



praying for politics
and government

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Ideas and information for effective prayer.

We've come up four simple ideas to help you pray for politics and government. Whether you are planning to pray as an individual, a local prayer group, or a church, you will find something in here to help you!

This pack is divided into four main sections. If you have downloaded it from the internet, then you can choose either to print the whole thing or just the page(s) that you intend to use. If you have it in booklet form, you are free to photocopy whatever sections you need. At the back you will find an 'information and resources' section with web addresses and contact information. This is referred to throughout the rest of the material.

“Christians are called to serve and lead in politics and government - and prayer is where we need to start. With the Bible, prayer needs to be shaping and guiding our words and actions as we obey the call to disciple the nations for Christ.”

-Andy Reed MP

1) PRAY AS PART OF YOUR REGULAR CHURCH MEETING

On pages 3 and 4 you will find some ideas for bringing prayer for parliament and government into your weekly church service. If you are a church leader, you can incorporate this into one of your meeting plans, possibly timed to coincide with a lectionary theme or an upcoming event (like the opening of parliament or an election).

2) PRAY AS PRAYER GROUP

If your church holds a regular prayer meeting or you are part of an intercession group, maybe you could give one of your meetings over to praying for parliament and government? On pages 5-6 you will find a suggested 60 minute prayer meeting plan (of course, you can spend longer if you have the time available!)

3) PRAY AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Page 7 contains a 7-day personal prayer guide which you can print off and use as part of your own devotions. Each day gives you a bible verse to meditate and reflect on, and a suggested topic for prayer.

“When you tell non-Christians that they are being prayed for, it is an immense act of witness - especially if those non-Christians are MPs!”

-Tim Farron MP

If you are part of a prayer group, cell group, or similar small group, maybe you could commit to all praying for 5 minutes each day? This could be a practical response following a small group meeting where you have talked about these issues (maybe using the 'small group meeting plan' from www.susa.info).

4) HOLD A NIGHT OF PRAYER OR 24-7 STYLE PRAYER EVENT

If you are stirred about the need to pray for our nation at this time, we'd like you to consider taking a 'step of faith' and organising something slightly more stretching than a traditional prayer meeting (although that would be great too!) You might want to consider:

- A 'night of prayer', running say from 8pm until midnight;
- A 24-hour prayer watch, perhaps from Friday to Saturday lunchtime;
- Dedicating the whole week to 7 days of 24 hour continuous prayer.

Sounds impossible? It isn't! Turn to page 8 for more about how to turn this vision into reality...

PRAYER AS PART OF YOUR REGULAR CHURCH SERVICE

One way to pray together for parliament and government is to do so as part of your normal church service.

We know that churches pray in many different styles and traditions. Some read out formal prayers, some use responsive liturgies, and others encourage the participation of the whole congregation. Whatever style of prayer you are used to, we have come up with something that you should find helpful. Or alternatively, why not use this as an opportunity to try something that you are a little less familiar with?

Did you know...

That the familiar chime of Big Ben is itself a prayer, taken from Handel's 'Messiah'? The accompanying words are: "All through this hour / Lord, be my guide / And by Thy power / No foot shall slide."

- USE THE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

If your church has video projection facilities, you can download a free powerpoint presentation from www.susa.info (search in 'resources' for 'prayer for politics - slides').

The presentation focuses on 4 areas, and includes scripture verses and pointers for prayer. It can be used either to support prayer led by an individual, or to provide themes and pointers for a time of 'free' prayer in which the whole congregation can participate.

- FOLLOW THE RESPONSIVE LITURGY

We have produced a prayer for parliament and government following a leader/response format, which is suitable for congregational use.

You may want to project it up on a screen if you have the facilities, or alternatively print out copies for people to refer to. You will find the printed version on the next page.

To obtain a copy of the slides, go to www.susa.info and search for 'prayer for politics - liturgy'.

