



Pray for the Nation ~ INOI MO TE MOTU

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Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.
(Ephesians 6:18)

Holy Spirit led prayer

How often do we, as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, think about, pray about and act by what we are told to do 'in the Holy Spirit'? The terms "in the Spirit" or "in the Holy Spirit" are used 14 times in the New Testament. The terms "with the Spirit" or "with the Holy Spirit" are used 24 times. The terms "by the Spirit" or "by the Holy Spirit" are used 46 times. For example, we are told to:

Be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18)

Pray in the Spirit (1 Cor 14:15; Eph 6:18; Jude 20)

Worship in the Spirit (Phil 3:3)

Sing in the Spirit (Eph 5:18).

Live by the Spirit (Rom 8:5; Gal 5:16, 25)

Be led by the Spirit (Gal 5:18)

Walk in the Spirit (Rom 8:4)

Jesus said "... wait for the promise of the Father ... John [the Baptist] baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit ... You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses ..." (see Acts 1:4-5, 8). How different the Church (including us) would be if we waited, prayed and did what we are told to do above!

- Lord, please help *me* to do what the Scriptures above tell me to do.
- Lord, help the *Church* and the churches to follow Your instructions, including the above.
- Fill *every Christian* with the fulness of the Holy Spirit so that we pray, live, are led, worship, sing and walk in the ways of God, and to the glory of God.
- Transform us all by the power of Your Spirit so that we are effective pray-ers and witnesses to You, in the needy and lost world around us.

Three major hindrances to the above are: **unbelief**; we are **too busy** with other things so that we do not put God and His ways first in our lives; and we are **too self-centred** to really care about other people and how our lives affect them.

- Lord, give me the faith to really trust You and Your Word, and to live accordingly. May my life and my

prayers bring glory and honour and praise to the Lord!

- Help me to give priority to You and your ways, and fit other legitimate things around them.
- Help me to love You with all my heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love other people in the way I love my self [and want others to love me!] Help me to pray and live accordingly.
- Help me not to make an idol out of worldly things but to fit them into my life in the right way.

How would Jesus pray?

Jesus said, "When you are praying, don't use vain repetition like the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Don't be like them, for your [Heavenly] Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray, then, like this ..."

Jesus then gave what is often called the *Lord's Prayer*, which includes worship and adoration; prayer for God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth; prayer for our daily needs; forgiveness for our sins; victory over temptation and the evil one. (Matthew 6:7-15).

In the light of the above words, when we are praying, one of the things that will help us to pray is to consider how Jesus might pray, in a similar situation. What does God see? What does God feel about the situation? How would Jesus pray? How did He pray when He was on earth? What did He teach about prayer? **Pray** that the Lord will inspire and lead your praying. Seek to pray what God gives you to pray. In your situation, what does it mean to say, "May God's Kingdom come. May God's will be [known and] done on earth [including what I am praying for or about] as it is done in Heaven."? Then seek to *pray, praise, worship, confess, give thanks or intercede*, as the Lord leads.

The above verses encourage us (or tell us!) to be led by the Holy Spirit in what we say and do; how we live and worship and pray. We need to ask God *how* we should pray, and pray for God's perfect and blessed will to be done in every situation. We may have our feelings or desire about what we want (or think) should be done, but we need to be led by the Spirit as we pray. Before He gave us the Lord's prayer, Jesus said, "Pray, then, in this way ..." (see Matthew 6:7-9).

In the matters for prayer mentioned below, let us pray that God will lead us as to how we should pray.

With the above in mind, please pray about the following issues: **Euthanasia** (a Bill about this is currently before our Parliament); **Abortion** (there is a proposal to repeal the current laws on abortion, making abortion totally a mother's choice ("right"), and a health issue, not a legal issue); **Marriage and marriage celebrant** issues (the number of marriages last year was about 25% of the number in 1973); **Gender identity** choices; **Pornography** on TV and the internet. These and other similar issues have been mentioned in recent *Family First* emails; see <https://www.familyfirst.org.nz/>

King Solomon prayed, "Give Your servant an understanding mind to govern Your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern Your great people?" (1 Kings 3:9). Our leaders need to *know* what is right; to *discern* between good and evil; and **choose to govern by what is right!**

Calling young people to prayer in Australia

A recent report, concerning the call to young people in Australia to pray, is very encouraging.

