



Pray for the Nation ~ INOI MO TE MOTU

Intercessors for New Zealand

105 Woodman Drive, Tawa, Wellington 5028, New Zealand

ifnz@xtra.co.nz www.Pray-for-the-Nation.org

APRIL 2018

“I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom.” (Matthew 26:29). “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.” (Luke 22:15-16). “This is My body that is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me. ... This cup is the New Covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

REMEMBERING – THE LAST PASSOVER OF JESUS, THE MESSIAH ... until He comes

ADORATION – praise and worship

“Therefore, God exalted Him, and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that ‘Jesus Christ is Lord’, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11).

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of His glory with rejoicing; to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power and authority, before all time, and now, and forever. Amen.” (Jude 24-25).

Also Hebrews 13:20-21 and Revelation 5:9-10, 12-13.

- Use these passages, and other similar ones, to praise and worship Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

CONFESSION – of Truth, and of sin

“If you confess with your lips that ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9-10).

“Everyone who confesses Me before others, I will also confess before My Father in Heaven.” (Matthew 10:32).

“If we confess our sins, He who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9).

- We need to confess our faith and love for the Lord; and that ‘Jesus is Lord’ – and Lord of our lives!
- We need to confess what we have done wrong, and what we have failed to do that we should have done; ask God’s forgiveness in Jesus’ name; and then thank Him for saving us from sin and its penalty.

THANKSGIVING – for all the Lord has done

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name.” (Psalm 100:4).

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it, with thanksgiving.” (Colossians 4:2).

“O give thanks to the Lord for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever.” (Psalm 136:1).

- Thank Jesus for all He did for us, through His life, death and resurrection, so that we can know God, and fellowship with Him.
- Thank God for our salvation; that we have been born again through the blood of Jesus Christ.
- Thank God for the many wonderful things He has done in your life, and also thank Him for prayers He has answered – and name a few!

SUPPLICATION – for our needs and the needs of others

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. ... I have learned to be content with whatever I have. ... My God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to His riches in glory, in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7, 11, 19).

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers and intercessions, with thanksgiving, be made for everyone.” (1 Timothy 2:1).

- Pray for those who do not yet know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour; or are not walking with Him.
- Pray for other people who you know are in need of God’s help, healing, provision, and so on.

Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry,
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry,
Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer!

Joseph Scriven (1820-86)

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

PRIORITIES

Some of our priorities, as Christians, should be as follows. **Please pray and reflect on each of these, and ask God what He wants to say to you about them:**

1. **Listening to God** – including reading and meditating on His Word, the Bible.
2. **Prayer** – fellowship or relationship with God.
3. **The Church** – the Body of Christ, with whom we fellowship, worship and support one another in our mutual Faith, and serve the people around us (and others we may not know; e.g., in other lands).
4. **Sharing the Faith** – God never intended that the faith He has given us should be kept to ourselves; we are to go and take the Good News to others. We need to pray for, seek after, and take up any opportunities we have, to share God's goodness, love and salvation.
5. **Other issues** – such as political issues, world events, moral issues, the needs in society, our concern for our world, etc. – in a sense these come next because unless we listen to God and get His direction and guidance; unless we pray; unless we actively support the Body of Christ; unless we share our faith; there will always be unsaved people around us, who will do whatever they like, because they do not believe in the God who can lead them, help them and empower them to change.

OUR PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER'S PRAYER from 1962 to 2017

Most people will know that late last year the Speaker of the House of Parliament, changed the words of the prayer which had been prayed in Parliament since 1962. He omitted the words "through Jesus Christ our Lord" in order to include people of every religion. In doing so, he removed the only name under Heaven and on earth, by which Almighty God (El Shaddai) will answer our prayers. [El Shaddai was the name by which the Lord revealed Himself to Abraham, in Genesis 17:1, about 4000 years ago]. Because the Speaker has refused to change his prayer, we are calling on all Christians and churches, from time to time, to *continue to pray the original prayer for our Members of Parliament and our Nation* [with the words in brackets slightly changed so that we can pray for our Government, rather than the Speaker praying as a representative of our Parliament.]

Please pray the original prayer for our country and our Government:

"Almighty God, Humbly acknowledging our need for Thy guidance in all things, and laying aside all private and personal interests, we beseech Thee to grant that we [all Members of Parliament] may conduct the affairs of this House [the House of Parliament] and of our country to the glory of Thy Holy Name, the maintenance of true

religion and justice, the honour of the Queen, and the public welfare, peace and tranquillity of New Zealand, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

- **Pray for** all Christian MPs, that they will serve the Lord and the people of Aotearoa New Zealand with God's wisdom; and care for all peoples in our land.
- **Pray for** all MPs, that they will lead our country in God's ways, according to *His* desire and will for us.

