

# The National Day of Prayer

The First Thursday in  
May

## Righteousness Exalts a Nation

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord*  
Psalm 33:12

### Introduction: Biblical Principles Concerning Nations

We will begin our discussion of the National Day of Prayer by explaining eight Biblical principles related to nations.

1. God's sovereignty extends over individuals and all institutions, including nations.

*All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations* Psalm 22:27-28

*Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* Psalm 2:6-8

God is Creator of men and nations, therefore He has the right of ownership. He claims ownership and control of men and nations before they existed: since creation! God does not just claim sovereignty over the individual believer but also over families, churches and nations. His sovereignty is absolute and total.

2. Nations, like individuals, are accountable to God and will be judged.

*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.* Psalm 9:17

Nations are not judged by God in the same way that individuals are. Individuals have an obligation to repent of their sins and bow their knee to God as Savior and Lord. Individuals must have a faith that leads them to individual salvation. Nations have an obligation to honor God by their laws and their actions.

3. Only the nations whose God is the Lord are blessed by Him.

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.* Psalm 33:12

Our forefathers believed, as the Scriptures teach, that God deals with nations as well as individuals. They believed that, just as there are Christian individuals, there could be Christian families, Christian churches and Christian nations. The nation of Israel is the first example of a nation in covenant with God. But groups of people do not have the same type of covenant with God as an individual does. Edmund Morgan, Emeritus Professor of History at Yale, articulated the Puritan view of group covenants:

*How, then, could the covenant of grace, which dealt with salvation, include a whole family, a whole church, or a whole state? The Puritans never gave a completely satisfactory answer to this question, but they did give an answer. The covenant, they said, when applied to a group, originated in, but was not the same as, the covenant of an individual. It had different terms and a different name. It was called a family covenant or a church covenant or a state covenant, instead of a covenant of grace, and the group engaging in it promised external obedience instead of faith and received external, temporal prosperity instead of eternal salvation. Since every group contained unbelievers, no group as such was capable of salvation. God's covenant with a family, a church, or a state, therefore, as well as his covenant with the tribe of Israel, concerned this world, not the next. You cannot obey me in heart and in spirit, He told the members of these bodies, but you can at least do me honor by not breaking my laws openly and publicly; if you as a people will perform outward obedience to my commands, I will give you outward prosperity as a people. On the other hand, if you disobey me outwardly, I will destroy you as utterly as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrhah.<sup>1</sup>*

4. Nations should acknowledge God's laws as their laws.

*For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Deuteronomy 4:7-8*

Just as the nation of Israel observed the laws of God in every area of their individual and corporate lives, so did our nation in times past. This is what raised America to such great heights in so short a period of time. Every nation will make laws based upon its prevailing theology and view of its sovereign. It is incumbent upon a Christian nation to honor the Lord in its civil sphere as well as in the individual, family and church spheres.

5. Nations are responsible to keep the truth.

*Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Isaiah 26:2*

Nations are required to keep the truth just as individuals are. "Thou shalt not bear false witness" is representative of one command of God that applies to national life as well as our personal lives. The main way that a nation keeps the truth is by honoring the principles of God's Word.

6. A nation's spiritual condition is reflective of the spiritual condition of its citizens and leaders.

*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs 14:34*

*When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting. Proverbs 11:10-11*

*When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. Proverbs 29:2*

A nation is composed of individual citizens. Just as a spiritual condition of a family would be characterized by the spiritual condition of the mother, father and children, the same would be true of a nation. Therefore, righteous people generally will select like-minded men and women to represent them, and they will place them in office. Conversely, a nation with unrighteous rulers is reflective of a profane electorate. In short, we get the kind of government that we resemble.

7. Growth in the size of a nation's external government reflects an increase in unrighteousness in the people.

*For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged. Proverbs 28:2*

There is a direct relationship between internal self-government and external government. God designed us

for the former, but as a loving provider He designed a safety net of external government, to limit man's ability to harm his fellow man. When a people are self-governed they will not need many princes. But when they lose their desire and ability to control themselves under God's authority and according to His Law, they will have many princes or civil rulers. The scope and size of our civil governments stand as a reminder to us that we need to repent and turn to God with all of our hearts, desiring to be ruled by Him rather than His earthly magistrates.

8. God will heal the nations.

*In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22:2*

The Sovereign who created us and promised to one day make us completely whole also promises to heal the nations. God is the restorer of all things. We need to seek him for the healing and restoration of families, churches and nations.

