest days in all of American history. America will never be the same again.

Americans have experienced the gamut of emotions—bewilderment, fear, grief, despair, frustration, and anger. Now a sense of uneasiness has settled on this nation. The people of this nation must grapple with the fact that America is *vulnerable*. We have always been vulnerable. Yet now, this truth has been demonstrated to our hearts and minds. The vivid and stunning pictures of the hijacked airplanes exploding into the World Trade Center have crashed our notion of invincibility. That one word, *vulnerability*, sums up the uneasiness that blankets this nation.

Praying for this nation is the valuable lesson that we must learn from this tragedy. Our vulnerability should drive us to our knees. We have received a powerful object lesson. We can no longer take for granted the security of this nation. We can no longer hope that everything will be fine in our land. We cannot allow ourselves to grow complacent in pleading before God for America. We must cover our nation with intercession. We must stand in the gap for this nation.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on praying for the nation. It is our hope and prayer that this issue will challenge you and equip you to

cover the nation with fervent intercession. God will honor your praying for America. The history of this nation is a testimony to the power of prayer. America exists and survives because our spiritual forefathers humbled themselves before God and prayed for the nation. Previous generations of believers have stood in the gap and prayed this nation through the ups and downs of our history. God has blessed and secured this nation through the praying of His people.

Now it is our turn. Our time has come. We must show the same faith and courage that our spiritual forefathers exhibited. We must plead for this nation with faith and persistence. Will you accept the challenge and stand in the gap for America as others have in our history?

Why Pray For The Nation?

In past weeks, a concerted call to pray for America has been continually sounded. The message of the hour is, "Pray for the nation." Yet, what motivations are there for praying for the nation? Why should the believer commit himself or herself to pray for the nation? There are some biblical reasons why the believer is to pray for the nation.

The security of the nation is based on God and His protection. A nation is not secure because of its military power. The history of the world reveals the destruction of great empires with

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powerful armies. The psalmist declares the weakness of military power and weaponry, "No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for safety; neither shall it deliver any by its great strength" (**Psalm 33:16-17**). Yet, the psalmist announces how one can find true security, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD" (**Psalm 20:7**). God alone can strengthen and secure a nation. As Mary Washington told her son, George Washington, our first President, "Remember that God is our only sure trust."

By praying for the nation, we can declare our dependence on God. When believers cry out to God for protection, it is a matter of humbling ourselves before Him. It is a way of saying, "Lord God, we do not trust in our military or our power; we are depending on You. You are our ultimate defense." God is pleased to honor this kind of humble dependence. Through prayer, we can declare our helplessness and dependence on God. By doing this, we are trusting in God to help and defend the nation. He is the only Hope for the nation. Through prayer, we claim this hope.

Praying for the nation is part of fulfilling our responsibilities before God as citizens. You are a citizen of America not by chance but because of God's purpose. You live here because of God's will, "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings" (**Acts 17:26**). God determined that you would live in this nation. You are a citizen of this country due to God's own plan. This calls for good stewardship. God desires that you do all that you can to bless and build the nation. An essential part of this is praying for the nation. Through prayer, you can bless and make a difference in the nation. Praying for the nation is a way of fulfilling your God-given responsibility as a citizen of the nation where God has placed you.

Praying for the nation enables you to act as salt and light. Jesus desires that you make a righteous difference where you are. He says, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden"

(**Matthew 5:13-14**). Through prayer, you can exercise a righteous influence. It enables you to fight against the tide of ungodliness. You can pray the destruction of evil and the establishment of godliness in the nation. You can pray for justice. You can plead with God to end poverty and crime. Prayer provides you with the possibility of bringing change to this nation. Praying for the nations gives you the opportunity to be salt and light in the midst of sin and rebellion.

Praying for the nation is crucial to spiritual awakening. If this nation is going to experience widespread awakening, God's people must humble themselves before Him and cry out to Him. We must plead with God to stir the hearts and the lives of Americans. We must seek Him for His awakening grace. Our plea must be the same as the psalmist, "Restore us, O God; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved" (**Psalm 80:3**). God has ordained that we must ask in order to receive (**Matthew 7:7**). Spiritual awakening can happen in America; we must plead with God for it. The necessity of this awakening should motivate and encourage us to pray for the nation.

Prayer Strategies For The Nation

The following are prayer strategies that you can use to pray for the nation. These strategies are offered to you to help you build an arsenal of prayer ideas. They are presented in order to give you an assortment of ideas that you can use to develop your own intercession for the nation. These suggestions can help you develop variety in your praying for the nation. You can use these strategies or develop your own from them. Plead with the Holy Spirit for direction in how to use these materials and how to pray for the nation.

