

# Occasional Update #17

19 September 2023

“Righteousness exalts (raises up) a nation, but sin is a reproach (disgrace) to any people.”  
Proverbs 14:34

## PRAYING FOR THE ELECTION

### INTRODUCTION

In less than 4 weeks [14 October], 120 women and men will be chosen to be our MPs – and who they are, will have a large effect on our people and country, for the next 3 years.

Our country needs to make the “best possible” choices of our leaders, their decisions, policies, laws, etc., because once these are enacted, they may be very hard to change.

I should mention that I am not a politician, a political commentator, or reporter. But I am a Christian who cares about my country and its people. Hence, I will share from the point of ‘**Praying** for the Election’, not the ‘**Politics** of an Election’.

Not much of what Jesus said in the Gospels, refers to the Roman authorities, and what His followers’ responsibilities are in a foreignly-governed land.

One reference that many Christians might think of, is “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s [because he had a certain authority on earth]; and render to God, the things that are God’s. Of course, the Lord has authority over all things – He is King of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the earth]” (Matt 22:21)

We live in a secular world, governed by people, most of whom are not Christians. But we still have a responsibility to those in authority over us.

Thank God we don’t live under a dictatorship – we (as a whole country) have the freedom of selecting our leaders, who are expected, at least, to be agreeable to listening to what we say, and need, and want!

Our Parliament meets, debates, make decisions and laws, in what is called the “House of Representatives” – representatives who represent and reflect what our society is like and wants overall. So, our elected Government is a **representation** or **reflection** of **who we are** as a nation – our nature, values, behaviour, beliefs, etc.

The decisions made by Parliament can have a major effect on us personally, and maybe on the country as a whole. Once made, decisions may not be easily changed, especially laws which have been made in the past.

### The Bible says, ...

“Righteousness exalts (lifts up) a nation; sin is a reproach to any people.” (Prov. 14:34)

By definition, of course:

Good people do good things, which have good results (they are a blessing to our nation); but the converse is also true. In other words, “We reap what we sow!” Which, of course, is obvious!

### We need righteous leaders

As Christians, we probably think of the word “righteous” in terms of what Paul says in his letters – people who are “made righteous through the blood of Jesus, and His forgiveness” – and, of course, this is true.

So, what about people who are not Christians? The word “righteous” means living in the right way. But how is “right” defined? What is right and what is wrong are defined by God, not by people.

There are many people who are not “believers”, who seek to live what we might call a ‘Godly type’ of life – a “good and upright, decent” person – a person of ‘good character’ and conduct, but who are not necessarily believers in, or followers of Jesus; so they are “righteous” (right living) in the broad sense of the word, basically living *how* the Bible teaches us to live, but not having a *saving faith* in the Lord.

Obviously, we need to pray for righteous leaders, and leaders who have wisdom, skills, abilities, and action (not just talking!) **Leaders who have a real, genuine heart to serve our people.**

## How should we respond?

I would like to share some thoughts, sort of in a time-line, under 3 headings:

### NOW THEN AFTER

#### 1. NOW – from now, until just before the election. Key word: “CHOICES”

- It is now too late for any more parties, or candidates, to stand in the coming election.
- Currently, Parties and candidates are campaigning; making election “promises”, etc. But we need to know “are these promises realistic”? Can they be fulfilled? Is it *likely* they will be fulfilled?

Voters are now thinking about [and Christians, hopefully, are also praying about!] how they will vote.

- Different Christians obviously have different ideas and preferences, so we need to ask God how *we* should vote. By the way, this *may not necessarily* be the “same as always” – in other words, a traditional, or inherited vote! It may not necessarily be simply “my habit of voting” or “the same as our parents.”

#### 2. THEN – around election time. Key word: “CHANGES”

- There may well be important changes just prior to the election. For example, voters and their *final* choices of Party, and electorate MP – or, in fact, even whether they will vote at all.
- Likewise, changes in the thinking and plans of potential MPs. For example, who will be list MPs, and what will be the priority of selection from that list.

#### 3. AFTER – continuing after the election. Key word: “CONSEQUENCES”

- Which Parties will be in the Government? What coalitions may be formed in order to get sufficient, or a majority, of seats, and so on?
- Who will be Prime Minister, Deputy PM, other Ministers, Electorate MPs, List MPs?
- Some of the more important Ministries such as Welfare, Health, Education, Finance, etc – Who will be chosen as their Ministers, and what will be their ability to make good choices and changes, where changes are needed?
- In different ways, NZ is changing – for better or for worse. What will the Government do to help deal with the problems we face? Of course, the Government can’t fix everything; but its decisions and actions are very important to us all.
- We need a more united Parliament. The Government and Opposition *don’t have to* fight one another; they need to work together, and to agree on the best possible decisions and

outcomes. So, we need continued prayer for our elections, MPs and new Government.

