

The Timeless Voice: Why our legislature needs to pray

Commentary by Greg Baker

Like in most state capitols across America, the Iowa State Capitol begins each morning in prayer. As the culture becomes more secular, many wonder, what is the future of morning prayer? Is it any longer appropriate in today's culture? Is it good use of the state's time and resources? Is the state just merely keeping a tradition?

I believe opening each chamber in prayer is the most important work that the Iowa Legislature does each day, and if prayer was to be removed not only would the legislature suffer, but so would the people of Iowa.

When King Solomon was crowned king over Israel, he had big shoes to fill. His father, King David, was perhaps Israel's best king. David was not a perfect king, but he was a very good king. King Solomon knew that it would not be easy to replace David, and he also knew the gravity and importance of his position.

In 1 Kings 3, God offers Solomon anything that he would want, to which Solomon responds, "Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" (1 Kings 3:7-9).

Solomon asked God for wisdom. Why? Because Solomon knew if he was going to govern the people of Israel well, he needed wisdom from above. The role of the king is difficult. Not

every issue that comes before the king is black and white. If the king is going to administer fair justice, he must have wisdom from God. Solomon understood this, and he asked God for that wisdom.

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Every morning that legislature opens in prayer our governing officials are humbling themselves before the same God of David and Solomon. They are saying, “I am not that smart. I do not have it all together. God, I need you, and your wisdom to govern this great people of Yours.”

If our government leaders do not seek the Lord to carry out the difficult tasks before them, they will be more likely to govern from pride and earthly wisdom instead. But no earthly wisdom can bring about true, fair justice. It will bring out a cheap substitute and will leave the king and the people calling for more.

The tasks before Iowa and our nation are much too great *not* to pray to the God who created the heavens and the earth. We, as people, are far too weak to carry this on our own. God invites us to share our load with Him. Let Him carry the burden, for we are inadequate to do so without Him.

Behind the gavel in the Iowa House and Senate hangs a portrait of President Lincoln. As we start each morning in prayer, let's remember these words President Lincoln spoke in 1863: “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!”

That is why our governing officials must start their morning in prayer. As a state and nation, we must continue to be humble and ask God for the wisdom we all need from Him. Let us never become too proud to pray to the God that made us.

[Click here to watch Greg's short video, "Congressional prayer: So much more than a tradition."](#)

Greg Baker is vice president of church engagement for The FAMiLY LEADER.