Praying The Lord's Prayer For The Nation

Our Father: Father, I plead that the people of America would come to know you as their Father through Jesus Christ. I ask You to turn Americans to Yourself through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

and repentance of sins. I plead that You would grant faith and repentance to the people of this nation.

In heaven: O God, cause this nation to recognize that You are the only true God. I ask that America would trust in You, acknowledging Your sovereignty and obeying Your Word. Cause the people of this nation to see the danger and futility of worshipping and pursuing anything or anybody other than You. Cause the people of this nation to forsake their idols and turn to You, the living and the true God.

Hallowed be Your name: I pray that America would honor You as God. I ask that the people of this nation would fear You. Grant us a fresh understanding of and reverence for You. Let our nation act and speak in a way that will glorify You. I ask that this nation will glorify You.

Your kingdom come: I plead that Your kingdom would engulf America. From Maine to Hawaii, from Washington to Florida, and all points in between, I plead that millions and millions of people will surrender to Jesus Christ the Lord. I plead that Americans will turn from their sin to Jesus Christ in true faith. I pray that Jesus would reign as Lord in the hearts and lives of Americans.

Your will be done: Father, I pray that Your will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. Grant this nation a sensitivity and submission to Your will. Teach us what Your will is and empower us to walk in obedience to You. Let this nation follow the path ordained by Your good pleasure and will.

Give us our daily bread: Father, thank You for Your merciful blessings on this nation. You have been kind and gracious to America. I pray that You would teach that You are the Fountain and Source of our blessings. Reveal to us that it is Your blessing that has provided for and sustained this nation. I pray that America will seek You for her needs. Cause the people of this nation to seek You and trust in You and Your goodness.

Forgive us: Father, I pray that You would convict America of its sin. Reveal to us that You are the holy God and that You hate sin. Let these truths be

burned on our consciences. Strip away our self-righteousness. Open our eyes that we might see how wicked and abominable that our sin is. I pray that we would turn to You in repentance. I ask that we would confess our sin and cry out to You for forgiveness and restoration.

As we forgive: Father, I ask that You would release a spirit of mercy and forgiveness in this nation. O God, let love, justice, and mercy reign in this land! Through love, justice, and mercy, tear down the barriers that separate people. Grant us a forgiving, merciful spirit. Bring an end to abuse, bloodshed, and violence.

Do not lead us into temptation: Father, I ask that You would give this nation a hatred of sin. Grant us the strength to stand strong against temptation. Empower us to root out and destroy the moral corruption and rot that plagues this nation. I ask that this nation would receive a fresh glimpse and understanding of Your holiness. Create within this country a hungering and thirsting for holiness.

Deliver us: Father, I plead that You would destroy Satan's schemes for this nation. Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, I plead that You would destroy the bondage that Satan has enslaved this nation with. In the name of Jesus Christ, destroy the strongholds that he has been able to establish in this country. I plead that You would bind him, his demons, and his work in this nation. In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray that He would be bound and stopped and that Jesus would be exalted as the only Lord and Savior in our nation.

The kingdom: Father, I ask that Your kingdom would advance throughout this nation. I pray that millions upon millions of people will surrender their lives to Jesus Christ. I plead that nothing will stop the kingdom of God and that it would smash the kingdom of Satan throughout this nation.

The power: Father, I plead that Your power would flow into this nation as never before in its history. Let Your transforming power flood every inch of this nation. I ask that You would revive Your people through Your almighty power. I plead with You to awaken the lost to You, their sin, and their need of Jesus through Your great power. O God, I

pray that You would release Your power into this nation and turn us to Yourself.

The glory: Father, let Your glory shine in this nation. Reveal Yourself to America in fresh and powerful ways. Cause this nation to know that You and You alone are the true and the living God. Show us that You are the great and mighty God of time and eternity.

The Greatness of God: Praying Psalm 33 For America

Psalm 33 is a hymn of praise to God for who He is and what He does. The psalm focuses on God as the Creator, Sovereign, Judge and Savior. America's only hope is in the Lord God. Without acknowledging Him and trusting in Him, we have no hope. This psalm challenges us to worship God and trust Him. It asks for praise to the mighty King of heaven and earth and for trust in Him and His purpose. For this reason, it provides us with a model of how to seek God for this nation. It offers us numerous suggestions on how to intercede for the nation. The following are some prayer requests that you can offer to God in behalf of this nation.