- **Praise God** for organisations such as:
  - **Intercessors Aotearoa** and **Prayer@Parliament**, which focus especially on praying for government.
  - **Pray as One NZ** and **Pray for the Nation**, which focus on the nation as a whole.
  - And, of course, many other groups which are praying for our nation.
- **Prayer @ Parliament**, which usually meets 3 times each year in Parliament's Grand Hall, organises an **Adopt a Member of Parliament for Prayer (AMPP)** – this involves commitment to praying for your Electorate MP, and a chosen List MP.  
See [prayeratparliament.org.nz](http://prayeratparliament.org.nz) for further details.

### WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY:

I'm sure we all know of these verses, but in the context of what we will be praying for this evening, it is good to think about them again, and what they say:

**1 Timothy 2:1-2** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone – for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a **quiet** and **peaceable** life, in all **Godliness** [or righteousness] and **dignity**.

In other words, the good and right use of authority is for our good, and protection.

**Matthew 6:9-10** Jesus said to His followers, "Pray then in this way: Our Father in Heaven, hallowed [holy; respected and honoured] be Your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."

In other words, we need to pray to our Father for **His** will to be done here on earth, just as it is in Heaven.

**2 Chronicles 7:14** *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, forgive their sins, and **heal their land**.

This verse, of course, was given to the Israelites ['My people'] – and still applies.

But the followers of Christ today are also "called by His name" – 'Christians' and so this applies to us too.

**Jeremiah 29:7,11** The Lord said to the Jews who were in captivity in Babylon:

"Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. ...

"For surely I know the plans I have for you – plans for your **welfare** and not for harm, to give you a **future with hope**."

God's plans are for our **good**, not for **evil**, although this may include difficult and testing times. And sometimes we may wonder why God allows some things to happen; including, for example, some things our government allows or prohibits – for example, on moral issues.

**Isaiah 55:8-9** "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways", says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."

God's ways are not necessarily our ways – what **we** think should be done!  
**BUT** – God knows what He is doing, and He knows best!  
Also, prayer involves FAITH – whatever the results!

So, as we approach the elections, and final decisions are being made, let us pray for the fulfillment of the LORD's plans for our “**welfare** and not for harm, and to give us a **future with hope**.”

**Speakers' prayer** The Speaker is in charge of what goes on in the debating chamber. Each day Parliament sits, the Speaker opens the session, and leads what goes on in the Chamber. *Every sitting day since Parliament first sat in 1854, our Parliament has been opened with prayer. In 1962 the following prayer was Adopted by Resolution of the House*

"Almighty God, humbly acknowledging our need for Thy guidance in all things, and laying aside all private and personal interests, we beseech Thee to grant that we may conduct the affairs of this House and of our country to the glory of Thy holy name, the maintenance of true religion and justice, the honour of the Queen [King], and the public welfare, peace, and tranquillity of New Zealand, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

### Websites

**Government:** <https://Elections.nz> and <https://www.Vote.nz>

**Family First:** <https://ValueYourVote.org.nz> How MPs have voted in the past, and therefore some indication of where they stand with regard to various important issues.

**FINALLY:** [How am I going to vote?](#) “**Let us pray!**”

### **PRAYER POINTS:** The 3 C's

#### **CHOICES**

- Pray that Christians will prayerfully choose which Party, and Electorate candidate, they should vote for, and vote in the way the Lord leads them.
- Pray that all voters will vote for Parties and Electorate MPs who have righteous values, and a genuine desire to do their best for the welfare of our people.

#### **CHANGES**

- Pray for the outcomes of the elections, including coalitions; which MPs are chosen for Ministerial positions, and other leading roles in government.
- Pray that all changes which occur as the result of the elections and a new government, will be for the betterment of our country as a whole. That all new and existing MPs, will have the wisdom and ability to make right decisions, to build up our country and bring blessing to our people, especially to those in need.

#### **CONSEQUENCES**

- The future of our country and people can be greatly affected by our government leadership and its decisions and laws. Pray that in the coming years we will see the goodness and kindness of God, in the new government we will have.
- Pray that what God said to Israel in the past will also come to pass in Aotearoa New Zealand: “For surely I know the plans I have for you”, says the LORD, “plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you **a future with hope**” (Jer. 29:11)

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**Pray for the Nation:** <https://www.pray-for-the-nation.org/> [ifnz@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ifnz@xtra.co.nz)  
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