



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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Be strong in the Lord and in His power. Put on the whole armour of God to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities and powers of this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you are able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand. Stand therefore with the belt of **Truth** around your waist, the breastplate of **Righteousness**, and the shoes of the good news of **Peace**. Take the shield of **Faith** to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of **Salvation**, and the sword of the **Spirit** which is the **Word of God**. (Ephesians 6:10-18, Abridged)

Pray in the Spirit at all times, in every prayer and supplication!

God defend Aotearoa New Zealand!

Men of every creed and race, gather here before
Thy face,
Asking Thee to bless this place; God defend our
free land –
From dissension, envy, hate and corruption,
guard our State
Make our country good and great; God defend
New Zealand!

1. As a nation we need to be dependent on God, not independent of Him, if we want to see His blessings on our land and people. Are we dependent on God?
2. Humanism seeks to live independent of God and do everything our way, ignoring Him, His wisdom, His power and His love for us.
3. We need a godly nation – one which is based on God's values – "whatever is true, honourable, just, pure, pleasing and commendable; if there is any excellence and it is worthy of praise, think about these things!" (Philippians 4:8). Do we aim for these things?
4. "Don't be deceived, God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow (Galatians 6:7). What are we sowing? What are we reaping?"
5. Our struggle is "against the powers of this present darkness" and "spiritual forces of evil" but the Lord has given us the whole armour of God – Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Faith, Salvation, His Word and the ability to always pray and intercede in the

Spirit – but we must "put on the whole armour". Christians, wake up! Put on the whole armour of God!

Pray about the above 5 points as you are led by the Holy Spirit and God's Word.

Pray for "God's Government". For righteous and wise leaders, righteous legislation, righteous and wise decisions.

Pray for Family values to be upheld for all – unborn babies; the right upbringing of children by their mothers and fathers; teaching that is good and right; influences for good through *all* media (including social media); good government; support for the poor, disabled, elderly, until natural death.

The Supreme Authority of the LORD

(Based on Matthew 6:9-13; Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 28:18-19)

- Our Father, who is in Heaven, Your name is holy. May Your Kingdom come; may Your will be done here on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day all we need for today. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. May we not be led into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power [authority] and the glory, forever. Amen!
- A child has been born for us, a Son has been given to us; authority rests upon His shoulders; and He is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually ...

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REVIVE US AGAIN!

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Unity

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity! ... For there the Lord has commanded the blessing – life for evermore.” (Psalm 133:1, 3).

One thing is certain – if God commands blessing then nothing and no one can stop it. But the commanded blessing is for those who dwell together in unity, and when the condition is fulfilled then the promise is that they will have life for evermore.

In many ways this is the crux of revival – Christians dwelling together in unity, and God blessing them with life which reaches out into the community, bringing life to others in turn.

Unity in the Church

It is interesting and important to notice the times in the book of Acts when the concepts of unity and being in one accord are mentioned.

1. Prior to the day of Pentecost “all these, with one accord, devoted themselves to prayer” (1:14).
2. When the day of Pentecost came “they were all together in one place” (2:1).
3. After the day of Pentecost, they were “day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes ... with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people, and the Lord added to their number” (2:46-47).
4. When they faced opposition “they lifted up their voices with one accord to God” (4:24).
5. They shared with those in need: “The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no-one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony ... and great grace was upon them all” (4:32-33).
6. When witnessing, “many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles, and they were all with one accord” (5:12).

7. As a result of Philip’s miraculous preaching, “the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said” (8:6).
8. In making decisions, “It seemed good to us, becoming of one mind, to send chosen men to you” (15:25).
9. In basic matters of Church life and fellowship, “they continued steadfastly [together] in the teaching of the apostles, and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (2:42).

So we see in the early Church, a fundamental unity between the believers in their teaching, prayer, witness, fellowship, etc. As a result, God commanded the blessing, the Christians were blessed, received “great grace” and “great power” (4:33), many people were saved, and the Church grew. That is, there was revival!

The two-fold nature of unity

1. In one sense, all true Christians are already united in Christ. This is shown by the following Scriptures:

John 10:16 While there are many Christian “folds” (churches), there is only one Shepherd and only one Flock (Church).

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 When we were born again, “by one Spirit we were all baptised into one Body (the Church) ... and all were made to drink of the one Spirit”.

Galatians 3:28 “You are all one in Christ Jesus”.

Ephesians 2:13-19 Through the death of Christ the dividing wall has been broken down and we are reconciled both to God and to one another.

Ephesians 4:4-6 “There is one Body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all”.

2. However, the problem comes in the practical outworking of this unity in our daily lives and in the functioning of local churches. In many instances there is obvious disunity between believers. (Note that we are not here talking about differences between Christians and non-Christians, but division between true

Christian believers). Hence, in the New Testament, there are exhortations to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ... until we all attain to the unity of the faith” (Ephesians 4:3, 13).

Paul wrote strongly to the Corinthian Christians about the division between them, calling them “carnal” (fleshly or worldly) Christians rather than spiritual or mature, because of their disunity (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-9). Later he wrote, “Mend your ways, heed my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace” (2 Corinthians 13:11); and “be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (Philippians 2:2). “Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit ... love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind” (1 Peter 3:8).