## History of Days of Prayer, Fasting, Humiliation, Penitence and Thanksgiving

Our Pilgrim and Puritan forefathers embraced a providential view of life. They believed that God was superintending their lives; they knew that their loving Father was graciously providing and caring for them. They believed that He administered discipline as any loving father would; therefore in times of distress and calamity they would proclaim days of humiliation and penitence and repent of their sins. They would proclaim days of thanksgiving and prayer in response to His kind answers to prayer.

Congress has called for over 200 National Days of Prayer and Fasting. In addition, over 1,400 days of fasting, humiliation, penitence, prayer and thanksgiving were called by various levels of government and by churches in the years 1620 to 1815. W. Deloss Love, Jr., in his book *The Fast and Thanksgiving Days of New England* documented these occasions. His book is another reminder that America is a Christian nation founded by those who were in covenant relationship with the God of the Bible!

The following excerpts are representative of the proclamations of days of fasting, humiliation, penitence, prayer and thanksgiving. As you study them, you will get a sense of a people who had a deep relationship with their God.

### 1. Response in the Virginia House of Burgesses to the Boston Port Bill

*The sentiment and determination of the patriots south of New England were represented in the proceedings of the Virginia House of Burgesses. On the reception of the news of the Port Act, all business gave way to the generous purpose to stand by Massachusetts. In resolves penned by Jefferson, they set apart the first day of June as a day of fasting and prayer, to invoke the divine interposition to give to the American people one heart and one mind to oppose by all just means every injury to American rights, and to inspire the minds of His Majesty and his parliament with wisdom, moderation, and justice. These resolves brought down a dissolution; and before others, proposing a congress, could be passed.*

*In Virginia the members of the House of Burgesses assembled at their place of meeting; went in procession, with the Speaker at their head, to the church and listened to a discourse. 'Never', a lady wrote, 'since my residence in Virginia have I seen so large a congregation as was this day assembled to hear divine service.' The preacher selected for his text the words: 'be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee. He will not fail thee nor forsake thee.' The people', Jefferson says, 'met generally, with anxiety and alarm in their countenances; and the effect of the day, through the whole colony, was like a shock of electricity, arousing every man and placing him erect and solidly on his center.' These words describe the effect of the Port Act throughout the thirteen colonies.<sup>2</sup>*

## 2. Ben Franklin at the Constitutional Convention, Thursday, June 28, 1787

*In the beginning of the Contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayer in this room for Divine protection.—Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor.*

*To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance?*

*I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth – that God Governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?*

*We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that ‘except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that built it.’ I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the Builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and bye word down to future ages.*

*And what is worse, mankind may hereafter from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing Governments by Human wisdom and leave it to chance, war, and conquest.*

*I therefore beg leave to move—that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service.<sup>3</sup>*

## 3. Provincial Congress, President John Hancock, April 15, 1775

*In circumstances dark as these, it becomes us, as Men and Christians, to reflect that, while every prudent measure should be taken to ward off the impending judgements; . . . at the same time, all confidence must be withheld from the means we use; and reposed only on that God who rules in the armies of Heaven, and without whose blessing the best human counsels are but foolishness—and all created power, vanity. It is the happiness of his Church that, when the powers of earth and hell combine against it, and those who should be nursing fathers become its persecutors—then the Throne of Grace is of easiest access—and its appeal thither is graciously invited by the Father of Mercies, who has assured it that when his children ask bread he will not give them stone.<sup>4</sup>*

## 4. Proclamation by Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut

During the turbulent and troubling times of 1775, Governor Jonathan Trumbull was moved by God to call the inhabitants of his colony to a day of public fasting and prayer. His proclamation follows:

*Although we have great Reason to adore the Divine Goodness, for the Plenty, and general Health, we have enjoyed in the past Year; yet we ought, with humble Reverence, to take Notice of the Frowns of God, in visiting divers Towns and Places, with Sickness and Mortality, especially amongst the Children:—And also, in still holding his Rod of Correction over us, threatening the Loss of our Privileges and Liberty; and considering that we see not a spirit of Repentance and general Reformation, under his awful Threatenings,—and, that all our Salvation, and the supply of all our Wants, depend on his Pleasure;—to whom we are to seek for all Good.*

*I have therefore thought fit, by and with the Advice and Council, to appoint, and do hereby appoint, Wednesday, the 19th Day of April next, to be observed as a Day of public Fasting and Prayer, throughout this colony, by all Christian Churches and Societies in it;—hereby exhorting both Ministers and People to humble themselves sincerely before GOD,—and mourn*

