

## Why A Worship Service For The Nation?

Over the past month the members of the Vestry Committee have been working tirelessly to hold a special Worship Service for our Country. You may be wondering why such a Service? Like all other traditions in our Anglican Faith; this too is embedded in our Holy Scriptures.

From my interactions with people I realised that many are not aware of its importance with reference to the Holy Bible and thus I thought share with you its relevance.

Our Holy Scripture record that God can turn the hearts of kings (Proverbs 21:1 JKV **“The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will”**). That means that we should be praying for God's will to be done and for our leaders to seek God and listen to Him. We should pray that they would be surrounded by godly counsel and, most important, that our leadership would personally know God and the salvation found through in Almighty God through His Son Jesus Christ.

Think about all of the issues before our President, Prime Minister and all other leaders of our nation at this moment. Our broken borders are a major challenge. In addition to all of the other concerns, they can provide terrorists easy access. Just look at the killing that on in Kashmir and parts of North Eastern India.

Look at the unabated rape of the young girls and women - from six to sixty. The violence against people making a choice on the food they prefer to eat. Farmers of the land committing suicide as they are unable to feed their hungry family nor pay back to the Bank. The list is endless in our Land.

Our World is no better...

Ukraine is in peril as Russia seems to want to rebuild its former Soviet empire there. China is spending huge amounts on its military and beginning to flex its muscles in the Pacific, threatening us in the north and also its neighbours including Vietnam and the Philippines. Pakistan is carrying out terrorist attacks every day. North Korea has nuclear weapons, Iran may be on the verge of getting one, and the threat of terrorists gaining access to nuclear bombs has become very real.

Should we not be diligently praying that God would give our Leaders, the Parliament and Judiciary as well as for the security and defence forces of our land? Our President, the Prime Minister and his council of Ministers along with the Governors and the Chief Ministers of the States and their Council ministers need our prayers - even if they are not the candidates we voted for.

Interceding for those in authority is not an option. It is a biblical command that we are to obey. **“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”** (1 Timothy 2:1-2, KJV).

Understand that St. Paul is writing this instruction to his protégé Timothy at a time when the awful emperor Nero was at the helm of the vast Roman Empire. Christians were viciously

persecuted, clothed in wild animal skins and put in the arena before hungry lions and also used as human lanterns to light the streets of Rome.

Nevertheless, the aged St. Paul, who would soon be martyred during Nero's reign of terror, instructs Timothy to make prayer for the rulers of his day - including the deranged Nero - a personal priority.

There should be a sense of urgency in our prayer life, an understanding that we **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”** (Ephesians 6:12 KJV). The prince of darkness is grimly and powerfully at work in world affairs today, and prayer is a great battlefield especially as we pray for those in leadership of our Land.

When the Holy Bible records that the **“he king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.”** (Proverbs 21:1 KJM), it means that a Sovereign God can turn the heart of a king at any time and in any way. If there are policies and platforms that don't conform to biblical ethics, the intercession of Christians can be used in a powerful, transforming way.

Neither Kings, nor Presidents, nor Prime Ministers, nor members of Parliament, Legislature or Judiciary are the ultimate authority – only God Almighty is. **“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision”** (Psalm 2:2-4 KJV).

As the eminent preacher, Charles Spurgeon said, “prayer is the slender nerve that moves the omnipotent muscle of God.” The Bible commands us to pray for authorities, because all authority has been established by Him to accomplish His purposes.

When the prophet Jeremiah wrote to the Jewish exiles who lived in Babylonian captivity, he encouraged them not to protest or rebel against their captors, but to pray for them: **“And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.”** (Jeremiah 29:7 KJV). Even in the midst of an evil and wicked land, Jeremiah focused the Hebrew captives to pray for God's blessing.

Perhaps this is at least part of what St. Paul meant when he said that praying for our leaders can result in an atmosphere that is conducive to the spreading of the Gospel, leading to a **“...quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”** (1 Timothy 2:2, KJV). The more materialistic and hostile the culture is to Christians and Christianity - the more difficult it is to preach and teach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord may use our prayers for those in authority to somehow delay or even stop legislation or initiatives God's will. We have experienced serious moral degradation in our land, but there are still many opportunities for the proclamation of the Gospel.

It is also very clear that the ultimate reason the Bible instructs us to intercede on behalf of our leaders is so that they might come to see the true Light. **“For this (our intercession) for this**

**is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4 KJV).**

Praying for those in authority means that we are constantly asking that the Lord will open their hearts to the truth of the Gospel message. I cannot help but ask myself if all Christians had been faithful to pray for our leaders, would our nation - even our world - be different today? Can our diligent, heartfelt prayers make a difference for the future? Most certainly they will for the Holy Bible says so.

As this is scripturally being mandated, the Anglican Denomination across the globe, hold a special service of Remembrance or a special service for the Nation (according to local importance) each year. It is at this time of corporate worship that we thank God for the years and events gone by and seek His presence and guidance in the years to come for our Nation.

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