- READ OUT THE PARLIAMENTARY PRAYER

This prayer has been read out every day when parliament has been in session since the 17th century. Today the prayers are normally said by the speaker's chaplain.

The words are as relevant today as when they were first written, and stand as a powerful testimony to the Christian heritage of our parliament and legal system:

LORD, the God of righteousness and truth,
grant to our Queen and her government, to members of Parliament and all in positions of responsibility,
the guidance of your Spirit.
May they never lead the nation wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals;
but laying aside all private interests and prejudices
keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all mankind;
so may your kingdom come and your name be hallowed.
Amen.

A prayer for politics and government

*Leader says the words as indicated. Congregation respond with the words printed in **bold***

Leader: I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour.

**All: We pray for our leaders today.
We pray for the wisdom to decide;
We pray for the integrity to be honest;
We pray for the generosity to share;
We pray for the humility required for peace.**

Leader: We pray for the Queen and Royal family.

All: All through this hour, Lord be their guide.

Leader: For the Prime Minister [name], and for the Cabinet.

All: All through this hour, Lord be their guide.

Leader: For all those who are members of the House of Commons and House of Lords.

All: All through this hour, Lord be their guide.

Leader: For our local MP [name], and for local Councillors.

All: All through this hour, Lord be their guide.

Leader: We pray for all Christians working in the areas of politics and public service.

All: All through this hour, Lord be their guide.

Moment of silence for personal prayers.

Leader: The prophet Isaiah wrote of the Messiah who was to come: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." We believe Christ to be the source of all wisdom, generosity, honesty and peace. We accept his good Government in our lives.

All: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Leader: May the Spirit of Christ be at work in our Parliament and all Political office. May the principles and priorities of Jesus be at the heart of Government.

Leader: Christ stands for justice.

All: Let the poor have a voice in our parliament.

Leader: Christ stands for righteousness.

All: Let our laws be rooted in right living and in the way of love.

Leader: Christ is the Prince of Peace.

All: May the values of love, forgiveness and hope be at work in our land.

All: Amen.

Praying for parliament and government: the 60-minute prayer meeting plan

YOU WILL NEED:

- A Bible.
- Basic information about:
 1. your local MP;
 2. some current political issues;
 3. your local Councillors;
 4. Christians involved in politics (organisations and/or individuals).

(See the 'information resources' section at the back of this prayer guide, or cut out articles from local and national newspapers).
- A neutral greetings card and envelope (without a printed message inside).

SETTING UP

Pin up the four sets of information you have collected on the walls of your prayer space, or lay them out in the four corners of the room.

Encourage people to look at them as they come in and drink their tea and coffee!



INTRODUCTION (10 MINS)

Read out Psalm 99, as a declaration of God's sovereignty over all.

Spend some time in prayer acknowledging Jesus as the supreme king, the ruler above every earthly political system. Try to remain focussed on worship and adoration rather than starting to pray for specific issues. You may also wish to spend some time in 'sung' worship if this is something that you would normally do.

Read out 1 Timothy 2: 1-4 as a 'mandate' for the rest of your prayer time.



PRAYER FOR YOUR LOCAL MP (10 MINS)

Briefly share some information about your local MP (who they are, their personal and family situation if you know it, their party, their particular issues of interest). Pray positively for them, focussing on two areas:

- Their personal life, health, family life, and workload (MPs frequently identify work and stress and their top personal prayer need);
- Their work as a politician, for wisdom, and that they would be a Godly influence.

If your MP is known to be a Christian, pray for boldness as a witness in parliament. If not, pray that they will come to know Christ for themselves! If they have a record of opposing Christian values, use Luke 6: 27-36 to guide your prayers.



PRAYER FOR CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES (10 MINS)

Briefly share about one or two political issues for which you have found newspaper articles or information from the internet (see the 'information resources' section).

Now spend time praying into these issues, praying that God's will would prevail and for the individuals whose lives are affected.