*for all our Sins, which are the procuring Cause of all the Tokens of Divine Displeasure that we are under;—and deprecate the awful Judgments we are threatened with, and the loss of our inestimable Privileges. Particularly to lament that carelessness and unteachableness of Spirit which appears amongst us;—that we are no more wakened, humbled and reformed, when the awful Judgments of GOD are threatened to punish us:—Earnestly to beg the pardon of our Sins,—and that GOD would graciously pour out his HOLY SPIRIT on us, to bring us to a thorough Repentance and effectual Reformation, that our Iniquities may not be our Ruin:—That He would restore, preserve, and secure the Liberties of this, and all the other British American Colonies, and make this Land a mountain of Holiness, and habitation of Righteousness forever.—That GOD would preserve and confirm the Union of the Colonies in the pursuit and practice of that Religion and Virtue which will honor Him,—And be our greatest Honor and Security.*

*And to offer up fervent Prayers to Almighty GOD for his blessing on our rightful Sovereign, King GEORGE the Third, that He may have the Divine Direction in all his Administrations; and his Government be just, benign, gracious and happy to the Nation, and these Colonies:—That He would bless our gracious Queen CHARLOTTE, the Prince of Wales, and the rest of the Royal Family:—That He would bless, guide and assist the Rulers of this Colony; give them Wisdom and Firmness, in this dark and difficult Day; lead them into right Measures, in all the administrations of Government, and succeed them:—Unite the Hearts of the People to live in all Godliness and Honesty; and preserve all our just Rights and Liberties:—That He would bless and succeed the Gospel Ministry, and make it the Power of GOD to the Salvation of many Souls; and build up the Churches in Faith and Holiness:—Bless and smile on the College and means of education, that our children may be trained up in the love of GOD and their Country, and in all useful Knowledge;—and succeed the Endeavors used to civilize and christianize the Heathen:—that it would please GOD to bring forward the springing of the Year, and give suitable Seasons;—cause the Earth to yield its Fruits and Increase;—smile upon the Labors of his People;—dispose them to Industry and Frugality;—give them Opportunity quietly to attend their Business;—and crown the year with his Blessing;—cause Glory to dwell in our Land, and give Peace to Israel.*

*And all servile Labor is forbidden on said Day.<sup>5</sup>*

What was amazing about this proclamation? Trumbull had his colony on their knees, repenting of their sins, on April 19, 1775, the day that the British regulars fired on our brave minutemen on the church lawn in Lexington—the day of the “shot heard around the world.” God lovingly and graciously timed these two events so we would be in prayer as we faced the world’s greatest military power.

5. Continental Congress, March 11, 1780

*It becomes us to endeavor, by humbling ourselves before God, and turning from every evil way, to avert his anger and obtain his favour and blessing. It is therefore recommended . . . to implore the sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth to remember mercy in his judgements; to make us sincerely penitent for our transgressions; to prepare us for deliverance, and to remove the evils with which he hath [visited] us; to banish vice and irreligion from among us, and establish virtue and piety by his divine grace . . . to bless all schools and seminaries of learning, and every means of instruction and education; to cause wars to cease, and to establish peace among the nations.<sup>6</sup>*

6. President John Adams, Proclamation of a Day of Fasting, March 23, 1798

*The safety and prosperity of nations ultimately and essentially depend on the protection and blessing of Almighty God; and the national acknowledgment of this truth is not only an indispensable duty, which the people owe to Him, but a duty whose natural influence is favorable to the promotion of that morality and piety, without which social happiness cannot exist, nor the blessings of a free government be enjoyed; This duty, at all times incumbent, is especially so in seasons of difficulty and of danger when existing or threatening calamities, the just judgements of God against prevalent iniquity, are a loud call to repentance and reformation.<sup>7</sup>*

## 7. Proclamation by George Washington, January, 1, 1795

*When we review the calamities which afflict so many other nations, the present condition of the United States affords much matter of consolation and satisfaction. Our exemption hitherto from foreign war, an increasing prospect of the continuance of that exemption, the great degree of internal tranquility we have enjoyed, the recent confirmation of that tranquility by the suppression of an insurrection which so wantonly threatened it, the happy course of our public affairs in general, the unexampled prosperity of all classes of our citizens, are circumstances which peculiarly mark our situation with indications of the Divine beneficence toward us. In such a state of things it is in an especial manner our duty as a people, with devout reverence and affectionate gratitude, to acknowledge our many and great obligations to Almighty God and to implore Him to continue and confirm the blessings we experience.*