The following is about an Australian *National Day of Prayer and Fasting*. While it is for Australians, its concept, and prayer for young people, is something which is worth praying for here in New Zealand also.

A next generation prayer movement Zoom gathering will take place at 8pm (NSW time) on Tuesday 19th June 2018. The night will be devoted to raising up and encouraging the next generation of pray-ers in Australia and giving them a voice and a platform. The *World Prayer Council* defines 'The Next Generation' as the 15-35 year age group. The gathering is being organised by the *National Day of Prayer and Fasting* committee and is designed to try and reach more young people and alert them to all that is happening in prayer in our nation.

The night will be devoted to prayer and sharing the vision for a next generation prayer movement and spiritual awakening for our nation. During the night those gathered will divide into groups of between 6 and 10 people with each group being led by an older prayer warrior. The focus of the breakout room time will be on 50% discussion and 50% prayer. Each group will be asked two questions to be answered by each member of the group in order, led by the group facilitator. Those questions will be:

1. What is God's vision for the *Next Generation Prayer Movement* in Australia? How can you contribute to it?
2. How can we, as an older generation of prayer leaders, serve you as a younger person, to see the *Next Generation Youth Prayer Movement* raised

up in Australia? What are your ideas to best see this happen?

Everyone will then pray into the points raised in their group and then pray for each other. Each group leader will ask one of the youth prayer participants to take notes and give a 1 minute report when everyone comes back to the main group.

See www.nextgenprayermovement.com

While this date has now passed, it is a wonderful concept, encouraging the younger generation to pray for their nation, for young people, and what is happening in their country.

Pray for our young people

Let no-one despise your youth, but set the believers an example – in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12).

As we get older we realise that more and more, what our people need is for young people to be increasingly responsible for what happens in our society, and for its well-being. In the verse above, and the verses below, Paul gives some very wise instructions to the younger Timothy. His letters to Timothy were written just a few years before he was put to death. See 1 Timothy 6:11-12; 2 Timothy 1:6-7; 2:2 and 2:15; 3:16-17; 4:2 and 4:12.

We need to pray for our younger generation, as Paul prayed for Timothy and gave him some of his final words of wisdom and challenge.

We need to pray through the above seven Scriptures for young people (and older people too!) regarding the way we should live.

- **Especially pray for all young Christians** you know, that they will live according to what God says through these words; that their lives will be a Godly example to everyone around them – at school, at work, in their families, their church and society at large.
- **Pray** that God will call young people into His Kingdom – that they will be born again, filled with His Spirit and share the Gospel in the power of God's Spirit. God is establishing His Kingdom here on earth and He is calling young people to "Come! Follow Me!" **Pray** that they will hear and obey!
- **Pray** that they will be called to evangelism, missions (both here and overseas), including cross-cultural missions.
- **Pray for them** – that prayer amongst young people will increase; that God will lead them in prayer, how to listen to God, and how to pray (even praying for 'younger youth'!)

Whatever your age, please pray with and for these and other young people, for a passion for God and obedience to Him and His calling!



Pillars of Society

2. THE 2nd PILLAR: The Family

Why is the Family, the second pillar? Because of the strategic importance of the family in the life of every baby, child, teenager and young adult. We were born to live in families.

Right from the beginning God created a man and a woman, and they had children. The parents and the children were a family.

Tragically, many families do not live in the way God intended: a husband and wife, usually with children.

The main reason for families is that they provide mutual love and respect of one another, support, provision, encouragement, teaching and learning, protection and so on. The more families “break down”, the more this is going to be reflected in society and how it functions. This is why good, strong, healthy families are such an important pillar for good, strong, healthy societies.

See Ephesians 5:21 – 6:4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:1-8; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Parents

The role of father and mother are crucial to the family. The principal functions of love, provision, teaching, protection, discipline and upbringing in general, lie with the father and mother.

In Christian families, an upbringing in the knowledge and ways of God – the Father, Jesus His Son, and the Holy Spirit – should be fundamental to the way the family coordinates and functions together, as well as being an example and witness to the community.