- ◆ **Verses 1-3-Praise God for His goodness to this nation.** Praise is the natural response for receiving God's blessings. Adore Him for being gracious to America. Praise and thank Him for specific blessings that He has poured out on the nation. The word "rejoice" in verse 1 signifies intensity and jubilation. Praise God for the nation and its blessings with all your strength and with great joy.
- ◆ **Verses 4-7-Plead that America will come to the true knowledge of God.** In these verses, God's greatness is exalted in a variety of ways. He is:
 - The righteous God (v.4)
 - The God who can be trusted (v.4)
 - The God who is just and good (v.5)
 - The God of tender love (v.5)
 - The God of almighty power (v.6-7)
 Pray that Americans will come to know God as He is. Plead that the nation will be filled with the true knowledge of God. Ask that as the waters fill the ocean so this nation would be filled with a true understanding of God's character. Ask that the ignorance of God will be
- eradicating from the nation.
- ◆ **Verses 8-9-Plead that America will fear and reverence God.** Ask that the understanding of God's character will lead to genuine fear and reverence for God. Pray that our knowledge of God will create great humility among our people.
- ◆ **Verses 10-11-Ask that America will know that rebellion against God is foolish and deadly.** Plead that this nation will be submissive to God's purpose. Plead that the people will desire to know and do what God has willed.
- ◆ **Verse 12-Pray that the nation will realize the blessedness of obeying God.** Obeying God is what makes a nation great. Disgrace comes to a nation when it turns from God and His standard. Plead that a spirit of obedience would fill the nation. Pray that there will be a hungering and thirsting for God's Word and obedience to that Word.
- ◆ **Verses 13-15-Plead that the nation will realize that our accountability is to God.** We must pray that this nation will realize that God is the Judge and that the Bible is His holy standard. Ask that Americans will realize that God is the just Judge and that all people must give an account to Him.
- ◆ **Verses 16-19-Pray that Americans will look to God and depend on Him.** These verses reveal that a nation's security is not based on military might. Only God can secure and bless a nation. He is the only One who can sustain and protect a nation. It is only those who fear Him and who hope on His mercy that can expect His help or blessing. Plead that the people of this nation will fear God and will hope on His mercy. Pray that the nation will depend on God above all things for our protection and existence.
- ◆ **Verses 20-21-Plead that America will rejoice in God.** Ask that He will become our Delight. Pray that the people of this nation will see the blessedness of trusting in God and that we will rejoice in Him and His will.
- ◆ **Verse 22-Pray that God will have mercy on America.** Ask God to pour out His mercy on this nation in abundance. It is only by His mercy that we exist and are not consumed. America has sinned greatly. But, God is a God of great mercy. Plead that He will have mercy on the nation and turn it back to Himself.

Blessing Or Curse: Praying Deuteronomy 4 For America

In **Deuteronomy 4**, Moses exhorts the people to commit themselves to hearing and obeying God before entering the land. The nation is confronted with a choice between obedience and disobedience, blessing and curse. If they obeyed, they would experience God's blessing. If they rejected God and His Word, they would experience the curse of disobedience.

This nation must decide between obedience and disobedience, blessing and curse. Because of this, **Deuteronomy 4** provides a model for praying for the nation. The truths presented in this chapter provide us with points to plead before God for the nation. They offer us insight on how to intercede for our nation and its relationship to God.

- **Plead that America will hear and obey the Word of God** (vv.1-2, 5, 40). Ask that there would be a fresh hungering and thirsting for the Word of God throughout this nation. Plead that ~~this nation will become hearers and doers of the Word of God~~ (James 1:22-25).
- **Pray that America will comprehend the consequences of obedience and disobedience** (vv.3-4, 6-8, 40). We need an understanding of this truth throughout the land. Ask God to burn upon the hearts of the people of this nation that there are consequences both for obedience and disobedience to God. Pray that this would be clearly set forth in the hearts and minds of the people.
- **Pray that America would teach the next generation the Word of God** (vv.9-14). It is crucial that the next generation hear and learn the Word of God. Ask that God would burden the present generation to stand strong for the Word of God and to live it and declare it to the next generation. Plead that the young people of this nation will have a heart for the Word of God. Ask Him to root out the worldliness that would hinder them from hearing and receiving the Word.
- **Plead that Americans would love God with all their beings** (vv.15-20). Pray that the true and living God will be the top priority of our

lives. Ask that the people will not exalt anything above God—that God is our great desire and primary pursuit. Plead that the nation will be delivered from idolatry. America is a nation with many gods. Pray that people will turn from their “idols” to true faith in the living God.

