

A Prayer for the New President

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by Bob Vander Plaats

President Trump will join religious leaders on Saturday to lift up prayers in the Washington National Cathedral at the post-inaugural prayer service. The service this time carries an additional urgency to cry to God for healing our divided nation, where many are angry and frustrated and feel disrespected and ignored.

Candidate Trump is now President Trump. His leadership and his example will either unite and heal or further divide us.

I consider myself a friend to President Trump. The last time I met with him, I offered him words of encouragement versus endorsement. My commitment to him then, as it is now, is to cheer him on when he leads well and hold him to account when he misses the mark.

Perhaps no one understood the roots of leadership better than the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He said that if you want to be the greatest, you must be willing to be the least, and that real leadership is not realized by pushing others down only to build yourself up.

Inspired by the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, Dr. King said the test of a leader is the desire to be a servant, putting the cause of the greater good above self-interest. I pray President Trump embraces "cause above self" leadership.

God holds us accountable for the talents and gifts he gives us. There is no greater accountability than to the gift of leadership. This is why he instructs those called to lead to

do so with all diligence. So let us pray that President Trump leads with diligence.

What does diligence look like? God tells us in Exodus that it begins with capable leaders. President Trump is a talented and business-savvy leader who has built a world-class empire. But Scripture also requires leaders to fear God. Why? The writer of Psalms tells us that is the beginning of all wisdom. We need a wise leader who diligently seeks wisdom.

Let us pray that President Trump will bend his knee and bow his head in humility before God to receive divine guidance and wisdom.

Exodus also instructs us to select leaders of truth. We need leaders who know just from unjust and righteous from unrighteous, who know God's truth. Let us pray that President Trump immerses himself daily in God's word and allows truth to be his compass.

And, finally, Exodus instructs us to select leaders who hate dishonest gain. Let us pray that President Trump will be a leader with trusted and demonstrated integrity.

I've heard people suggest we need another Reagan today. I politely disagree. We need a Lincoln.

President Lincoln inherited a deeply divided country. He knew that unity would be discovered and embraced only around justice, righteousness and truth. Thus, he called upon the nation to return to God and his principles. Lincoln's leadership was vital in unifying and healing a nation around God, the only hope for healing and uniting.

So today and in the many days to follow, let us pray that President Trump's leadership will be one that restores, unites and heals our nation.

Bob Vander Plaats is the president of the Family Leader, a

nonprofit Christian organization.