

Hungering for a Godly Nation
Praying Down the Kingdom
1 Timothy 2:1-7, Daniel 10:12-14, Matthew 6:9-13, Ephesians 1:20-23
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Both our partisanship and our cynicism in politics are driven by the mistaken notion that people are the key to cultural change. Partisans hope that people can make it happen, and cynics think people ought to make things happen but cannot. The way out of both extremes is prayer, which is God's deep strategy for social change. We will consider two incentives for praying and some guidance on how to pray.

I) Incentives for political praying

A) The Lord wants us to pray

1 Timothy 2.1: I urge that supplications be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions...

Matthew 6.9ff: Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

- Make the Father the issue world-wide
- Not that we will be taken to heaven, but that heaven will be brought to earth

A form of power politics open to us all

B) God hears us

- He hears us the moment we speak
Daniel 10.12: Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day...your words have been heard.
No need to fear
- He is re-ordering social history around us
Eph. 1.22: He put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church
Hope as we pray
- He loves us
1 Timothy 2.6: There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men.

II) Guidance on how to pray politically

A) We will pray whole-heartedly and comprehensively

Daniel 'gave his heart...'

- The enormous gap between the fact of Jesus' reign and the appearance of things

B) We will pray for a certain kind of peace

1 Timothy 2.2: ...that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way

- Leaders everywhere who will permit the Christians to thrive everywhere.
- So that people everywhere will meet the mediator

Take away

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Do an inventory on your political praying: How much time did you spend last week on it? For whom did you pray? For what did you pray?
- 2) Reflect on how Jesus commands us to pray in Matthew 6:9-10 and how Paul urges us to pray in 1 Timothy 2:1-2. What is meant by “hallowing God’s name” and bringing God’s kingdom to earth? Why and how can we possibly pray for “all rulers”?
- 3) Read Daniel 10:12-14. What does it suggest about the relationship between events in the world that we see and the world that we do not see? The angel tells Daniel not to be afraid. Why was he afraid (read back in the chapter), and what reason did the angel give him for not being afraid? Does Daniel’s encounter have any application to us as we face an uncertain or troubling political situation?
- 4) Read Ephesians 1:20-23. What does Paul mean when he says that God has “made Jesus head over all things to (or ‘for’) the church”? What is the destiny of the church in God’s plan for human society? What effect should this have upon how we think about and involve ourselves in political life, and how we pray politically?
- 5) According to Ephesians 1:20-23, what status does Jesus enjoy? According to 1 Timothy 2.6a, why should we confidently grant him that status?
- 6) What specifically should we pray with reference to every ruler in the world in 1 Timothy 2:2? How does this compare to how we pray for the rulers of the world? What rationale does Paul give in 1 Timothy 2:3-6 for why we should pray this way?
- 7) What practical steps might you take to make your political praying more consistent, earnest, and comprehensive?