



## 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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Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came so that you may have life and have it abundantly" – in all its fulness. (John 10:10)

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### Jesus wept

Lazarus had died, and even though Jesus knew he would come to life again, when Jesus saw Mary weeping and the others with her, "He was greatly disturbed in His Spirit and deeply moved". When they showed Jesus where his body lay, **Jesus wept**. (John 11:33-36). Jesus knows what we go through when we are robbed of even life itself. He so loves and understands, that He joins us in our sorrow and grief, and Jesus wept!

On 15 March in Christchurch, a man shot dead 50 people, and injured 50 others, 12 of whom were critically injured. This incident has shocked our nation, and indeed, other nations throughout the world.

**James 4:7-9**, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. ... Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into heaviness."

**Romans 12:14-16**, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another."

### Prayer

Now is the time to weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn – and to intercede for all who have been affected by this tragic event:

- The families and friends of all who have been killed or wounded.
- Those involved in the tragedy: those who witnessed the events; police, ambulance and hospital staff and others.
- Those still in hospital, especially those in critical condition, and those who will suffer from injuries for the rest of their lives.

- People suffering from trauma and fear; and those who feel hatred, bitterness or revengeful.
- The perpetrator of this massacre, and his family.
- That somehow God will bring good out of evil; for God's protection from such violence and tragic deaths in the future; and there will not be threats of revenge and retribution.

### Our National Anthem

Suddenly the words of our National anthem take on a new relevance and urgency to ...

#### Pray for the Nation!

1. God of nations at Thy feet  
In the bonds of love we meet  
Hear our voices we entreat  
God defend our free land.  
Guard Pacific's triple star  
From the shafts of strife and war  
Make her praises heard afar  
God defend New Zealand!
2. Men of every creed and race  
Gather here before Thy face  
Asking Thee to bless this place  
God defend our free land.  
From dissention, envy, hate  
And corruption, guard our State  
Make our country good and great  
God defend New Zealand!
3. Peace not war shall be our boast  
But should foes assail our coast  
Make us then a mighty host  
God defend our free land.  
Lord of battles in Thy might  
Put our enemies to flight  
Let our cause be just and right  
God defend New Zealand!

4. Let our love for Thee increase  
May Thy blessings never cease  
Give us plenty, give us peace  
God defend our free land  
From dishonour and from shame  
Guard our country's spotless name  
Crown her with immortal fame  
God defend New Zealand!

5. May our treasures ever be  
Freedom's ramparts on the sea  
Make us faithful unto Thee  
God defend our free land.  
Guide her in the nation's van  
Preaching love and truth to man  
Working out Thy glorious plan  
**God defend New Zealand!**

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**Nine days** before the above-mentioned horrific events took place, our weekly *Prayer Update* contained the following:

**God's Word for this week ...**

*Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him. Don't worry about those who prosper in their way but carry out evil deeds. ... The wicked will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD will inherit the land.* (Psalm 37:7, 9)

**DON'T WORRY ... "be still!"**

When we see and hear terrible things that are going on in the world, or in our own country, we need to continue to trust in the Lord – **be still** before Him and wait patiently for Him to act. God can be very patient for evildoers to change their ways, but in His time, He will act and bring them to an end. Every evil regime; every evil leader or movement will be brought to its end. **"Be still** and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:10) – whatever happens, the Lord is still King of kings and Lord of lords; He has the final say and will judge all things. In the Psalmist's amazingly prophetic words (Psalm 107:23-30) – fulfilled by Jesus when with His disciples in a boat on the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:35-41) – the Psalmist said, "They cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out from their distress. He made the storm **be still**, and the waves of the sea were hushed." (Psalm 107:28-29). The word "seas", in the Bible, is sometimes used to symbolise the nations. In the words of the hymn:

*"Are we weak and heavy laden,  
burdened with a load of care?  
We should never be discouraged –  
take it to the Lord in prayer!"*

**Let us wait on the Lord in prayer**, for the areas in which we may be troubled, and see storms brewing, or troubles occurring:

1. In our own personal lives –
2. In our families –
3. Amongst our friends –
4. In our church –
5. In our city –
6. In our nation – e.g., immorality, poverty, crime, violence, suicide, mental issues.
7. Throughout the world – e.g., terrorism, poverty, famine, disasters (hurricanes, fires, extreme heat or cold, volcanic eruptions)

*[In numbers 1 to 5 above, pray over issues that are relevant to you and your situations]*

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In times of crisis like the above shootings, all sorts of thoughts and emotions arise: anger, fear, grief, revenge, hate, bitterness and so on. There are flashbacks, nightmares, trauma, heaviness, etc.

Extremely hard though it may seem, God calls us to forgive and still keep on loving – just as Jesus did before He died for our sins. Not only is the unfailing God still with us, His Spirit is with us to strengthen and help us in times of need.

Jesus said to His disciples, shortly before He died on the cross, *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. ... You believe in God, believe also in Me"* (John 14:27, 1)

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**Questions continued from the end of page 4**

4. Discuss what you think about the statement: "Good ethical practices in businesses and in Government are of vital importance to the welfare of society."
5. If you are in paid employment, what areas of your work do you consider to be well organized and run? About what areas do you have major concerns? What could you do about these concerns (as well as praying about them)?
6. What are some ethical principles that should be applied to the **"Other situations"** mentioned on page 4 (number 8)?

**PRAYER SUGGESTIONS**

Many situations and ethical values are mentioned in this study. Please pray about these, especially as they apply to your workplace, and to our Government.



