

Good government is conditional upon the Church...

God Requires Us To Pray For Our Rulers

Derek Prince

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The following is excerpted from the transcript of a message drawn from 1 Timothy 2:1-4 delivered in London by Derek Prince in 1974. A series from the complete message, foundational to the mission of Intercessors for America, appeared in the very first LEA newsletters. As our nation faces another pivotal round of elections this year, it seems very appropriate to reprint this challenge.

Will you contact your pastor and help call your church to "pray first" for all in authority? Will you help mount First Friday prayer meetings and other times of pre-election prayer in 2004? If so, please write and let us know. We stand ready to supply you with bulk quantities of the LEA First Friday newsletter for distribution in your church or prayer group. -Gary Bergel, President IFA

Bear in mind that the Epistle of Timothy was written specifically to tell Timothy how to conduct the affairs of the local congregation. This is stated in 1 Timothy 3:14-15: *"These things I write to you ... that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, "*

The basic thrust of 1 Timothy is how to conduct the affairs of a local congregation. Beginning with Chapter 2 Paul states the first responsibility and ministry of a local church: *"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. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. "* (1 Tim 2:14)

Let's just take those verses and see in simple language what they mean. In verse 1 Paul says that first of all the primary responsibility of Christians meeting together in public worship is intercessions, prayers, giving of thanks, etc. **In one word, prayer is the primary ministry and primary obligation of Christians meeting in fellowship.**

And, the first general topic for prayer is *all men*. God says "all men." Isaiah 56:7 declares, *"for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people."* God loves the world and He wants us to love the world. Not the system that is in the world, but the people in the world. God loves every one of them!

Verse 2 gives us the first *specific* topic for prayer. *"For kings and for all that are in authority."* (1 Tim 2:2) What one word sums that up? Government! The first specific topic of prayer is not the missionaries, nor the evangelists, nor the sick - it is the government! **Hardly any church or group prays for the government first.**

What are we to pray when we pray for the government? *"That we may lead a quiet and*

peaceable life in all godliness, and honesty." (1 Tim 2:2) Let's ask ourselves this: "Does the government we live under affect the way we live?" Anybody will have to say "Yes." Do you want to live a good life? Wouldn't it be common sense to pray for the government? Paul says that we are to pray that we have such a government that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness, reverence, dignity and honesty. Paul is sensible enough to acknowledge that the life we lead is intimately related to the people who govern us. I believe you could sum up the second half of that verse as, "that we may be well governed." We are to pray for the government that they may govern well.

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour " (1 Tim 2:3) What does the word "this" refer to? The end of verse 2 refers to good government. Verse 3 is saying this: "Good government is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." **Good government is the will of God!** Do you believe that? I do.

"Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim 2:4) This fourth verse explains why good government is the will of God. Do you believe this scripture? I do. I believe God wants all men to have the opportunity to be saved by hearing the truth of the Gospel. I further believe that no man can be saved who doesn't hear the truth of the Gospel. That is my conviction. That is why Jesus said, "Preach the Gospel in all the world to every creature." That is why He said, "Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations." That is why He said, "This Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations."

If you believe that it is the will of God for the Gospel to be preached to all men in all nations, I want to ask you one question. "Which makes it easier to preach the Gospel, good government or bad government?" To me there is no doubt. So, I have no problem believing that God wants good government, once I am convinced that God wants the Gospel preached to every person.

But God will not give us what is His will unless we meet the conditions. The fact that good government is the will of God does not guarantee good government because God has you and me involved in the working out of His will on earth. If we don't play our part, it won't happen. So God says, "When you come together your first ministry is prayer. Your first specific topic of prayer is your government." The thing you are to pray for is good government. Good government is the will of God because good government makes it easier to preach the Gospel.

Before I became a preacher I was a student and teacher of logic. To me, the logic of what

we've discussed is flawless. There is no way around it.

Let's look for a moment at 1 John 5:14-15: *"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of him."*

If we ask anything, according to the will of God, we know two things. First of all that He hears us, and secondly, since we know that He hears us, we know we have what we ask for. Put that together with 1 Timothy 2 which shows that good government is the will of God. If we are praying for good government, we are praying for the will of God. If we pray for the will of God we know that He hears us. If we know that God hears us, we know that we have what we pray for - good government. **So if we don't have good government, what is the reason? We didn't pray for it.** For ninety percent of you that is the simple explanation. You did not pray.

Now there is one other possibility. Some of you did pray, but you prayed without knowing that it was the will of God. Because God only guarantees the answer when we know that it is His will. So, it is not enough to pray. You have got to pray with the scriptural assurance that what you are praying for is the will of God. You may start praying for good government, but if you didn't pray in the assurance it was God's will, your prayer would not have any guarantee of an answer.

The man who wavers will not receive any answer to his prayer. *"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord."* (James 1:6-7)

So if you go out and say, "That was a wonderful message by Brother Prince, I am going to pray for the government. It is God's will." And you pray for a week and nothing happens, and the news gets worse and the crisis deepens, you say, "Must have been mistaken. Can't trust that man. " You change your mind - no answer to your prayer. You don't count. You are eliminated. **The only people who matter are the people who pray and go on praying knowing it is the will of God.** Perseverance in prayer "separates the men from the boys."