



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)

SEPTEMBER 2018

O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever.
O give thanks to the God of gods, for His steadfast love endures forever.
O give thanks to the LORD of lords, for His steadfast love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1-3)

Praise God for His goodness to us!

We who live in Aotearoa New Zealand have much to thank the Lord God for, so this time we will do so!

- **God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things**

Because of people's sinfulness, there is rebellion against God; there is unbelief in the Lord and His creative power; there is a refusal to believe in the goodness of God; and there is also the worship of false gods and demons. It is not surprising that a fallen, sinful world is beset by disasters and problems – all of which God is able to overcome if only we would call on His name, repent and ask for His forgiveness, salvation, healing; and for His divine intervention in the affairs of our land.

Psalm 136:4-9 says that God alone does great wonders – He did, He does, and He always will do. He created the heavens; He spread out the earth on the waters; He made the sun, the moon and the stars. *Is anything too hard for God?*

Praise God for the amazing things He has made – all creatures great and small; as well as the heavens, the earth and all good things which He has provided for us.

Praise God for the beauty of our land which He has given us, with all its provisions and blessings.

Praise God for the relative peace, unity, and prosperity we have through Him; and for His watching over us with love and care. We are a very blessed people!

Praise God for His longing to be part of our lives; to help us, provide for our needs and answer our prayers as we pray for His perfect and loving will for us – individually and as a nation.

Praise God for His great love for people who do not yet know Him, and for His longing that they will come to Him for salvation ("God so loves the world..." – John 3:16)

- **God is our Protector, Deliverer and Provider**

As well as creating us and all that is around us, God can protect us from harm and defend us from everything (human and demonic) that would seek to attack and defeat us. There is victory in Christ, and even though difficult times, sickness and other things come against us, we need to: "Trust in the Lord with all our heart and not rely on our own understanding. In all our ways acknowledge Him and He will direct our paths. Commit our way to the Lord and He will bring it to pass."

Psalm 136:10-25 speaks of Israel in the days of Moses. They were in bondage in Egypt, delivered from bondage, miraculously passed through the Red Sea, went through a wilderness for 40 years, defeated kings and given the Promised Land as their heritage. Difficult times (to put it mildly!) – but protected, delivered and with the Lord as our Provider – in spite of everything. In His steadfast love, God remembered them, rescued them and gave them all they needed.

Praise God for His protection over us and deliverance from evil, as a nation and personally.

Praise God for His faithfulness and that His hand is in every miracle we see. When all else fails – God is able to keep us from falling.

Praise God for the inheritance He has given us in this land; and that we as Christians are part of God's Kingdom *now*, and will be *forever!*

Pray for our nation, that we will continue to be a blessed nation if we follow the Lord and His ways.

Pray that God will help us – those who know, love and follow the Lord – to share with others, the good things God has so generously given to us, including salvation, so that they also can enjoy the wonderful things of God.

**"O give thanks to the God of Heaven,
for His steadfast love endures forever!"**
Psalm 136: 26

CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY

For those who are rich – that is, have more than enough to live on – it is easy to occasionally think of the poor, and even pray for them, but still do little about helping the poor. Jesus said, “you can show kindness to them whenever you wish”. The Christians in Macedonia and Achaia were “pleased to share their resources with the poor”. Paul was “eager to remember the poor” – not just remember, but to do something about it!

Christians Against Poverty www.capnz.org is one organisation seeking to do something about poverty. There are many churches and other Christian agencies also helping the poor, as well as government and other agencies. “You will always have the poor with you”, but we can do something about it, including praying for them. If you look at the CAP statistics on their home page, you will see what they have achieved so far, including 976 commitments to Christ (81 this year, so far!)

