

Des Moines police, pastors kneel together in prayer

DES MOINES, Iowa – On Monday evening, June 1, over 100 pastors, religious, community, and government leaders met on the steps of the Des Moines Police Department to pray for Iowa's governing leaders and to ask God to bring peace, healing, and restoration to a nation in turmoil over the death of black Americans at the hands of police.

The meeting was inspired by [the "kneel down" event in New Orleans](#) and the peaceful, [kneeling resolution of a standoff between police and protesters in Des Moines](#), both on Sunday.

On Monday evening, police officers in Des Moines again took a knee, this time to receive prayer from community pastors.

"It is vitally important for the Body of Christ to come together like this, cross-denominationally, city/suburb, cross-ethnically, and stand as one, and that can only come through Jesus Christ," said event moderator Al Perez of Help Des Moines, a group of pastors that seeks to meet community needs in Des Moines. "And it looks like what's going on behind me right here. ... We are the intercessors, but we are also the answer to prayer at the same time."

Perez, with assistance of The FAMiLY Leader Vice President of Church Engagement Greg Baker, contacted a wide diversity of pastors across the metro and surrounding areas, asking them to join with each other and government officials in praying for peace and resolution.

In addition to police officers, the pastors prayed over guests Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie, and Des Moines Chief of Police Dana Wingert.

“Tonight marks a breakthrough,” said Baker. “For six years we’ve been working to get church leaders and government leaders to partner together. So far, we’ve built successful partnerships in the areas of policy and community organization, but this is the first time that we’ve seen leaders in government and in the Church come to the end of themselves and realize they need to partner together in prayer.”

Baker continued, “There was genuine Christian community here tonight. There was something special going on. The Bible tells us to honor our leaders, and this was a great example of the Church doing it.”

Gov. Reynolds took time at the event to thank pastors for ministering not just to her, but to Iowa communities in need of healing and hope.

“The power that prayer and you have working through our community and our elected officials – that’s just the beginning of what is possible,” she said. “So thank you for forging those relationships, for reaching out to law enforcement in our community and for making a difference each and every day.”

Pastor David Sixtos, who helped negotiate the kneeling standoff between police and protesters Sunday evening, also attended the Monday evening event.

“We have the same heart for the police and for the protestors,” Sixtos said. “We want Jesus to be the peacemaker and allow God to do what He wants to do.”

“We are here because we know the real answer to these problems is Christ. The real need is transformation from within,” said Pastor Luke Hukee at Walnut Creek Downtown Church. “God is powerful and bigger than any race divide or injustice, so we believe that gathering together and praying is the best thing we can do.”

The hour-long event included prayer for Gov. Reynolds, Mayor Cownie, Chief Wingert, police officers as a whole, pastors of minority churches, pastors of large churches, small churches, college ministries, the youth, all the schools in the Des Moines area, student and college ministries that are working with troubled youth, Latino pastors for the community affected by the pandemic, and for the division between denominations. The event concluded with prayer by women who serve in parachurch ministries that seek revival and transformation.