*Deeply penetrated with this sentiment, I, George Washington, President of the United States, do recommend to all religious societies and denominations, and to all persons whomsoever, within the United States to set apart and observe Thursday, the 19th day of February next, as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, and on that day to meet together and render their sincere and hearty thanks to the Great Ruler of Nations for the manifold and signal mercies which distinguish our lot as a nation, particularly for the possession of constitutions of government which unite and by their union establish liberty with order; for the preservation of our peace, foreign and domestic; for the seasonable control which has been given to a spirit of disorder in the suppression of the late insurrection, and generally, for the prosperous course of our affairs, public and private; and at the same time humbly and fervently to beseech the kind Author of these blessings graciously to prolong them to us; to imprint on our hearts a deep and solemn sense of our obligations to Him for them; to teach us rightly to estimate their immense value; to preserve us from the arrogance of prosperity, and from hazarding the advantages we enjoy by delusive pursuits; to dispose us to merit the continuance of His favors by not abusing them; by our gratitude for them, and by a correspondent conduct as citizens and men; to render this country more and more a safe and propitious asylum for the unfortunate of other countries; to extend among us true and useful knowledge; to diffuse and establish habits of sobriety, order, morality, and piety, and finally, to impart all the blessings we possess, or ask for ourselves, to the whole family of mankind.<sup>8</sup>*

## 8. Proclamation by John Adams, March 6, 1799

*As no truth is more clearly taught in the Volume of Inspiration, nor any more fully demonstrated by the experience of all ages, than that a deep sense and a due acknowledgment of the governing providence of a Supreme Being and of the accountability of men to Him as the searcher of hearts and righteous distributor of rewards and punishments are conducive equally to the happiness and rectitude of individuals and to the well-being of communities; as it is also most reasonable in itself that men who are made capable of social acts and relations, who owe their improvements to the social state, and who derive their enjoyments from it, should, as a society, make their acknowledgments of dependence and obligation to Him who hath endowed them with these capacities and elevated them in the scale of existence by these distinctions; as it is likewise a plain dictate of duty and a strong sentiment of nature that in circumstances of great urgency and seasons of imminent danger earnest and particular supplications should be made to Him who is able to defend or to destroy; as, moreover, the most precious interests of the people of the United States are still held in jeopardy by the hostile designs and insidious acts of a foreign nation, as well as by the dissemination among them of those principles, subversive of the foundations of all religious, moral, and social obligations, that have produced incalculable mischief and misery in other countries, and as, in fine, the observance of special seasons for public religious solemnities is happily calculated to avert the evils which we ought to deprecate and to excite to the performance of the duties which we ought to discharge by calling and fixing the attention of the people at large to the momentous truths already recited, by affording opportunity to teach and inculcate them by animating devotion and giving to it the character of a national act:*

*For these reasons I have thought proper to recommend, and I do hereby recommend accordingly, that Thursday, the 25th day of April next, be humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that the citizens on that day abstain as far as may be from their secular occupations, devote the time to the sacred duties of religion in public and in private; that they call to mind our numerous offenses against the Most High God, confess them before Him with the sincerest penitence, implore His pardoning mercy, through the Great Mediator and Redeemer, for our past transgressions, and that through the grace of His Holy Spirit we may*

*be disposed and enabled to yield a more suitable obedience to His righteous requisitions in time to come; that He would interpose to arrest the progress of that impiety and licentiousness in principle and practice so offensive to Himself and so ruinous to mankind; that he would make us deeply sensible that righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people; that He would turn us from our transgressions and turn His displeasure from us; that He would withhold us from unreasonable disconnect, from disunion, faction, sedition, and insurrection; that He would preserve our country from the desolating sword; that He would save our cities and towns from a repetition of those awful pestilential visitations under which they have lately suffered so severely, and that the health of our inhabitants generally may be precious in His sight; that He would favor us with fruitful seasons and so bless the labors of the husbandman as that there may be food in abundance for man and beast; that He would prosper our commerce, manufactures, and fisheries, and give success to the people in all their lawful industry and enterprise; that He would smile on our colleges, academies, schools, and seminaries of learning, and make them nurseries of sound science, morals and religion; that He would make succeed our preparations for defense and bless our armaments by land and by sea; that He would put an end to the effusion of human blood and the accumulation of human misery among the contending nations of the earth by disposing them to justice, to equity, to benevolence, and to peace; and that he would extend the blessings of knowledge, of true liberty, and of pure and undefiled religion throughout the world.*

*And I do also recommend that with these acts of humiliation, penitence, and prayer fervent thanksgiving to the Author of All Good be united for the countless favors which He is still continuing to the people of the United States, and which render their condition as a nation eminently happy when compared with the lots of others.<sup>9</sup>*

In this proclamation by President John Adams, we see that he has listed the reasons why this special day is needed, how it is to be observed and about what specifically we should be seeking God. Below I have summarized each of these three parts of his proclamation.