Remember that you are here to pray for the issues, not debate them! Be aware that not all Christians share the same political views. Don't allow individuals with a strong opinion to 'take over', as this can destroy unity in prayer (Matt 18: 19-20).



PRAYER FOR YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS (10 MINS)

Councillors represent you on local issues like roads, planning, education, and public services.

Each area ('ward') typically has up to 3 Councillors. Most of them are unpaid apart from small allowances.

Share the names of your Councillors, and any information that you have been able to find out about them. Thank God for the service that they perform, and pray for each of them individually (along similar lines to those described for your MP above).



PRAYER FOR CHRISTIANS INVOLVED IN POLITICS (10 MINS)

Christians can and do get involved in politics in lots of different ways: through campaigning organisations, as churches seeking to have a positive influence at local level, and as individual politicians and public servants. Please pray for:

- The work of one Christian campaigning organisation you have identified;
- Your local churches and church leaders, that their words and actions would be visible and effective (Matt 5: 13-16);
- For Christians working in politics or public service, especially those known to you personally.



FINAL ACTIVITY: WRITE TO ENCOURAGE YOUR MP (10 MINS)

Send a greeting card to your local MP. In the message you should:

- Thank them for the work that they do representing your local area;
- Let them know that you have been praying for them.

Try and keep it simple, and don't use 'Christian jargon' that the recipient may not understand. Avoid the temptation to make any points about current political issues. It is best to do this separately by letter or email. Get everyone in the group to sign it. You do not have to give a contact address, but if you do you will probably get a reply.

You could also do the same for your local Councillors if you have time. It is unusual for elected representatives to receive simple thanks and encouragement (and sadly, Christians have sometimes been the worst offenders in this regard), so a gesture like this can really make an impact on them!

the 7-day personal prayer guide

DAY 1

PRAYER FOR YOUR LOCAL MP

MPs are our elected representatives; they are also human beings with high pressure jobs, families, hopes, dreams, and concerns. Pray for your MP (and their family) that God would bless them and use them to be a blessing, both locally and in their work in parliament.

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority..." (1 Timothy 2: 1-2)

DAY 2

PRAYER FOR OUR PARLIAMENT

We are fortunate to live in a free democratic society which rests on broadly Christian foundations. Give thanks for this freedom, and pray that Christian MPs will grow in numbers and influence across all of the political parties.

"By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth." (Proverbs 8: 15-16)

DAY 3

CHRISTIANS WORKING IN GOVERNMENT

Christians working in the political parties and the civil service can have a strong positive influence on policies and public services. Pray that God will strengthen them to be a faithful servant and witness in their work place, and a voice that is willing to speak up at the right time.

"And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

(Esther 4: 14)

DAY 4

PRAYER FOR POLITICAL LEADERS

Political leaders matter, both for the power they exercise and the moral direction that they bring to the nation (for better or worse). Pray for our Prime Minister and the cabinet, that they would show wisdom, character and integrity, serving and leading in a Godly way.

"He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning." (Daniel 2: 21)

DAY 5

PRAYER FOR YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Many local councillors serve their communities faithfully with little thanks! For some this is also a 'route in' to other political roles. Give thanks for the work of your local council, and ask that God would use them to help bring peace, prosperity, righteousness, and hope to your 'city'.

"Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city... Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." (Jeremiah 29: 7)

DAY 6

PRAYER FOR POLITICAL ISSUES

Political decisions affect key biblical issues like justice for the poor, the moral character of the nation, and freedom to proclaim the gospel message. Pray for effective Christian presence and influence in political debate, and for laws and policies which reflect God's word and wisdom.

"And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?" (Deuteronomy 4: 8)

DAY 7

PRAYER FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Local churches make up by far the largest voluntary and community organisation in Britain, but we often fail to use the voice this gives us wisely or effectively. Pray that churches in your area will recognise the political realm as a 'mission field' and rise up together in prayer and action.

