**Nine Ways to Pray for Church Leaders**

By Chuck Lawless from thomrainer.com/2014/12/nine-ways-pray-church-leaders/

In the late 1850s, a global spiritual awakening began when one man in New York City established a noonday prayer meeting and called the city to prayer. Indeed, most awakenings have begun with a few praying people who invite others to join them.

With that historical backdrop in mind, I wonder what might happen if congregations begin to pray the following prayers for church leaders. Would you pray these prayers for church leaders today, and then invite others in your congregation to join you?

*1. Pray they will keep their eyes on God.*

King Jehoshaphat faced three combined enemy armies, and he did not know what to do – except to lock his eyes on God. That’s the answer any time we have no clue about next steps.

“For we are powerless before this vast number that comes to fight against us. We do not know what to do, but we look to You.” (2 Chron. 20:12, HCSB)

*2. Pray they will not take a step apart from God’s leading.*

Moses prayed this prayer when God would send only an angel to lead His people after their fiasco with the golden calf. He would rather the people not start the journey if God Himself were not leading them.

“If Your presence does not go,” Moses responded to Him, “don’t make us go up from here.” (Exod. 33:15)

*3. Pray they will beware of relying on their own strength.*

David, who knew the Lord is the one who fights for him (1 Sam. 17:47), trusted in his own might when he took a census of the Hebrew armies. Recognizing his sin, he prayed a prayer most leaders need to pray at some point:

“I have sinned greatly in what I’ve done. Now, Lord, because I’ve been very foolish, please take away Your servant’s guilt.” (2 Sam 24:10)

*4. Pray they will be wise in leading God’s people.*

When Solomon might have asked for much more, he instead asked God to give him a “listening heart” as he governed the people of God. All of us who lead congregations need this wisdom.

“So give Your servant an obedient heart to judge Your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” (1 Kgs. 3:9)

*5. Pray they will weep over the sin and failures of God’s people.*

In my experience, the best shepherds are those who genuinely grieve the spiritual brokenness of the people they lead. Like Nehemiah when he heard about the damaged walls of Jerusalem, they are themselves broken when they see the results of spiritual decline.

“When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” (Neh. 1:4)

*6. Pray they will know when to push away from the crowds to pray.*

Ministry is time-consuming, and needs are ever before us. Nevertheless, leaders must have time alone with God to be renewed for the work – just as Jesus did.

“But the news about Him spread even more, and large crowds would come together to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. Yet He often withdrew to deserted places and prayed.” (Luke 5:15-16)

*7. Pray they will walk worthy of their calling.*

If we pray more for church leaders today, it’s likely fewer will fall tomorrow. We must pray they walk in obedience and bear fruit, just as Paul prayed for the Colossian believers:

“we haven’t stopped praying for you . . . so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.” (Col. 1:9-10)

*8. Pray they will speak the gospel boldly.*

Paul wrote from a prison cell – his punishment for preaching the Word – but still he sought prayer support to continue his evangelizing. If Paul needed such prayer, surely church leaders do today.

“Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.” (Eph. 6:19)

*9. Pray they will finish well.*

Those church leaders who finish well PLAN to do so; that is, they choose from the beginning to stand against the devil and glorify God. Pray that your church leaders can one day echo these words of the Apostle Paul:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim. 4:7).

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