



Prayer Resources

Online Articles

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How To Pray For Your Church

We have such a high priest who is seated on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. Hebrews 8:1,2

How do you pray for your church? The typical prayers uttered for the church in public are focused on numerical strength, financial stability, program success, and worldly popularity. The book of Hebrews presents a wonderful description of Jesus' current intercessory role as high priest for the church. The text says that He is a minister of the true tabernacle made by the Lord, not made by man. When man attempts to build the Lord's work on earth, the prayer focus is on numerical strength, financial stability, program success, and worldly popularity; but when the work is built by the Lord Himself, the prayer focus is quite different. The seventeenth chapter of John provides an opportunity to eavesdrop on exactly how Jesus is praying for your church. His prayer focus is upon His headship, the Church's leadership, and the congregation's fellowship.

Jesus is praying that His headship over His church will reveal His glory and His authority (John 17:1-5). Jesus knows that the *only true eternal success* that the church can experience is the reflection of His glory. He and the Father shared this glory before the world began. Man was created to fellowship with this glory. He was made to reflect the glory, not usurp it. Usurping this glory will bring man frustration, not fulfillment. Jesus knows that the only way the church will reflect that glory is by submission to His authority. The church must choose to do things His way, not man's way. Broadcasting numerical strength, financial stability, program success, and worldly popularity are indications that man is usurping His glory and rejecting His authority. Jesus is giving priority to His glory and His authority in His prayers for your church.

Jesus is praying that the leadership of His church will know Him as Lord, apply His Word, and live a clean life (John 17:6-19). Jesus knows that the *only true eternal source of confidence* that the leaders of the church can have must come from a recognition of who He is, of what He says, and of their obedience to what He says. Belief that Jesus is God's sole provision for man's salvation; belief that the entire Scripture is God's inerrant guideline for serving and living; and commitment to bring into obedience any wavering step from the guidelines are all necessary for the church's effectiveness. If there is compromise in any of these three areas, the church becomes ineffective. Seeking to be politically correct, inoffensive to the world, and tolerant of sin are indications that the church has lost its confidence. Personal sin among the church's leadership will bring tolerance to the gross sin of the culture. Jesus is not praying for freedom from the world's persecution, nor from Satan's interference. He is praying for protection in the midst of these attacks as the leaders of His church maintain who He is, what His Word says, and their obedience to what He says.

Jesus is praying that the fellowship of His church will bear witness, seek His glory, and

abide in unity (John 17:20-26). Jesus knows that the *only true eternal salvation of the lost* is dependent upon His followers sharing the truth, maintaining the priority of His glory, and dwelling together in unity. Witnessing words alone will not win the lost. The words must be overshadowed by the dynamic that comes from a personality submissive to the glory of God and from the personalities of a group submissive to each other. The glory of God and the unity of varied economic, ethnic, and social believers are such a contrast to anything else in the world. They arrest the longing attention of those in the world and give credence to the message shared in words. The world uses glitter, glamour, and gimmicks to attract the lost; but

Jesus is praying that His church will attract with His glory. A church built by man uses uniformity and unanimity to enlist the lost; but Jesus is praying that His church will enlist the lost through the attraction of creative differences bound together by a unique unity.

Jesus says in John 17:20 that He is not praying just for His disciples who are there with Him at the moment, but also for all those who would believe on Him through their witness. With His omniscient mind, Jesus was even that night praying for you and for your church. Will you allow Jesus' priestly prayer to reshape your prayers for His church?