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?... You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden." (Matthew 5: 13-14)

ORGANISING AND RUNNING A CONTINUOUS PRAYER EVENT

The bible gives us a clear command to 'Pray for rulers and those in authority' (1 Timothy 2: 1-2). In a time where huge issues are resting on the shoulders of our political leaders, we probably need to take this a bit more seriously than a quick 'God please bless the Prime Minister'!

We'd like to challenge you to consider taking a 'step of faith' and organising something slightly more stretching than a traditional prayer meeting (although that would be great too!) You might want to consider:

- A 'night of prayer', running say from 8pm until midnight;
- A 24-hour prayer watch, perhaps from Friday to Saturday lunchtime;
- Dedicating a whole week to 7 days of 24 hour continuous prayer.

Sounds impossible? It isn't! Since 1999, literally thousands of groups have taken up the challenge to hold a week of continuous prayer in response to the 24-7 prayer movement (www.24-7prayer.com). These have taken place in a variety of locations and settings, involving groups both large and small, and God has showed up in some remarkable ways.

HOSTING A SEASON OF 24-7 PRAYER

If you are considering running a 24-7 or even a 24-1 prayer event for the first time, it can all feel a bit daunting. Do not worry; help is at hand! The team at 24-7 Prayer UK have put together a guide packed with loads of advice and ideas specifically aimed at groups who are new to running these kind of prayer events. You can obtain a free copy by emailing uk@24-7prayer.com or by calling 0203 167 4831 and asking for 'Connect – how to run a 24-7 prayer room'.

ORGANISING A 'NIGHT OF PRAYER'

If you decide to hold a 'night of prayer' style event, you might like to consider the 'prayer concert' format which is often used for the annual Global Day of Prayer. This is a bit more like a 'conventional' church meeting (in whatever style you are accustomed to), but normally without the sermon or teaching and with a much stronger focus on collective prayer. Some elements that you may wish to include:

- Praise and worship times (we often find that worship inspires prayer and vice versa);
- Corporate prayer (everyone together);
- Prayer breaking down into smaller groups or pairs/triplets;
- Use of audio and video material;
- Testimonies from (and prayer for) individuals involved in these areas;
- Invited guests (you may be surprised that local politicians or representatives of public services are often willing to come along to Christian events, especially if the focus is clearly on thanking them, encouraging them, and praying for them);
- Room for the creative arts (dance, drama, music, poetry, visual arts, prophetic acts, film, photography, writing; the list is endless!);
- Refreshments – people will probably need them! (unless you decide to fast together, which can also be very powerful)

TOPICS FOR PRAYER

We often find that people ask 'what will I pray about for a whole hour?' In practise, once they get into the atmosphere of prayer with loads of visual and practical aids to encourage them, it rarely turns out to be a

problem. But to help the prayer flow and to encourage the sense of unity that comes from having a shared focus, you may find it helpful to provide some of the following:

- The '1 hour prayer meeting plan' (pages 5-6), which can be adapted for use as a personal prayer pattern for an hour in a 24-7 prayer room, or as the subject for some of the sections of a night of prayer.
- The bible verses and prayer pointers from the 'personal prayer guide' (see page 7).
- Information resources & news items. Your local and national newspapers will be full of stories that have a political dimension and need our prayers. There are a number of Christian organisations working in this field who can provide news and topical information; you can find some of their details in the 'resources' section below.
- Names and as many details as you can find about: your local MP and councillors; national and international political leaders and situations; local churches and their involvement in the community; Christian organisations who are active locally and nationally; Christians known to you who are involved in politics or public service (don't forget people like teachers, police, health workers, trade unionists – there may be more than you think!).

Feel free to be creative, and allow opportunities for everyone to contribute themes rather than assuming that it all has to come from 'the leaders'. Above all, create space and time to allow the Holy Spirit to speak in whatever way He chooses to do so. Truly effective prayer happens when we respond to God's initiatives rather than asking Him to bless ours!

