

WAR - SOME PRAYERS & THOUGHTS

1. War Dominated?

When we are confronted by international conflict we may feel that we do not know how to pray; everything is so complex. Little seems clear and nothing seems black-and-white.

Don't underestimate the effectiveness of the **Lord's Prayer** in this sort of situation.

The media would have war dominate us, and aims for the following – and in this order – to get our readership or attention.

- WAR
- US
- FEAR
- ADDICTION TO MEDIA

The Lord's Prayer frees us from this entirely. It replaces it by

- GOD
- KINGDOM & WILL
- NEEDS
- FORGIVENESS
- PROTECTION

The dangers of media domination, of war saturation, and crippling fear are done away.

We pray for friend and foe alike when we pray for God's **kingdom** of justice and mercy to be advanced. In political complexities the fervent prayer for 'his **will**' to be done frees us from the nigh-impossible task of diagnosing what should be done.

God knows! Trust him – align yourself with him.

In praying for our **needs**, we can cover friend and foe alike, leaders and the led, the guilty and the innocent. We begin to repair the ravages of human violence.

In praying for **forgiveness**, we step down from a position of moral superiority. No longer is it 'us' versus 'them', only God's sinful children. Within his world-wide family, we Christians can see God's wounds by which we are healed, when we look again at our Saviour on the Cross.

In praying for God to 'lead us not into **temptation**', we pray that he will govern our choices. What better prayer for all those involved in conflict at whatever level.

Deliverance from **evil**. This is not a weapon whereby the 'holy' curse an ungodly foe! It acknowledges that evil is within and around everyone, pushing us always away from feeling

and behaving as God wants. Evil is not the problem of 'them'. Evil is the problem of all of us. In praying for deliverance from it, we bring hope to the world.

If we add the doxology to the Lord's Prayer, we assert that above all earthly kingdoms, stands God's Kingdom.

We affirm that national and military might and glory are as nothing compared to the loving might and glory of the Living God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

This keeps War in its context.

Let's NOT succumb to media domination or become addicted to the regular record of violence they bombard us with.

Our contribution to human life will be better if, as St. Paul urged, we think on whatever is *true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report*.

We must not let our caring lead us to be mentally and spiritually dominated by War. The media will try hard to make War '**lord**' it over us. It has no place in that position – as we well know!

2. A Prayer for when we cannot pray.

When we don't know how to pray, *the Spirit himself intercedes for us*. [Romans 8:26] This first prayer of mine might be useful to many who feel like this.

- Acknowledge how you feel.
- Be honest with yourself and God.
- Let the Holy Spirit take and use your honesty, rather than let the devil drag you down.

Our Sovereign Lord and Heavenly Father,
We feel bewildered by the pace and power of events,
and worried about the future.
We don't know really how to pray.

**May your Spirit, therefore, take our thoughts for peace
and turn them into prayer.**

We ask this through your crucified but now risen Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. A Second Prayer

Here is a general prayer. The advantage of such a general prayer is that it retains God's sovereignty to do what he wants and it cannot fall into the trap of being a verbal command to God to do what we think is best!

'O God make Bush and Blair drown'. Those of other faiths may 'pray' like this, but Christians should not curse another – for that's what 'praying-against' amounts to.

We cannot pray 'against' a person whom God loves and to whom he has given free-will. Only the Devil binds people; our task is to release them.

We can – and *must* – pray against Evil operating through people, enslaving them, distorting them, and goading them to do what God does not want.

That's very different!

Prayer is not a spiritual weapon by which we seek revenge or mete out judgement. We should leave the latter to God! He's likely to do it more fairly than you or I!

Heavenly Father,
We turn to you in our need for **Peace**.
Overrule the forces of evil that would destroy it;
strengthen all forces of good that would establish it.

So that your created children world-wide may live
in harmony with you and with one another.

We ask this through the Prince of Peace,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

'Pray as you can, not as you can't' has always been sound advice.

Like the lad with the loaves and fishes, offer to God what little you have; acknowledge any confusion and uncertainty, and the smallness of what you have to offer. Then let God take it and do great things with it.

'The forces of evil...' Evil gets focused in places of power. What is not readily apparent is not necessarily less evil than that which is blatantly so. Self-interest, pride and domination can express themselves in atrocities, but can also infiltrate the widely-accepted policies of 'good' people.

When I use the phrase *'strengthen all forces of good'* I am affirming God's ability to use people and forces, which do *not* have the label 'Christian', in his purposes for the world.

This includes, of course, those of other religions, or of none, who seek peace.