

## THE URGENT NEED TO PRAY



The decision by the United Kingdom to withdraw from the European Union has resulted in a number of far-reaching and unanticipated outcomes.

The Referendum campaign brought into sharp contrast not only divisions within the UK population over the economy and immigration but also within political parties with both the Conservatives and Labour now facing leadership battles. In addition some European governmental leaders are concerned that their electorate may wish to follow the UK precedent and call for their own referendum. There are many who are bewildered, uncertain and fearful for the future, not knowing who can be trusted to lead the exit negotiations and, using David Cameron's analogy, steer the ship to its future destination.

In the midst of the turmoil though as Christians we have confidence that the Lord will guide us along *"unfamiliar paths"* (Isaiah 42:16) because He has promised to give us *"a hope and a future"* (Jeremiah 29:11) and that nothing *"will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:39).

### **If there was ever a need to pray then it is now – but how and for what should we be interceding?**

The three areas for consideration below are not designed to be all-encompassing and comprehensive but to provide a starting point for prayer from a Biblical perspective.

#### **LEADERSHIP**

1 Timothy 2:1-4 encourages us to pray for everyone (*"all people"*) but especially for all those in leadership – secular | social | spiritual – for the following reasons:

- **Peacefulness:** good leadership brings stability and peace so we need to pray for *"peaceful and quiet lives"*

- **Righteousness:** increased secularism and individualism are eroding the Godly and holy traditional values in our nation. Let's pray for a return to His ways
- **Mission opportunities:** whilst persecution and opposition to the Gospel have been used by God to bring people to faith, these verses tell us that it pleases God when we live in a peaceful, quiet, godly and righteous environment and provides an opportunity for people to come to know Him through Jesus.

Notice that it says *"petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people"* – or as The Message Version puts it, *"Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know"*.

Pray that:

- Those in Government and Opposition will have wisdom to know how to handle the outcomes of the Referendum
- They will be prepared to work in the best interests of the nation – and Europe – rather than in their own interests or because of political dogma or expediency
- Negotiations will be fair and equitable to all without causing discord and difficulty

### **RECONCILIATION & UNITY**

In 2Corinthians 5:18-20 Christians are described as having *"the ministry of reconciliation"* and of being *"the message of reconciliation"*.

Our role in society is to help bring people together and to God. Our ministry is one of reconciliation but the way we live our lives – in speech, actions and attitudes – are the message of reconciliation.

In addition we are called to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) actively working to bring harmony and unity.

Pray that:

- Those who are disappointed with the Referendum decision will accept the result and work together to seek beneficial outcomes for all
- Where there are divisions in families, political parties and other areas of public life, that people will endeavour to find common ground and consensus without harbouring resentment and bitterness
- EU and UK negotiators all will seek to find positive ways in which they can work together in the future including the discussions regarding the way

forward in terms of possible independence for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales

## **JUSTICE & FAIRNESS**

According to Micah 6:8 we are called by the Lord, *“To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”* Other Scriptures exhort us to care for widows, orphans and those from foreign countries. We have a duty of care to them and Jesus even instructed us to *“love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us”* (Matthew 5:44).

These are high standards which we can't achieve without the Holy Spirit's help and power. But if Jesus asked us to do this, it must be possible! Remember He *“is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us”* (Ephesians 3:20)

Pray that:

- The sense of fear over immigration will be dispelled and that communities of all cultures and faiths will be able to co-exist together in our nation
- Those with agendas to disrupt and even terrorise the people of this nation will not succeed
- We will recognise and appreciate the God loves everyone and doesn't want *“anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”* (2Peter 3:9)
- Christians will have opportunities to demonstrate God's love and that we will *“always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have”* (1Peter 3:15)

### **Above all let's pray for God's purposes to be worked out**

The familiar words of The Lord's Prayer should be on our lips, *“May Your will be done here on earth as it is in heaven”* as we seek to pray for our nation.

Below is a prayer we offer to you as a suggestion but our hope is that Christians throughout the UK will individually and collectively petition our Heavenly Father at this time.

“Heavenly Father, we acknowledge Your sovereignty and authority – You are Lord of the whole earth and we humbly plead for our nation at this time.

We acknowledge our unrighteousness and our need of Your forgiveness but thank You that in Your mercy and grace You have redeemed us and saved us through our Lord Jesus Christ who sacrificed Himself for us. And we thank You that through His death and resurrection we have full access into Your presence to

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confidently bring our petitions to you. Guide us we pray by Your Holy Spirit to pray in accordance with Your will.

Father, bless the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at this time. Give our leaders wisdom and common sense in negotiations with the European Union. Grant favour on these discussions and agreements to provide fairness and equity for all concerned.

Enable those who are currently anxious and apprehensive about the future to know Your peace – the peace that transcends and exceeds understanding – and so dispels fear.

Help us live together in peace with our neighbours and in doing so give us opportunities to share the love of Christ so that more people come to know Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

We pray for reconciliation, unity, justice, peace and that there may be hope for the future as people return to You and Your ways.

We ask that You will be glorified in this nation and throughout the world – may Your Kingdom come in all its fullness.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord and in His name. Amen.”

### **And finally**

Some verses which we hope will encourage and strengthen you at this time.

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”* – Romans 15:13 (NIVUK)

*“I said to myself, ‘Relax, because the Lord takes care of you’”* – Psalm 116:7 (NCV)

*“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* – Hebrews 4:16 (NIVUK)

*“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble”* – Psalm 46:1 (NIVUK)

*“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us”* – 1John 5:14 (NIVUK)

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