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following web links will help you to get hold of the information that you need to pray effectively for your local politicians, find out about national issues, and loads more!

YOUR LOCAL ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

- To find out the names and contact details of your local MP, Councillors, Euro-MPs, and regional assembly members, go to www.WriteToThem.com and enter your post code.
- To find out more about your MP, including their issues of interest, speaking and voting records, www.TheyWorkForYou.com is a great place to start (again, all you need to do enter a postcode).
- The majority of MPs (80-90% at the last count) have their own website. This will give you their own view of their work, often covering local issues as well as party ones. You can find it using a search engine, or there may be a link on www.TheyWorkForYou.com (above).
- Your local council website should have section on councillors, usually providing a picture and basic information and sometimes a short summary that they have written about themselves.
- Because elected politicians are public figures and often in the news, you can find out quite a lot about them by searching the internet. A suitable search would be their name followed by their role (eg: MP, MEP, councillor) and the name of their constituency or area. Thus a search for 'Gordon Brown MP Kirkcaldy' will give you a range of news items, official and unofficial sites, and biographies on the Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, Labour Member of Parliament for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath. The same method also works for local councillors and assembly members (but remember, not everything that you read on the internet is necessarily true, accurate, or fair!)

CHRISTIAN ORGANISATIONS AND ISSUES

One of the first places to go to for current issues is the local and national news (newspapers, TV, radio, and internet). Many of the stories that you will find here have a political dimension and urgently need our prayers!

In addition, there are a number of Christian organisations working in the area of Christian engagement in public and political affairs. A few of these are presented here (but you may well know of others):

- Theos (a Christian think-tank) provide a free media monitoring service (go to www.theosthinktank.co.uk and click on media monitoring).
- Tearfund are a charity who also campaign on issues which affect the poorest in society (such as international trade, development, and climate change). Visit www.tearfund.org/campaigning.
- CARE (Christian Action Research and Education) campaign on a range of subjects including bioethics and family related issues. Latest news and information at www.care.org.uk.
- The Evangelical Alliance (www.eauk.org) are active in helping Christians and Churches to positively influence the public life of our nation. Click on public theology or campaigns for more information.
- SPEAK is a campaigning organisation which brings students and young people together in prayer and action. To see current areas of focus, visit www.speak.org.uk.
- Premier Media (www.premier.org.uk) are a London-based radio station and media organisation who bring a Christian angle to current news stories. Click news to view their latest headlines.
- The Jubilee Centre (www.jubilee-centre.org) provide a range of more in-depth articles and papers on current political, economic, and social issues.
- Christians in Parliament (www.christiansinparliament.org.uk) host the annual Week of Prayer for Parliament and Government, and the National Prayer Breakfast.
- There are groups meeting for prayer, worship, and fellowship in most of the main government departments, co-ordinated by Christians in Government (www.ciguk-service.net/).
- The UK's 3 main political parties each have their own internal Christian groups. Visit www.thecsm.org.uk, www.ccfwebsite.com, and www.ldcf.net to find out more (or even to join!)

AND FINALLY...

There are loads of ideas to help you with prayer at www.24-7prayer.com. For free help and advice, you can call 24-7 UK on 0203 167 4831 or email uk@24-7prayer.com.

Don't forget to check in at www.susa.info for loads more resources and the latest on Christian engagement in parliament and government.

"Christians in Parliament are hugely grateful for the prayers of Christians across the country. I trust that these prayer resources will help you to pray in an informed and relevant way, and that together we can make a positive contribution to seeing our nation blessed and healed."

-Andrew Selous MP



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Phil Anderson is a leader within 24-7 Prayer, an international movement of prayer, mission, and justice. He has worked professionally as a consultant and project manager in Parliament and the Foreign Office. Phil also flies 'planes, writes books, and is part of a 24-7 Prayer 'boiler room' community in south Essex. He is married to Lisa and has 2 daughters.