Apart from helping wherever and whenever you can, **please pray:**

- For those people and families on low incomes, who struggle to live financially. Pray for wisdom as to how to budget, and ways to obtain help.
- Pray that money will not be wasted or spent on cigarettes, drugs, alcohol and other things which are not helpful, and in some cases are harmful to the way they should live. (This also applies to some people and families who are not poor!)
- Pray for children who have inadequate food, clothing, warm and healthy homes, good education and protection.
- Pray for the elderly, that they will ask for, and receive, help where this is needed. Pray for the people who look after them.
- Pray for all Christian organisations, churches, individuals and our government, who are seeking to help those in need.

DIVERSITY

Increasingly, nations are becoming more and more diverse – racially (and hence an increase in the number of languages being spoken), spiritually, morally and culturally. While this is not necessarily a “bad” thing, it can cause a number of problems. Racial tensions, intolerance and prejudice can increase. Spiritual diversity increases – other religions become more predominant, and occultic practices become more “acceptable”. Morally, what is right and wrong become more confused – usually with a decrease in good moral living. Culturally, while increasingly diverse, this may or may not influence the nature of society in a beneficial or harmless way.

As Christians, we should love all people. We should also **pray for:**

- People who are immigrants and refugees to our country.
- Situations which may be harmful to our society – increased racial and inter-racial tensions, hatred, discrimination, violence, etc.
- The increasing blurriness between the Christian faith, and other religions, other religious philosophies, including atheism (Godlessness).
- The merging or blurring of truth with error (“alternative truth”, etc.); right and wrong (in God’s eyes and in His Word), God and paganism, etc.

It is interesting to note that the Israelites were, and Christians are, called to be a separate people, not “unequally yoked” to the world around them.

PRISONER ... OR FREE? The real cause of our high jail numbers

In an excellent article in the *Dominion Post* (24 July 2018), Garth McVicar, Founder of the Sensible Sentencing Trust www.sst.org.nz says “We reap what we sow” [a saying based on Galatians 6:7-8 “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.”] He goes on to say (regarding crime and punishment) that “we are worried by what we’re reaping and not enough by what we’re sowing.” He goes on to talk about “the traditional family – a stable family unit; two parents and the children they bring into a loving cherished relationship – where the child grows up being taught right from wrong – and to become a law-abiding contributing citizen.” He then quotes figures to show how the drift from traditional family life to today’s situation affects crime rates. “The evidence is clear that a child needs a father who wants and loves them. This is the best way to raise a child to become a law-abiding contributing member of society.”

Please pray about crime in New Zealand; its causes and solutions. **Pray** that the government, our justice system, and society as a whole will encourage change, in ways that will reduce crime and produce a society where children and young people especially, will be taught by word and example, and encouraged by our whole justice system, to live in ways that will produce a better society – good “reaping” from good “sowing”.

The ultimate answer, of course, is people’s salvation and life-transformation by Jesus. **Pray** for this!

October Prayer Letter

PLEASE NOTE:

The October Prayer Letter may not be out until the end of the first week of October, sorry.



Pillars of Society

4. THE 4th PILLAR: AUTHORITY

All authority is ultimately in God's hands, as He rules over all. "The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His Kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19). This is wonderful to know! However, it doesn't exempt us from praying for the world around us (including our own nation) and doing what we can, to see it changed for the better!

As far as leaders are concerned, "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord, and He turns it wherever He will." (Proverbs 21:1). Again, this does not mean that we aren't part of what God may be doing.

After king Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the great statue, the Lord reveal to Daniel what it meant. Then Daniel prayed and said, "Blessed be the name of God from age to age, for wisdom and power are His. He changes times and seasons, deposes kings and sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. To You, O God of my ancestors, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and power, and have now revealed to me what we asked of You; for You have revealed to us what the king ordered." (Daniel 2:20-23). The vision Nebuchadnezzar had, involved his kingdom, the Medo-Persian empire which would follow, then the Greek and Roman empires, and then the end of these empires and the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth when Jesus came into the world to transform people's lives forever.

What an encouragement to know that as we seek God and are willing to be used by Him, there is a divine-human relationship that can affect changes in our lives, society, and the world.