A TROUBLED WORLD

There are many things in the world that may deeply trouble Christians; in fact, most of these things also trouble people who are not Christians! Natural occurrences like earthquakes, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, drought, floods, famine, climate change effects, and so on; plus man-made things like violence, drug addiction, deteriorating moral standards, other ungodly things, wars and potential wars including the use of nuclear weapons, and so on. "But God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7). The world is full of disturbing and negative things that could happen, or are happening. But we must pray out of faith in the God Who controls all things, and trust in His judgements.

Pray that:

- Christians will not fear, but will pray in faith, and trust God in all things.
- Christians will rise up in prayer against all ungodliness.
- Christians will intercede for those people throughout the world who are afflicted by the above.
- Christians will use these things to talk with people who are not yet believers in Jesus, and seek to point them to Jesus, Who can save them (for time and eternity), and give them love, faith and hope in the midst of natural disasters and man-made evil.

OUR NATION'S WAYS

All of the following have been suggested; some are currently being debated and others have the potential to be adopted as well. **Please pray** over each of the following:

- **Euthanasia** – submissions on this bill are now being considered.
- **Abortion Act** – changes to this Act, which would take away the present restrictions on abortion.
- **National Anthem** – proposals to replace our national anthem ("God of nations ...") so that it either does not mention God, or becomes generic for all faiths.
- **Private schools** – the disestablishment of private schools, which would affect Christians schools too.
- **New Zealand flag** – the possible change of our flag, (which has both the cross on it, and the Southern Cross – which only God can change!) has already been discussed but so far has been rejected by Parliament.
- **Bible in Schools** – whether or not this will continue to be permitted.
- **Written Constitution** – the possibility of New Zealand becoming a Republic, independent of the British monarchy.



Passover, Atonement, and Communion

PASSOVER

Exodus 12:1-28 (and 12:43 – 13:10)

Passover = pass over, because God passed over the Israelite homes that had done what He told them to do, otherwise their firstborn would die (12:26-27).

During the Passover:

A year-old male lamb (or goat) was chosen on the 10th day of the first month of the year. It was examined, and if it was found to be perfect, it was killed on the 14th day of the first month, at twilight (around sunset – about the time Jesus died and was buried).

Its blood was put on the two doorposts and lintel of the Israelites' homes, using a branch of hyssop which represents cleansing (it was used as an antiseptic). E.g., David said, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Psalm 51:7)

The entrance to the home was therefore **covered** by the blood, so that the firstborn in the home did not die because God passed over them. (Most homes would have had only one door).

So, the covering of the home by the blood of an innocent/perfect young male lamb protected the Israelites from the death of their firstborn. Compare this with:

- **Adam and Eve** who tried to cover themselves with fig leaves, but God covered them with the skin of an animal (probably a lamb).
- **Abel's** sacrifice of a young lamb was accepted by God, but Cain's sacrifice of grain was not accepted by God.
- **Abraham** was about to sacrifice his son Isaac, when God showed him a male lamb, caught by its horns (head) in a thorn bush, which was sacrificed instead of, or in the place of, his own son. (Remember, Jesus was crowned with a crown of thorns! And was sacrificed/died instead of us, for our sins).

Unleavened bread, symbolising purity, was made without yeast/leaven, which was a fermenting agent and symbolised sin.

The lamb was roasted over a fire, and was then eaten with the unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs – the death, fire and bitter herbs symbolised the agony Jesus suffered for us.

As a result, Israel was saved from death, set free from slavery to the Egyptians, and destined to enter the Promised Land.

Jesus was the Lamb of God – tested as being perfect ("Who of you convicts Me of sin?" He asked (John 8:46). He was a young (about 33 years old) male – God's only begotten Son, who suffered, died and shed His blood so we could **live**, be **set free**, and **destined for the Promised Land** (Heaven).

Jesus ate bitter herbs:

- He went through agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Judas, one of His disciples, betrayed Him.
- Peter, a disciple very close to Jesus, denied three times that He knew Him.
- Many Jews rejected Him.
- Annas, a former High Priest; Caiaphas, the current High Priest; King Herod, the Jewish representative of Rome; and Pilate, the Roman Governor, all rejected Him.
- He was spat on, beaten, crowned with thorns, and nailed on a cross until He died.

The **unleavened bread** speaks of Jesus' sinless perfection. Jesus told His followers at the Passover, as they took the bread, "Take, eat. This is My body which is broken for you" (for our sins) – Matthew 26:26.

The **wine** speaks of Jesus' blood which was shed so that our sins were not only "covered", but forgiven, and we are *washed clean* from sin, fit for His perfect, Heavenly home. We do not have to die a spiritual death, but we have been set free to enter God's Promised Land – not on this earth, but the New Earth He will create.

Jesus said, "This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28).

NOTE:

The **Passover** lamb was chosen on the 10th day of the first month of the Jewish year, and the Passover was held on the 14th day.

