



## Pray for the Nation ~ INOI MO TE MOTU

Intercessors for New Zealand

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The LORD said, "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

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"Train up children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

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### The Family

**Note:** With regard to the above verse, the Proverbs are general principles for Godly living. Godly parents and families may still have some unregenerate and wayward children. This is not necessarily a reflection on the way they have raised their children. For example: The father of the prodigal son; and our Heavenly Father Who created us and loves us, but still needed to send His Son to bring us salvation and the ability to live Godly lives through His Spirit.

#### The family

The family plays an extremely important part in the bringing up of children, and the influences which help to mould their lives and give them direction towards adulthood and their responsibility for the way they live – for better or for worse. Tragically, the homes and families of a huge number of children are far from ideal, leading to major problems in the lives of children as they grow up. Wrong and dangerous influences are also all too common.

1. **We need to pray** against those influences which have a bad effect on their lives, and hence in the society in which they grow up and live.
2. **We need to pray**, conversely, for good influences in society which will help bring them up to be good citizens – the prime influences being a good Christian upbringing, a genuine conversion to Christ, and living God's way.
3. **We also need to pray** for a number of good organisations, especially Christian ones, which endeavour to help families and individuals grow in the right ways, and so help to produce good societies in which the moral and spiritual "climate" is a good one and not a bad, destructive and ungodly one.

One such organisation is *Family First*, which in the past four months has featured the following issues in their emails: Marriage celebrants' freedom to refuse to marry same-sex 'couples', euthanasia, abortion, prison rates, motherhood, sexual exploitation, gender identity, drugs, pornography, and child abuse. See [www.familyfirst.org.nz](http://www.familyfirst.org.nz)

Some other organisations are:

Focus on the Family [www.family.org.nz](http://www.family.org.nz)

Family Life: [www.familylife.org.nz](http://www.familylife.org.nz)

The Parenting Place: [www.theparentingplace.com](http://www.theparentingplace.com)

- **Please pray** for these organisations and all they seek to do for the betterment of society through the encouragement of what is good and right, and for people's lives to be changed by the Lord so that they contribute to their families and our society in beneficial ways.
- **Please continue to pray** for the issues mentioned in the *Family First* emails, listed above.
- **Please pray** for many parents who struggle to raise their children, because of rebellious or problem children, or poverty, or because they are separated or divorced from their children's father or mother; for solo parents, and so on.
- **Praise God** for every Christian home; for Godly parents who lead their children in God's ways; for children who honour their parents and are a blessing to them.
- We must never forget the subtle ways the enemy will try to deceive and tempt us – personally and as families, because he knows these are key ways to destroy us and those around us. But we have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ – in His name and power we can defeat every temptation the enemy would set before us. *Praise God for this!*
- **Ultimately**, for all of us, the answer to all these issues is for people to turn to the Lord in repentance and to be born again by His Spirit. To love, and obey the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love others as we love ourselves. For this we need the power of the Holy Spirit to lead us and empower us to do God's will, for the glory of God and the blessing of our society. **Please pray** for these things too, and for every Christian who seeks to live this way.

### CHILDREN'S COMMISSION

The Children's Commission is a government body whose role is to bring different perspectives together to tackle child poverty, standing against bullying, and building the future of education, in our country. The Commissioner for this body is Judge Andrew Becroft, a Christian. In the past two years:

- Seventeen-year-olds are now included in the youth justice system, allowing them to be held to account, but also have their needs and underlying causes of offending addressed.
- The Families Package, effective since 1 July, will help many New Zealand children get more of the everyday things they need to thrive.
- Looking further ahead, we have the prospect of child poverty reduction legislation, and with it the chance to aim high for child well-being.