Jesus said, "All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Me" (Matthew 28:18). Isaiah 9:6-7 also says, "Authority rests on His (Jesus') shoulders ...His authority shall grow continually ..."

Proverbs 29:2 says, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan."

We need to pray and work towards seeing righteous people in authority and not the wicked. We can all see, and have all seen, what wickedness can do in our world, and what a blessing Godliness is.

As well as the Lord being in supreme authority, there are also human authorities in various areas of our society. These include authorities in the: **Family, Church, Government** and its subsidiary departments, **Law and Justice, Employers**, and other institutions we choose to be a part of.

Family: In the family, children are to respect and honour their parents. The parents are also to love, teach, discipline and raise them in a God-honouring family. (See Ephesians 5:21 to 6:4).

Church: In the church we should honour one another and have respect for those who are in leadership in the church. See, for example, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and Hebrews 13:17.

Government: Specific references regarding secular Government in a country include Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Titus 3:1-2 and 1 Peter 2:13-17. There are also references to paying taxes (!) in Luke 20:21-25 and Romans 13:6-7. These verses imply good government, as distinct from ungodly laws, a corrupt government, or one which suppresses or is opposed to Christians living God's way. There may come a time when Christians will have to

say, “We must obey God rather than man”, when God’s laws conflict with the laws of the land (Acts 4:19-20, 27-31; 5:29). Praise God that many countries live under governments which are democratic and have basically good laws.

Ultimately, the best government is founded on God’s government and principles, but because we live in a fallen human world, and most of our people and leaders are not Christians, our government is imperfect. Christians should always encourage what is good and the ways of God, but there will always be laws which permit or forbid certain ways of living. Christians are free to do what is right in God’s eyes; in a sense non-Christians can “do what they like” but may suffer the consequences, even if they are not caught breaking the laws of the land. We, Christians, as disciples or followers of Jesus, seek to obey the Lord and His ways – and receive His blessings as a result.

An interesting parallel between ways Christians are called to live, and the ways of a secular country is as follows:

Church	State
Christian	Secular
The Lord	Rulers
Spiritual law	Moral law

Christians live in a **State**, with **Secular** laws; under **Rulers** (whoever is the highest authority – King, Queen, President, etc); and with the **Moral** law. But Christians also live under the ultimate authority of the Lord – the King of kings – and under His spiritual laws, as well as living under the secular and moral laws of their country.

We therefore need to be subject to those in authority over us, except where this conflicts with God’s rule, in which case “we must obey God” rather than a secular rule which prohibits this.

Christians also need to be salt and light in the world and society in which we live, and, as

Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before people that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

Law and Justice: Because of the separation of Justice from government (that is, justice as the implementation of the Law, and punishment for those who break the Law). Justice should not be interfered with, by whatever Government is in power. Justice has the role of enforcing *the Law as it stands* (which may, of course, be altered by the Government from time to time). The Justice system (the Law Courts and judges) therefore have a very important role in enforcing the authority of the country’s Laws. Good laws should encourage people to do what is right and discourage (punish), those who do what is wrong.

Employers and other organisations: Finally, other areas of authority include the authority of the leaders of whatever business we work for, and any other organisation we belong to which has rules of membership.

In Ephesians 6:5-9, today, the “slaves–masters” relationship should be seen as the equivalent of the “employees–employers” relationship!

QUESTIONS

1. To what extent does God rule over the affairs of nations, and to what extent does He allow them to do what they choose? (God’s dealing with nations, including Israel, in Old Testament times, may help answer this question).
2. What do we mean when we refer to a good (or bad) government?
3. What influence does the Church have in society today? What influence *should* it have?
4. In what ways should parents have a good influence over their children?
5. How do the Church, Christians, the Lord and spiritual laws relate to the State, secular society, rulers and moral laws?
6. What are some ways in which good authority operates, and what are some ways in which bad authority operates?

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