## *Pillars of Society*

### 10. THE 10th PILLAR: BUSINESS

The subjects of 'Business' and 'the Workplace' are extremely broad and complex, but we need to pray about them from time to time, whether we are directly involved or because they cover our national economy and our personal working life, finances, and so on.

"Business" probably plays a more important role in our lives and society than many of us think. It plays an important role timewise, in our income (and expenditure!), our desires, skills, interests and hopes!

The pillar of "Business", referred to below, includes our employment, work, economics, financial matters, industry, farming, science and technology, and so on. It involves money, which we can't live without! It has input into our feeling of self-worth and satisfaction.

While "Business" may not sound a very "spiritual" matter to be concerned with, or pray about, it plays a very important part in society – and one in which everyone is involved, for better or for worse, depending on how this area of our society is run.

The following topics include some of the broad issues related to business – issues concerning which we need to pray. Most of these issues are good in themselves, but may be used for undesirable, wrong or criminal purposes. We can use many things for both good and evil; we need to make sure that good prevails, and that we do what we can to minimise the inevitable wrongdoing.

"Business", in the broad sense of the word, is far more extensive and complex than what is mentioned below, but these are some important areas about which we can pray.

Most of the following issues are not easy to measure or to resolve, but some of the principles of good business are mentioned below. We should pray for what is good and fair, and pray concerning major areas in society where these values are not being upheld.

#### **Employers and employees**

Our world today is very different from that in Biblical days, but the nearest equivalent today to the Biblical 'masters and servants' would be employers, managers and employees. (Today, we still talk about "public servants", although not about our "masters"!)

The Bible has much to say about money, working, relationships within employment and, of course, the principles of Godly ethics and behaviour, which should apply to the Business world, and especially to Christians and their behaviour in the world of business and employment.

See Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22 – 4:1; Titus 2:9-10

Apart from people who are self-employed and have no employees, broadly speaking there are three "groups" of people involved in business. These are:

- owners and shareholders of the business.
- employers (if the business is not managed by the owners).
- employees.

Ideally, all three groups should work together in ethical and fair ways, in the interests and for the welfare of all three groups. However, if there are owners, or employers, or employees who work in undesirable or wrong ways, this will inevitably have its impact on the business and will not be in the best interests of either the business or those who work in it.

Some of the areas which need to be considered, and prayed about, include:

#### **1. Ethical practices**

A business may well prosper, but it may involve unethical practices by owners, employers and/or employees. Some major ethical values that relate especially to business (but are also general ethical issues in all areas of society) include the following points.

See Proverbs 11:1; Ephesians 4:28

#### **2. Fairness**

There needs to be fairness at all levels of the business – fairness between what the owners, employers and employees do and what benefits they receive; how they are respected and treated by others in the business, and so on. It

is obviously not good if some people are cheated or unfairly treated in other ways. Each person should be paid “fairly” for what they do – though this is always difficult to determine! “Slave labour” – people paid grossly under what they should be – is not ethical. Also, the balance between profit and wages is important. See 1 Corinthians 3:8; 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

### 3. Financial expectations

Owners, shareholders, employers, those in leading roles, and other employees, all have their expectations and “right” to expect to receive what is fair and just – including fair pay and reasonable profit. The whole area of Finance is a major area in which there are many points of view, for many reasons, but the areas of fairness for all concerned, honesty and good work at all levels, should be a major component.

See Romans 4:4; James 5:4-5

### 4. Honesty

Honesty, both within the business, between people involved in the business, and in dealing with the public, is obviously one ethical issue which should occur; tragically it often does not, and sometimes there is very serious dishonesty – which can occur at any of the levels of responsibility in the business.

See Luke 16:1-6

### 5. Work well done

Every person in the business is (and should be) expected to work well – not do careless or shoddy work, avoid work, waste time unnecessarily, and so on. Those who purchase goods and services expect (and should expect) things to be well done.

See Proverbs 24:30-34; Ecclesiastes 9:10a; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

### 6. Working conditions

Sometimes these may be far from desirable, but may be unavoidable. However, as far as possible, workers’ work conditions should be reasonable. Poor conditions, in order to make more profit, is usually unfair on workers.

**7. Generosity and genuine care** for other people are major principles in a fair, just and caring society, where people help one another for the benefit of all its people. The same is also true of good businesses.

See 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

### 8. Other situations

There are, of course, many other areas of business that are important. The following are some of them:

- Employment contracts.
- Mismanagement of staff.
- Laying off, or sacking, staff.
- Industrial relations and Unions.
- Strikes.
- Relationships between businesses, the public and the Government.
- Exploitation.
- Unemployment.

Interestingly, many of these issues are mentioned in the Bible – both Old and New Testaments! The Bible is a *very practical* guideline for all areas of life, not just “spiritual” issues. Ethical issues are discussed in many places, and most of the above are areas where ethical practices are taught. The best practices, the best society, and the best businesses will all follow principles which are consistent with God’s Word – because God knows what is best for us, our society and our world!

Obviously, what has been said above is very generalised and does not apply to all situations. For example, small businesses and large ones will differ greatly in what can and should be done. But obviously we need to optimise the running of businesses in an honest and fair way.

### Biblical teaching

The Bible has a lot to say about: masters and servants, money, labourers, toil, work, laziness, wages, cheating, wealth, poverty, fairness, etc. Especially for Christians in business, or the workforce, see Philippians 4:8-9; 2 Peter 1:5-8. These topics can be studied further by using a concordance or electronic word-search.

### QUESTIONS

1. Why should Christians pray for political, business or workplace issues?
2. What other verses in the Bible can you think of which have a bearing on Business and Workplace issues?
3. What are some other Christian ethical issues which need to be applied to business and workplace areas?

*Questions are continued at the end of page 2*

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