

# THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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## Transforming America Through Prayer

John Hancock, one of the founding fathers of America said, "Let us humbly commit our righteous cause to the great Lord of the Universe . . . Let us joyfully leave our concerns in the hands of Him who raises up and puts down empires and kingdoms of the earth as He pleases."

On November 1, 1777, the United States Congress called for a National Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer for the victory at Saratoga during the Revolutionary War. During this day of prayer, Congress urged the people to ask ". . . Jesus Christ mercifully to forgive and blot out (our sins)" and "to prosper the means of religion for the promotion and enlargement of that Kingdom which consisted in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Three years later on October 18, 1780, Congress once again called for a Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving for the discovery of Benedict Arnold's treason plot. Again the people were urged to ask God, ". . . to cause the knowledge of Christianity to spread over the whole earth."

In 1787, the year the American Constitution was framed, Congress urged the people to thank God for providing us "the light

of the Gospel truth . . . " and to ask Him to "raise up from among our youth men eminent for virtue, learning, and piety, to His service in the church and State; to cause virtue and true religion to flourish; . . . and to fill the world with His glory."

Congress renegotiated and ratified the Treaty of Tripoli in 1805 only after repudiating and deleting the phrase: "The United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion."

In 1854, the House of Representatives passed a Resolution proclaiming "the great and vital element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and divine truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Congress and President Ronald Reagan proclaimed 1984 as the "Year Of The Bible."

Why have a history lesson in a newsletter on prayer? These words remind us of the glorious past of our nation. It shows us that America sought God and God blessed the nation. God established and has sustained this nation. Yet, it also reveals how far we have strayed from God. It points out the spiritual and moral decay of our nation. It magnifies the disregard for God and His Word that fills our society.

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As I read these things, my heart grieves. I love this nation. Much of what I see and hear in our nation shatters me. I have great concern for the future – the destiny – of our nation. Yet, as I read these words, hope fills my heart. My spirit grows resolute. God reigns on His throne! If we will seek Him, God will hear and God will touch and bless our nation afresh and anew. America can have spiritual awakening. American can turn back to God and His Word.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* focuses on praying for America. It will provide you with a variety of insights and prayer guides that you can use to intercede for our nation. These insights and guides can invigorate and renew your praying for the nation. For those outside of this nation, you can apply the same principles to your praying for your nation.

America needs intercessors – believers who will seek God for the nation. Will you accept His call? Will you make the commitment to pray regularly for the nation?

## Why Pray For The Nation?



People frequently ask me if praying for the nation makes any difference. They wonder if their intercession for America actually has any impact. Your prayers for America do matter. God uses your intercession for this nation. He responds when you cry out to Him about this land. How can we know this with certainty? The Word of God gives us some reasons why we can trust that God will hear and use our intercession for the nation.

*The first reason is that God is the ruler of the nations.* God reigns over all nations. He is the One who raises nations up and puts them down. He sustains and blesses nations. When you pray, you seek the God who is Lord of every nation and people group in the world. The Word of God says:

“Behold, the nations are a drop in the bucket, and are counted as small dust on the scales; look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing” (Isaiah 40:15).

“All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless” (Isaiah 40:17).

“All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’” (Daniel 4:35)

The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect” (Psalm 33:10).

Whatever the LORD pleases He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places” (Psalm 135:6).

Our God is the sovereign Lord over the nations of the world! He can bless, sustain, awaken, stir, judge, or destroy any nation on this planet. By seeking God for America, you call on the One who can bless, sustain, and renew this nation. When you intercede for America, you seek the One who reigns over the nations. What an encouragement and challenge for us!

*God’s calling for the church provides encouragement to pray for America.* God desires for the church to be a house of prayer, “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence” (1 Timothy 2:1-2). This verse reveals that He has placed the church in the world to pray. God wants the church to intercede for all kinds of people with all kinds of needs. God especially wants the church to stand in the gap for government leaders (2:2). This must also include the nation where those leaders govern. The church has the privilege and responsibility of praying for the nation. God desires that His church – every church in the nation – intercede for His work in and His blessings on America. This is His will for the church.