The **Day of Atonement** was held on the 10th day of the seventh month – exactly 6 months later.

DAY OF ATONEMENT – Given *after* the exodus, and *after* the Law was given.

Leviticus 16 (and 23:26-32)

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the people chose two male goats. The High Priest cast lots, and one goat was chosen for the Lord.

The Lord's goat was the **sin offering**: its blood was taken by the High Priest into the Holy of Holies in the Tent or Temple, where the blood was sprinkled on the

Mercy Seat, (the top of the Ark of the Covenant). It was also sprinkled on the four corners of the altar of burnt sacrifice. The goat itself was then offered up as the **sin offering**.

The blood of this goat made atonement for the sins of the people.

The other goat was the **scapegoat**: The High Priest laid hands on the head of this goat, and confessed the sins of the people, over it. After atonement was made for the people's sins, it was set free in the wilderness – it was the "scapegoat".

NOTE: The High Priest first offered a young bull as a sin offering for himself, while Jesus didn't need to do this, as He had no sin.

The two goats were for (a) a sin offering for the people, and (b) a scapegoat that carried away the sins of the people. Jesus was both our sin offering, and also the Scapegoat Who carried away our sins.

- Compare this with the ram offered to the Lord by Abraham, while Isaac – who Abraham was going to sacrifice – was "set free" (Genesis 22:1-18).
- Compare this with Jesus, the Lamb of God, Who was offered up on the cross, as the sin offering, and carried away our sins for us, in order that we might be set free. He **atoned** for our sins.

Atone = at one. People who are separated from God by sin, or separated from one another, can be "reconciled" by repentance and forgiveness – so they are no longer separated, but united – "at one" with each other.

e.g., Reconciliation of a bank statement with deposits and withdrawals.

Our sin separates us from God. But Jesus' shed blood reconciles/unites/makes us one with God the Father.

Twice a year there is (1) **Passover**, and (2) **Atonement**, to remind us of what God has done:

- **Passover** – we are protected by the blood and saved from death, so that by the GRACE of God, we will not die; but be set free from bondage; and enter the Promised Land. *There is no mention of sins and forgiveness in the Passover.*
- **Atonement** – to remind us that when we repent and confess our sins, they are atoned for; and taken away by Jesus, our Scapegoat Who carries away our sins.
 1. We are "forgiven and cleansed" (1 John 1:9)
 2. Our "sins are removed from us as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12)
 3. They are "trampled underfoot; and cast into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19)
 4. They are "never to be remembered any more" (Jeremiah 31:34).

We are *reconciled* to God; *set free* from years of bondage and slavery to sin (as the Israelites were set free after 430 years in Egypt. Exodus 12:40-41); destined for the Promised Land – a land "flowing with milk and honey."

Hence we have "fellowship" – intimate relationship and friendship with God our Father – because of His Son Jesus, the Lamb of God, our Saviour, and the Light and Hope of the world.

- The message of the **Passover** is that by God's grace, we are: (1) saved from death by the blood of the Lamb, (2) set free, and (3) destined for the Promised Land.
- The message of the **Atonement** is that by God's grace, **if** we believe, repent and confess our sins, (1) Jesus (our Scapegoat) will take them away, (2) we will be forgiven and cleansed, and (3) have eternal life.

COMMUNION

Communion = common union/united together with God, through His grace and mercy.

So, **Communion = Passover + Atonement**.

1. God's **grace** is seen in His gift to us of *salvation* from death; we are set free from bondage; and destined for the Promised Land.
2. God's **grace** is seen in His *forgiveness* for sin, when, by faith, we **repent, ask** and **receive** forgiveness.

Both of these are by God's grace, and both of them are for us – eternally!

1 Corinthians 11:23-32

We need to examine our lives – the way we live – and act and think and speak (thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions), to see if there is anything which:

1. God will not tolerate (not **pass-over**)
2. Separates us from God (not **at-one**)
3. Breaks our fellowship with God (no **communion**)

So we:

1. Search our hearts and lives (Psalm 139:23-24)
2. Repent of, and confess all known sin (1 John 1:9)
3. Pray for God's cleansing and forgiveness (Psalm 51:7)
4. Thank Jesus for His body which He gave (symbolised by the bread), and His cleansing by His blood (symbolised by the cup). (Matthew 26:28)
5. ... and enjoy life with Him – abundant life – for ever and ever! (Matthew 26:29). **AMEN!**

QUESTION

What are the similarities and differences between the Passover, the Day of Atonement, and Communion?

Pray for the Nation, 105 Woodman Drive, Tawa, Wellington 5028, New Zealand

Weekly *Prayer Updates* can be found on our website: www.pray-for-the-nation.org/prayer-updates.php

This monthly *Prayer Letter* is also on our website: www.pray-for-the-nation.org/monthly-magazines.php