Jesus, in His prayer prior to His crucifixion, reminds us that the world will believe that the Father sent His Son, when they see the unity of Christians (John 17:20-23).

What is true in the Spirit must be worked out in our daily lives, lest we be guilty of not discerning the Body of Christ and thus eating and drinking judgement upon ourselves when we share communion together (1 Corinthians 11:27-32; cf. 10:16-17).

What separates us?

There are four major things which divide Christians, and none of these are Scriptural reasons for separation.

- 1. Denominations:** For convenience, our churches have various names, but there is no way in which we can justify our being **divided from one another** on the basis of denominations. If we are ever to see true unity then the day will have to come when we are prepared to fellowship with all true Christians, irrespective of denominational names. We must see Christ in our brothers and sisters, and our prejudices, suspicions and “party spirit” must go (Galatians 5:20).
- 2. Traditions:** While some traditions are not wrong in themselves, if they become a point of division within the Body of Christ then this is wrong. Again, we must be big enough to see that while some people prefer to worship the Lord one way, others prefer to worship in other ways. See Romans 14:1-23; Colossians 2:16-17.

3. Leadership: We all have our preferences as far as who we prefer to be our pastors, teachers, elders, etc., within the church, but division over leadership is carnal. “When one says, ‘I belong to Paul’, and another says, ‘I belong to Apollos’ are you not carnal and walking as [worldly] men?” (1 Corinthians 3:4).

4. Doctrine: This is the major cause of division within the Church, and yet there is no Scriptural basis for division over doctrine between born again Christians. Concerning fundamental issues of our faith and salvation we are, of course, agreed, but while we must earnestly seek after the truth we should not, in so doing, allow it to destroy our fellowship with other Christians who differ in some minor point of doctrine from ourselves.

What unites us?

1. The fact that we are saved, born again by the Holy Spirit, and have received divine life, thus becoming children of God.
2. Our belief in, and sincere love for, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
3. Our genuine desire to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, to serve Him, and to love our neighbours as we love ourselves (Luke 10:27).
4. As a result we will seek to base our lives on God’s Word, the Bible, we will desire fellowship with other believers (Hebrews 10:25; 1 John 1:3, 7), and we will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23-24).

Like the spokes and hub of a wheel, as we get closer to the Lord we will also get closer to each other.

Since all true Christians will one day spend eternity around the throne of God, worshipping and serving Him (Revelation 7:9-17) let us begin now to tear down the dividing walls and learn to appreciate and love one another in the same way that God Himself loves each of us.

The only basis for not usually fellowshipping with other Christians should be that our geographical locality is such that it is impracticable (normally) to travel so far to be with them, or that the size of the group would be

so large that more intimate fellowship would not be possible.

Praise the Lord that with the transport and venues we have available, it is often possible to fellowship with a fairly large cross-section of believers in our nation, and with very large groups of Christians, through Christian conferences, etc.

Unity versus Truth

In our desire for unity, God is not calling us to compromise the truth (that is, what we believe). We are not, in this study, advocating a watered-down “unite with everybody in spite of what they do or believe”, or a lowest common denominator Gospel. All of us must earnestly seek after the truth as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit through the Bible. The Bible is our sole authority, divinely inspired and infallible, for all matters of faith and Christian conduct. As we search the Word together, with hearts open towards God, His truth, and towards one another, He will lead us (plural) into all truth (John 16:13).

Unity will come out of a divine love for one another (John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-21), as we submit to one another in this love (Ephesians 5:21), and as we are eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

QUESTIONS

1. What is the “life for evermore” which is promised in Psalm 133:3?
2. What does it mean to be of “one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32)? How is it possible to be of one heart and mind with other Christians?
3. What practical things can we do, (a) individually, and (b) as a local church or Christian group, to help bring about Christian unity?
4. Can we be united in the Faith before we are united in the Spirit? (Ephesians 4:3, 13).
5. How does having “a love for the brethren, a tender heart, and a humble mind” help us to have “unity of spirit”? (1 Peter 3:8).
6. “Unity and division are primarily heart attitudes and are not necessarily dependent upon whether or not we fellowship together regularly”. Discuss.

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- Jesus said, “All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations ...” **Jesus is Lord!**
- Daniel 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 ... " (**Daniel 2:20-23**)

Pray through, and give God praise and thanks for, each of the above four Scriptures.

1. Pray that these will be proclaimed and seen in action in our country – the glory, majesty and authority of a righteous God.
2. Pray that we will keep our eyes on the Lord – He is the Governor over all Governments.
3. Pray that God’s will shall be done in our land, and that humbling ourselves, praying, seeking God’s face and turning from our wicked ways, will bring God’s forgiveness and blessing upon our land (2 Chronicles 7:14)
4. Pray that people’s hearts and lives will be changed; that people (especially Christians) will seek after righteousness, God’s presence, and power to proclaim God’s Way, His Truth, and His Life.
5. The battle against evil, corruption, immorality and wickedness, etc., is an ongoing battle. Pray for God’s Spirit to bring conviction of sin upon our people; repentance and turning to what is good and Godly.
6. Pray that the folly of ungodliness, and the wisdom of God’s ways and God’s values, will be seen, and we will follow Him. Pray for good, strong family values that will bring about a healthy society.
7. Pray that the Lord will raise up men and women of God into leadership in all areas of our nation, including Government and places where “important and life changing” decisions are made.