*God has strategically placed you in this nation.* You do not live in America by chance. You. God has put you here to pray for the nation. The Word of God says in Jeremiah 29:7, “And seek the peace of the city where I

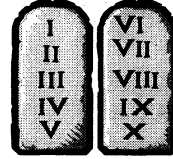
have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace." God told the captives to seek the peace of the place where He put them; He wanted them to pray for this place. This principle applies to you. God has raised you up in America that you might pray for the nation. He has brought you up at this time that you might stand in the gap for this country. You do not live in this nation by coincidence; God has planted you here to bless and intercede for the country.

*Intercession can deliver a nation.* It can unleash God's blessing on the country. God reveals this in **Ezekiel 22**, "'So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD" (**Ezekiel 22:30-31**). God declares that He would not have poured out His judgment on Judah if one person had stood in the gap for the nation. If one person had prayed for the nation, God's judgment could have been averted. Do you see the power of intercession for a nation? One person can make a difference! Don't ever feel that your prayers for the nation have no value. God sees them as precious and uses them!

*God's favor rests on the nation that seeks Him.* The Word of God says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance" (**Psalms 33:12**). When a nation seeks God, He will hear and respond. He will act in behalf of a country that calls on Him and puts their confidence in Him. As we seek God for the nation, we can experience His favor. We can know the blessedness of trusting in God for our nation.

*Prayer enables us to exercise a righteous influence.* God calls on His people to have this righteous influence, "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 have limitless power to influence and bless this nation. You may not ever go to Washington DC. Yet, when you get on your knees, you have more power than any politician or statesman to guide and transform this nation.



## Praying The Ten Commandments For America

What does God require of America? It is obedience to His revealed will. God has made His will known in the Ten Commandments. He shows us how to relate to Him and to each other in these commands. For this reason, it serves as a rich resource of praying for the nation. Read the Ten Commandments asking God to give you insight on how to pray for the nation. Yield yourself to the leading of the Spirit as you read. You can use the following prayers in your praying for the nation. You can also adapt them or put your own together. God desires obedience from America. Because of this, we need to make this a part of our praying for America.

*The First Commandment – No other gods before the one true God (Exodus 20:3)*

O God, I plead in the name of Jesus that America will turn to You and worship You alone. I pray that America will love You and worship You above everything else. Forgive us placing other things above You. Have mercy on us; our sin of having other gods displeases and grieves You. Turn us to Yourself that we might serve, worship, and love You as our God.

*The Second Command – No graven images (Exodus 20:4-6)*

O God, forgive this nation of its ignorance of You. Forgive us of our lack of knowledge of You as You have revealed Yourself in the Word. Fill this nation with a hunger and thirst for You. O God, teach us Your character and Your ways. I ask that this nation will forsake all other gods and will turn to You, the living and true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*The Third Command – Do not take God's name in vain (Exodus 20:7)*

O God, forgive this nation of its irreverence. I pray that we will not take You or Your Word lightly. I plead that You will fill this nation with a holy reverence for You, Your Word, Your church, and Your pastors. Forgive us of our hypocrisy. I ask that our lives will back up our profession of You as our God, Father, and Refuge. I pray that America will reverence, exalt, and cherish You and all those things by which You make Yourself known – the Word, the church, and its spiritual leaders.

*The Fourth Command – Honoring the Lord's Day (Exodus 20:8-11)*

O God, I ask that we will worship and honor You on the Lord's Day. Forgive us for our neglect and disregard of this day. I plead that we will spend the day in public and private worship of You. Enable us to use this day to show mercy and to bless others. I pray that this nation will set this day apart to honor You, seek You, and bless You with all our beings.

*The Fifth Commandment – Honor your father and mother (Exodus 20:12)*

O God, I pray that You will unleash Your blessing on the families of this nation. I ask that children will honor their parents. Grant them the power to cherish, bless, and submit to their parents. Cause the children of this nation to honor their parents as long as they live. Grant Your strength and grace to fathers and mothers throughout this nation. Help them raise their children in a wise and godly way.

*The Sixth Command – Do not kill (Exodus 20:13)*

O God, have mercy on America. I plead for You to fill our nation with a renewed commitment to the sanctity of life. I pray that we will cherish and honor life. Cause us to honor and respect each other as people made in the image of God. Forgive this nation of the abomination of abortion. I ask You to root this evil out of our land. Bring it to an end, O God, the Giver of life.