### **Reasons for such an event:**

- We need to have a deep sense of His governing Providence and our accountability to Him.
- A society should acknowledge its dependence and obligation to Him.
- In times of danger, we should supplicate Him who is able to defend or destroy us.
- Special seasons of public religious solemnities may help avert evils planned against a nation.
- These special times call us back to our known duties and back to truth; they also give us an opportunity to teach these truths to others.

### **How this day is to be observed:**

- Humiliation, fasting, penitence, thanksgiving, prayer
- Abstain from secular occupations
- Public and private religious duties
- Remember our sins and offenses against God, confess them, and repent of them
- Ask for the grace of His Holy Spirit to enable us to yield in obedience to Him

### **Prayers and intercessions that we should make:**

- Ask that He would stop the progress of impiety and licentiousness
- That we would understand that righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people
- That He would turn us from our transgressions and turn His displeasure from us
- That He would give us unity as a nation
- That He would preserve us from the desolating sword and from pestilence
- That God would give us health
- That our agricultural business would thrive so that there would be food for all

- That He would prosper commerce, manufacturing and fisheries
- That our colleges, academies, schools and seminaries would be nurseries of sound science, morals and religion
- That God would bless our military
- That God would bring peace upon the earth by disposing nations to justice, equity, benevolence and peace
- That He would extend the blessings of knowledge, of true liberty and of pure and undefiled religion throughout the world

## 9. Lincoln's Proclamation, March 30, 1863

On March 30, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a historic Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day:

*Whereas, the Senate of the United States devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation:*

*And whereas, it is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history: that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord:*

*And, insomuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisement in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?*

*We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.*

*But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.*

*Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!*

*It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.*

*Now, therefore, in compliance with the request and fully concurring in the view of the Senate, I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer.*

*And I do hereby request all the people to abstain on that day from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite, at their several places of public worship and their respective homes, in keeping the day holy to the Lord and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.*

*All this being done, in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings, that the united cry of the nation will be heard on high and answered with blessing no less than the pardon of our national sins and the restoration of our now divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace.<sup>10</sup>*

## An Annual National Day of Prayer

In 1952, a joint resolution by Congress called for an annual National Day of Prayer; President Truman signed it into law. In 1988, a joint resolution of Congress, signed by Ronald Reagan, declared the first Thursday of May to be the National Day of Prayer:

### AN ACT

*To provide for setting aside the first Thursday in May as the date on which the National Day of Prayer is celebrated.*

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the joint resolution entitled Joint Resolution to provide for setting aside an appropriate day as a National Day of Prayer, approved April 17, 1952 (Public Law 82-324; 66 Stat. 64), is amended by striking a suitable day each year, other than a Sunday, and inserting in lieu thereof the first Thursday in May in each year.*

### APPROVED

May 5, 1988

Ronald Reagan <sup>11</sup>

## Celebrate the National Day of Prayer with Your Family!

One of the ways that we can pray year round that ensures that we seek God for all the areas of our life is to pray according to the spheres of authority. If we intercede for individuals, families, churches, voluntary organizations and the civil sphere, we will be covering the major aspects of our lives that need continual prayer covering. Following are some suggested items to pray about within each sphere:

- Individual—Pray for yourself and other individuals within your sphere of influence.
- Family—Pray for your family and other families, that the will of God will be done in this family. Pray that these families will represent the character of Christ and that they will be examples of a godly family for others to follow.
- Church—Pray for your own church and others as well as the whole body of Christ.
- Voluntary Associations—Pray for schools, businesses, and ministries that you have a burden for, that God would prosper His will through each of these.
- Civil—Pray for elected officials at all levels of government: local, county, state and national. Pray that they will fulfill their God-given responsibilities to punish evildoers and commend those who do good. Pray that they will refrain from exercising power beyond their jurisdiction.

## Endnotes

1. Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family* (New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1966), 9–10
2. Verna M. Hall, *The Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America*, Vol. I: *Christian Self-Government* (San Francisco, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1966), 336–337
3. William J. Federer editor, *America's God and Country* (Coppell, Texas: Fame Publishing, Inc., 1994), 248, 249
4. Steven McDowell, *America's Providential History* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Providence Foundation, 1989), 137
5. Verna M. Hall, *The Christian History of The American Revolution: Consider and Ponder* (San Francisco, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1976), 407
6. Josiah Benjamin Richards, Compiler and Editor, *God of Our Fathers—Advice and Prayers of Our Nation's Founders* (Reading, PA: Reading Books, 1994), 72
7. Ibid, 150
8. *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 179
9. *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, 285–286
10. William J. Federer, editor, *America's God and Country*, 383
11. Ibid, 464