In a media release, the Prime Minister said, “As part of the Child Poverty Reduction Bill the Government will develop a Child Wellbeing Strategy that outlines how children’s overall wellbeing will be improved. ... Today we’ve begun the crucial process of listening to children and young people, and those with a stake in their lives, to begin developing the strategy.” [Government media release 24 May 2018]

**Five top priorities** that were set last year were:

1. Achieving better outcomes for tamariki Maori [Maori children] – culturally responsive policies and services to enhance the mana of tamariki.
2. Helping build and monitor Oranga Tamariki [children’s living] – involving care and protection, and youth justice system.
3. Encouraging government agencies and NGOs to be more child-centred.
4. Improving children’s engagement in education.
5. Improving Youth Justice.

Some of our children face unacceptable levels of abuse, neglect, and violence, and the rates of relative child poverty and material disadvantage are profoundly concerning. A 2016 Child Poverty Monitor technical report showed about 8% of our children face severe poverty and material hardship.

See [www.occ.org.nz](http://www.occ.org.nz) for further details, or contact the Office of the Children’s Commissioner to receive their newsletters [children@occ.org.nz](mailto:children@occ.org.nz)

**Please pray** over the many issues referred to above, including the Commissioner and his staff, and for a very vital and valuable contribution to children’s welfare in all areas. Children are the new generation of our country and deserve the very best help we can put into their lives.

## **LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER** – the sign of our discipleship

While speaking of His ascension into Heaven, Jesus said to His disciples, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples [Christians; followers of Christ], if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

An old chorus, based on the above verses, says:

*They will know we are Christians – by our love,  
by our love.*

*They will know we are Christians – by our love.*

Easier said than done! But essential, if we are to be true disciples of the One Who laid down His life for us! Most of us live in reasonably easy and pleasant circumstances, but there are many people who don’t. None of us individually can do everything, but we can pray for the following people, and the many churches, Christian organisations, secular organisations and our government, and support them in what they do.

**Please pray for people who are:**

- **Home-less** – desperately needing a decent place to live.
- **Help-less** – needing help because of age, illness, or other disabilities.
- **Hope-less** – those who have no hope; those who are depressed and can find no answers to their struggles.
- **Health-less** – those who have severe health needs and may have been struggling for years with health issues.
- **Lost-ness** – people who are lost in the sense that they continually do not know where they are going in life; they see no future; and also those people who have not yet come to the Lord and have no saving knowledge or faith for the life to come.
- **Lonely-ness** – Those people who have few, if any, loving, caring and reliable friends.

When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like *sheep without a shepherd*. Then He said to His disciples (us!), “The harvest is plentiful, but *the labourers are few*; therefore *ask the Lord of the Harvest* to send out labourers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:36-38)

**Pray for labourers:** The Harvest is huge, and the need for labourers (helpers; workers) is also huge, therefore ***ask the Lord of the Harvest*** to send out labourers into His harvest.

To the best of our ability, we need to: Pray for one another; Support one another; Encourage one another; Provide for one another; Help one another; and Love one another!

**Pray** for all individuals, and organisations, and our government as they seek to help people in need.

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## **Did you know ...?**

Some of the books of Bible Studies which *Pray for the Nation* has published over the years, are available FREE. Most of them are available in printed form; some (including recent books) can be downloaded and printed.

See our website:

[www.pray-for-the-nation.org/bible-study-books.php](http://www.pray-for-the-nation.org/bible-study-books.php)



## *Pillars of Society*

### 3. THE 3rd PILLAR: The Church

The Church should be one of the strongest influences on society that there is, after the Lord Himself, and the influence of parents on their children – an influence which should teach their children right from wrong; encourage good character, honesty, and so on.

Because the Church is the Body of Christ and has been given the Word of God to instruct its members, and the power of God's Holy Spirit to live lives that are pleasing to God, based on His Word, there should be a strong influence in society to see it changed for the better by the lives and witness of God's people.

Sadly, this is often not the case. In many cases the lives of Christians are very similar to those of the world around them; in fact so similar that the world doesn't see much or any difference, and so they have little or no desire to change for the better.