*The Seventh Command – Do not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14)*

O God, have mercy on America. I pray for the destruction of the immoral spirit that pervades our land. I call on You for the obliteration of pornography from our society. Forgive us giving ourselves over to sexual sin in all forms. I plead that America will seek for sexual purity. I ask that the people of this nation will strive for purity in their thoughts, words, and actions. Deliver and protect marriages from the spirit of adultery that has gained a foothold in our society.

*The Eighth Command – Do not steal (Exodus 20:15)*

Holy Father, have mercy on America. I plead that You will forgive us of our greed and pleasure seeking. I plead for the annihilation of the spirit of greed that fills this nation. I call on You to unleash a spirit of compassion and ministry in this nation. Stir us to help one another. Touch us that we might seek to bless others. I plead that the companies and businesses of this nation will do what is right in Your sight. I pray that that employees of the companies and businesses will work diligently and give their best. I ask for this that You might unleash economic blessing on this nation – unprecedented blessing – because of obedience to Your commands.

*The Ninth Commandment – Do not give false testimony (Exodus 20:16)*

Father, I plead that this nation will love the truth and will seek after what is true. I ask that this nation will maintain and promote what is true. Destroy the ungodly concept of relative truth that fills this land. I pray that America will believe the truth, speak the truth, and live the truth. Cause us to love the truth of Your Word. Let it become our meditation all the day and all the night.

*The Tenth Commandment – Do not covet (Exodus 20:17)*

Father, have mercy on America. Deliver us from the spirit of covetousness that grips our nation. Set us free from the need to have increasingly more. O God, grant us the power and grace for contentment with what You provide. I plead that we will acknowledge You as our good and gracious Provider. Enable us to rejoice in You and Your blessings. Forgive

us for taking for granted that You are our wise and faithful Provider. Unleash a spirit of giving in this nation that will enrich Your church and advance Your kingdom.

## The Model Prayer And America

The Lord Jesus has given us the model prayer to teach us how to seek God. This model guides us in how to pray. It can also serve as a tool to help you intercede for the nation. You can take each phrase of the Model Prayer and use it in your praying for our country. You can even develop a daily prayer model from these seven petitions:

**Monday:** *Our Father who is in heaven.*

- Pray that Americans will come to know God as their personal Father through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Ask that believers in the nation will draw near to God in all holy reverence and confidence.
- Plead that America will seek God for His help and protection.

**Tuesday:** *Hallowed be Your name.*

- Ask that Americans will seek to glorify God.
- Pray that Americans will strive to obey the Word of God.
- Plead that God will accomplish all of His will for our nation.

**Wednesday:** *Your kingdom come.*

- Plead that the kingdom of God will advance throughout our nation.
- Pray that the Spirit and the Word will dismantle Satan's kingdom in our nation.
- Ask that believers will faithfully pray for and share the gospel with those who are lost.

**Thursday:** *Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

- Pray that America will have a heart for God and His Word.
- Ask that God will empower America to know, obey, and submit to His will.
- Pray for the removal of those things that hinder people from knowing and doing God's will in our nation.

**Friday:** *Give us this day our daily bread.*

- Pray that America will acknowledge that God is our Provider.
- Ask God to deliver America from greed and covetousness.
- Plead that America will depend on God for all its needs.

**Saturday:** *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

- Pray that Americans will repent and seek God's forgiveness.
- Ask that Americans will learn to forgive from the heart.
- Plead for the destruction of prejudice in our nation.

**Sunday:** *And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil.*

- Pray that Satan's grip on this nation will be shattered.
- Ask that Americans will love and seek for what is holy and pleasing to God.
- Plead that America will hate sin and will turn from that which is abominable in God's sight.

**Every Day Of The Week:** *For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*

- Plead that America will bless God – that this nation will adore and honor God as the holy and almighty God.
- Ask that this nation will see the reality and the beauty of the Lord God.
- Adore God for all His blessings on this nation.

## Standing In The Gap For The Family In America

In His wisdom and goodness, God created the family. He desires to bless, protect, and use families as a part of His purpose. At the same time, a nation rises or falls depending on the strength or the weaknesses of its family. The conditions in a nation will mirror what takes place in its families. For this reason, praying for the