

The National Day of Prayer

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

May 7, the first Thursday in May for 2026, is the **National Day of Prayer**. How did our great nation come to celebrate a national day of prayer? 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 and therefore in times of distress and calamity they would proclaim days of humiliation and penitence, and they would 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 have been called for 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* has documented these. 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 excerpt of a *Proclamation of a Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer* by the Continental Congress in 1780 is representative of the proclamations of days of fasting, humiliation, penitence, prayer and thanksgiving that were made.

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.

Wow- our political leaders in 1780 were calling our nation to repentance before almighty God! Let us pray for the United States of America, that God will graciously send us revival and reformation that we once again will be a “shining city on a hill.”

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 Regan, declared the 1st Thursday of May the National Day of Prayer.