- **Pray that Americans would know that God is a jealous God** (vv.21-24). In these verses, God reveals that He is a jealous God. He will not tolerate any rivals. He will not accept any compromise with sin. He is the true God who demands our allegiance and our affections. Plead that Americans will realize that God is the jealous God. Ask that this nation will realize that God desires and calls for our full allegiance and affection.
- **Ask that Americans would be delivered from complacency concerning God and His Word** (vv.25-28). In these verses, God warns Israel about growing complacent toward Him and His Word and then committing idolatry. Whenever a person grows complacent toward God and His Word, the next natural step is idolatry—exalting something or someone above God. When you forget God, you will replace Him as the priority of your life with something else. This is a danger that must be avoided. Plead that God would stir America to acknowledge Him and His Word. Pray that we will be delivered from forgetting God and His Word.
- **Pray that Americans will seek God with all their hearts** (vv.29-31). God will hear and answer when we seek Him with all of our hearts. Plead that God would give this nation a heart to seek Him.
- **Plead that Americans will know that God has blessed this nation** (vv.32-38). The greatness of this nation rests on the blessing of God. In His own goodness and mercy, God established this nation. He has sustained it and blessed it. Ask that Americans will acknowledge this truth and will respond to God with faith, obedience, and worship.
- **Ask that Americans will know that God is the only true God** (v.39). Pray that this nation will know and acknowledge that God is the God of heaven and earth—there is no other like Him. Plead that people will understand that God alone is God. Ask that the false concepts of God in

this nation will be forsaken and that people will truly know God as He has revealed Himself in the Word of God.

- **Pray that America would be a land of justice and mercy** (vv.41-43). The cities of refuge were established for anyone who accidentally killed another. The establishment of these cities was intended to provide a balance between justice and mercy. Those who murdered in cold blood were to be punished. Those who accidentally killed someone could find mercy in the city of refuge. The nation was to be characterized by true justice for the offenders and mercy for the victims. Pray that this same justice and mercy will characterize this nation.

Scripture Prayers For The Nation

The following prayers will enable you to cover different aspects of our nation's life and well being. These prayers are based on the Scripture. You can plead these with confidence and expectancy.

Father, I pray that You would guide our President. His heart is in Your hands. Guide him in the direction that You will. Surround him with wise people who are filled with integrity. Grant him advisors who will make Your agenda and the good of the nation their top priority. Give him the strength and the courage that he needs to do what is right (**Proverbs 21:1, 28:2, 8:15, 16:10; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Romans 13:1**).

Father, I plead for Your blessing on the Congress. I pray that they will make laws that are just and good. Grant them the wisdom and power to make decisions that will strengthen and prosper the nation. Provide them with all that they need to lead this nation according to Your purpose. I ask that they would be motivated by Your hand than by their own desires, their own profit, or their own partisan concerns (**Proverbs 8:15, 15:22, 19:21, 21:30, 29:14**).

Father, I ask that You would work among the Supreme Court justices of this nation. By Your hand, I pray that You would create a desire for

justice among them. I plead that they would make rulings in line with Your will (**2 Samuel 23:3; Proverbs 8:14-16, 11:1; Deuteronomy 16:18**).

Father, I ask Your blessing on the international relations of this nation. Grant this nation favor with the other nations of the earth. I ask You to raise up men and women in our diplomatic corps who are filled with wisdom and compassion. Grant them understanding and skill in dealing with other nations. Bless the embassy personnel in every foreign country. Protect them and help them maintain sound, working relationships with those nations. Use our international relations to open doors for the gospel in every nation of the world (**Proverbs 16:7; Matthew 28:18-20**).

Father, I plead in the name of Jesus that You would work among the American media. Raise up journalists and publishers who love the truth. Empower them to write and publish the truth. Grant them a hatred of lies, slander, hypocrisy, and half-truths. Purify their motives. I pray that You would bless and send Christians into the media circles as salt and light for Jesus Christ. I plead that thousands and thousands of the media people will come to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance (**Psalms 68:11; Proverbs 14:34**).

Father, You have created the family. In Your own wisdom and goodness, You established the family unit. I plead in the name of Jesus that You would bless and strengthen the families of this nation. I pray that this nation will see and know the benefits of a godly nation. I ask that legislation would encourage and help families. Deliver the families of this nation from those things that would harm and destroy them (**Genesis 2:24; Leviticus 25:10; Numbers 36:6-8**).