The government can make laws (or allow behaviour) which are not in the best interests of a country. But almost the only way a government enforces its laws is by punishing those who break the law, if they can catch them and succeed in getting a conviction. The powers of government have no ability to change character or provide the means by which a person can be reformed to be the person God wants them to be. Only God can do that, through a person's repentance, forgiveness and the power of God's Spirit at work in the lives of a born again person who follows the Lord and His ways.

This is why the Church, through the teaching, encouragement and support of its members, can be a strong pillar in society for truth and Godly living – provided this is taught by word and by example, in the churches.

The Bible says a number of important things about those who are willing to follow the Lord, and the blessings such people bring to a nation.

#### **For example:**

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." (Psalm 33:12). We may pray, "God defend New Zealand", but our nation has many gods, and, in practice, many people don't believe in any god.

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach (shameful) to any people." (Proverbs 14:34).

"If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked way, then I will hear from Heaven, and forgive their sins, and *heal their land.*" (2 Chronicles 7:14). God's people need to live in the above ways, if we are to see our land healed.

"First of all, then, I urge that supplication, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life, in all godliness and dignity. This is right and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, Who desires everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

"Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you ... and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." (Jeremiah 29:7).

#### **The LORD and His Church**

After Peter had confessed that Jesus is 'the Messiah, the Son of the living God', Jesus said, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father in Heaven. You are Peter (which means, a stone) and on this rock I will build My Church

and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:15-18)

The Church is built on the Rock foundation (not on sand), and it is built with strong pillars. Therefore it should have a Godly influence on, and in, society.

God is building His Church, here on earth and in every society, and the gates of Hades (death) will never destroy it. However, sometimes people try to build the churches their way, not the Lord’s way.

The New Testament tells us not only how we can be saved, but also how we, as Christians, should gather together for worship, fellowship, teaching, encouragement, and reaching out to people by witnessing to the Lord, and with the evidence of our changed lives, through what we say and do.

The Church is a body of people (not a building!) In the Church and in Christian’s lives, the power and presence of God should be evident.

This is summed up in Colossians 1:28, “It is He (Christ) Who we proclaim, warning everyone, and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”

And from all this, the Church is to go out into the community, sharing the Good News, encouraging what is good and Godly; living our lives as ‘salt’ and ‘lights’ to the world.

On one occasion, when Jesus saw what was going on amongst the people in the temple as they gathered together (money changers, the buying and selling of animals, etc), He said, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a House of Prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” (Mark 11:17).

### **A House of Prayer**

The first century Church were a praying people; they also saw many miracles and the power of

God at work amongst them. The Church – the Body of Christ on earth – is to be a praying people. See 2 Chronicles 7:12-18; Jeremiah 29:7; 1 Timothy 2:1-6; James 5:13-18. Prayer is mentioned 158 times in the New Testament! Prayer draws its power from the Lord, the Head of the Church.

### **God’s People**

In the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12), Jesus mentions nine particular groups of people who are blessed:

- The poor in spirit – theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Those who mourn – they will be comforted.
- The meek – they will inherit the earth.
- Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness – they will be filled.
- The merciful – they will receive mercy.
- The pure in heart – they will see God.
- The peacemakers – they will be called the children of God.
- Those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake – theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Those who are reviled, persecuted and lied about on Jesus’ account – their reward in Heaven is great.

**Church – Arise!** “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to Your Father in Heaven!” (Matthew 5:16).

### **QUESTIONS**

1. In what ways is the Church an *influence for good* in today’s society? (Proverbs 29:2)
2. In what ways is the Church a *benefit* to society? (Proverbs 11:10-11)
3. In what ways is, or should, the Church be a *light and salt* in the world? (Matthew 5:13-16)
4. Is the Church really *relevant* in society today?
5. To what extent is the Church truly a “*House of Prayer*”?
6. Do people today see or believe that the Church is a *pillar in society* for the benefit of our people? Why or why not?

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Weekly *Prayer Updates* can be found on our website: [www.pray-for-the-nation.org/prayer-updates.php](http://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](http://www.pray-for-the-nation.org/monthly-magazines.php)