Parents have an extremely important influence on the way children are brought up, for better or for worse. This is especially true when children are young. As they grow up into maturity they

will inevitably begin to make major decisions themselves about how they choose to live. This is why it is critical for parents to give a good, moral, responsible teaching and example to their children, so that they have a good foundation on which to build their lives. Of course, they may reject these ways, but then the responsibility is on them, if they have had a good and Biblical example in their childhood.

On the negative side, parents’ influence and behaviour also have an effect on their children – in some cases, even before they are born. Unhealthy practices, addictions (drugs, excessive alcohol, smoking), abuse, immorality and so on, can even affect the unborn child.

Sadly, in many homes, children are raised without their natural father and/or mother, for a variety of reasons, but this is not ideal. Many solo parents struggle to maintain their children in ways which are best for their welfare, besides the absence of their father and/or mother.

Children

Children should be seen as a blessing and privilege for parents, not a burden or hindrance to the parents’ desires. Psalm 127:3-5 says that “Children are a heritage from the Lord ...” Jesus said, “Let the children come to Me ...” (see Mark 10:13-16). He also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in Me, ...” (see Matthew 18:1-7).

Children are the future generation, after their grandparents and parents pass away. The future of the world ultimately depends on them and the ways they choose to follow. Will we set them a good and Godly example, or leave them to their own devices to get on as best they can in a world that is far from Godly? There is so much in the world today to lead them astray – addictions, immorality, violence, and so on. There are also Christian parents and churches who should be showing them the way to be a

blessing and Godly example of how we should live; plus the knowledge that this world is not the end – we are called to choose eternal life with the Lord God who made us.

Adults and elders

We have much to learn from older people – their knowledge, wisdom and experience (if we will listen to them and follow them) can be of great help to guiding younger people in their lives.

Sadly, there is often a great deal of disrespect or disdain for “oldies” and many younger people have to “learn the hard way” (if they learn at all). Also, the longer we develop and live the wrong ways, the harder it becomes to change.

However, there is a way to change! Not by human means, struggling and striving to be better, but by coming to Jesus and being filled with His Spirit in order that we may have the power to overcome the lusts of the flesh and the attacks of Satan, and learn to be followers of Jesus, His teachings, and the way He lived. Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who struggle and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” (Read Matthew 11:28-30).

Education

While education is not directly involved with the family, it becomes especially important as children grow up through school, college, and perhaps university. All of these have a strong effect on what young people believe and how they live their lives. And not only in formal education, but the vast amount of information – both good and bad – which influence our thinking and actions. We are bombarded daily by influences which “educate” us, for better or for worse, depending on whether we choose to follow what is good or go the way of the world. Good education and influences are those which encourage us to follow God’s ways – and these will bless us and our society!

Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up children in the way they should go and when they are old they will not depart from it.” “Training” is the key word – it involves both education or knowledge,

and the determination to follow what is right, with God’s help. Philippians 4:8-9 encourages us to think about, learn and practice those things which are true, honourable, just, pure, pleasing [to God], commendable, excellent and worthy of praise. How far we have fallen from these virtues!

FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

Gordon Copeland, a former United Future MP, listed six important principles concerning the Family (*Copeland’s Chronicle*, 29 Jan. 2004).

Principle 1: The family is the foundational unit that provides stability, well-being and continuity to our society.

Principle 2: Marriage between a man and a woman is the most deliberate approach to the establishment of a family and therefore society should promote and support it.

Principle 3: Commitment, stability and resilience are essential in marriages and all family relationships.

Principle 4: The family’s essential function is that of loving, caring for and nurturing all its members, recognising the need for an equality of well-being among them.

Principle 5: The interests of children are best served when they grow up in a happy, understanding, and safe home created by a loving mother and father supported by the extended inter-generational family/whanau.

Principle 6: Family membership requires a balancing of the rights, duties and responsibilities of each member.

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think about each of the above Principles?
2. Do you have any suggestions as to what other Principles could be added to this list?
3. Using the previous verses, summarise what Paul says about families and family relationships, and why they are so important to our society.
4. Sadly, many people live in situations which are far from the ideals mentioned above. How can we pray for them, and help them?

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