Father, I pray that this nation would turn to You in faith and repentance. Your Word says that godliness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any nation. Cause this nation to cry out to You and seek You with all our hearts. I pray that this nation would turn from its sin and that we will trust in You (**Proverbs 14:33**).

Father, I ask that You would protect this nation from terrorist attacks. In the name of Jesus, I pray

that You would thwart any attempts to attack this nation. I plead that You would cause their plans and intentions to be brought to light. Destroy any man to strike this country (**Psalm 11:7**).

Father, I plead that You would give our law enforcement officials wisdom and power to carry out their responsibility and to protect this country. Grant them what they need to apprehend and punish all offenders. Place Your hand of protection on them as they do their work (**Romans 13:3-4**).

Father, I ask You to bless and strengthen our military. I pray that You would protect them and help them to train and prepare for any conflict. Give them wisdom and courage and help them to carry out their responsibility (**Joshua 1:9**).

Father, I plead that You would be our Strength and our Protection. I thank You for our leaders, our military, and law enforcement authorities. Yet, ultimately, You are our Defense and Protector. I do not boast in any military power and weapons, but I boast in and trust in You. Father, put a hedge around this country. I ask You to protect this country with Your mighty hand. Cause this nation to rise up and stand firm (**Psalm 20:7-8**).

Father, I ask You to bless and strengthen our economy. Give our financial leaders the wisdom and insight that they need to lead this country to fiscal security and prosperity. Grant them inspired ideas that will lead America into financial strength not just for the present but also for the future. Bless this nation with prosperity so that we will send the gospel to the nations and help the poor and needy. Let us always be mindful that it is Your hand and Your blessing that provides us with economic security and prosperity (**Deuteronomy 8:17**).

Pleading For Spiritual Awakening In America

As you pray for the nation, you need to include pleading for spiritual awakening. This nation must experience a spiritual awakening that will shake its very foundations. There must be a

return to God, His Word, His Son, and His Church. Since prayer is a means of receiving awakening, we must plead with God for this powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

In past spiritual awakenings in America, certain truths were proclaimed with power. These truths were used of God to stir and change the hearts of people. In order to pray for spiritual awakening in this nation, we can use those truths to plead with God. We can develop our points for pleading with Him for spiritual awakening through these truths. We must pray that these truths will be proclaimed with fresh power, earnestness, and clarity.

- (1) *The Bible as the sole guide for faith and practice* (**2 Timothy 3:15-4:2; 1 Peter 1:21**). Plead with God to create within the people of this nation a hunger for the Word of God. Pray that people will seek God through His Word. Ask Him to release a spirit of obedience to the Word of God. Plead that this land will be filled with sound, clear preaching of God's Word.
- (2) *The new birth* (**John 3:1-10**). Pray that this truth will be proclaimed with power and clarity. Plead that people will understand the necessity of the new birth. Pray that they will see the insufficiency of religion, morality, and works apart from the inward transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- (3) *Repentance* (**Luke 13:1-3, Luke 15, Acts 17:30**). Plead that this nation will be filled with the clear and uncompromised call to repentance. Pray that the people of this nation will see how evil and destructive that sin is. Ask God to grant this nation a spirit of repentance.
- (4) *Faith alone in Jesus Christ alone* (**John 3:16; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5**). Pray that the message of Jesus Christ as the only Savior will be proclaimed in this nation with fresh power and clarity. Plead with God to exalt His Son in this nation as the only Redeemer and Mediator. Ask that this message will fill the nation.
- (5) *Holiness of life* (**1 Peter 1:15-16; Hebrews 12:14**). Pray that the message of holiness will be declared throughout this message. Plead that God's holiness and His demand for a holy life will resound throughout the nation. Plead that the church will repent and seek holiness with fervor and intensity.

A Prayer For Serving God

God longs for you to be a servant. Will you pray for Him to use you? The following prayer comes from Saint Francis of Assisi. It is based on **Romans 6:22**. I would encourage you to pray this prayer for the next month, asking God to transform you into a servant.

“Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned. And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.”

Do You Want To Emphasize Prayer In Your Church?

The Prayer Closet has designed “The Prayer Bulletin Insert” to help you emphasize prayer in your church. This insert can be placed in your church bulletins. The insert focuses on a particular prayer concern for each month. It provides insights and scripture prayers for the month’s prayer concerns. There are twelve in a set for the year for 2002 and may be reproduce for the number you need for your church bulletins. If you would like to receive a set of these inserts, please contact “The Prayer Closet”.



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