



A PRAYER FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY

Reading

Prayer played an important role in the American struggle for independence. On the first morning of the First Continental Congress (September 5 – October 26, 1774), the Reverend Duche, dressed in his Episcopal vestments, prayed the 85th Psalm.

John Adams describes the experience: “I never saw a greater effect produced upon an audience. It seemed as if heaven had ordained that psalm to be read on that morning.

George Washington was kneeling there, alongside him Patrick Henry, James Madison, and John Hancock. By their side there stood, bowed in reverence, the Puritan patriots of New England, who at that moment had reason to believe that an armed soldiery was wasting their humble households. They prayed fervently for America, for Congress, for the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially for the town of Boston, whose port had been closed and in which the British troops were being quartered.

And who can realize the emotions with which they turned imploringly to heaven for divine help. It was enough to melt a heart of stone. I saw tears gush into the eyes of the old, grave, pacifist Quakers of Philadelphia.”

John Adams, in a letter to his wife, September 1774

Leader: In the spirit of those who gathered in 1774, let us turn imploringly to God to give us the grace our country needs and pray together Psalm 85.

Side 1: You once favored, Lord, your land,
restored the good fortune of Jacob.
Restore us once more, God our Savior.

Side 2: Please give us life again,
that your people may rejoice in you.
Show us, Lord, your love;
Grant us your salvation.

Side 1: I will listen for the word of God;
surely God will proclaim peace,
To his people, to the faithful,
to those who trust in God.

Side 2: Near indeed is salvation for the loyal;
Prosperity will fill our land.
Love and truth will meet;
justice and peace will kiss.

Side 1: Truth will spring from the earth;
justice will look down from heaven.
God will surely grant abundance;
our land shall yield its increase.

Side 2: Prosperity will march before the Lord,
And good fortune will follow behind.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Pause for reflection.

Song: “*This is My Song*” – Finlandia. Jean Sibelius

This is my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for lands afar and mine.
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country’s skies are bluer than the oceans,
And sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine;
But other lands have sunlight too, and clover,
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine.
O hear my song, thou God of all the nations,
A song of peace for their land and for mine.

This is my prayer, O Lord of all earth’s kingdoms:
Thy kingdom come; on earth thy will be done.
Let Christ be lifted up till all shall serve him,
And hearts united learn to live as one.
O hear my prayer, thou God of all the nations;
Myself I give thee; let thy will be done.

Pause for Reflection:

As we celebrate July 4, 2018, what do you implore God for our country, for our world?

What are your hopes, your dreams for our country, for our world?

Sharing.

Intercessions

Leader: O God, you have called us to peace for You are Peace itself.
May we have the vision to see that each of us, in some measure,
can help to realize these aims.

Reader 1: Where there are ignorance and superstition,
All: Let there be enlightenment and knowledge.

Reader 2: Where there are prejudice and hatred,
All: Let there be acceptance and love.

Reader 1: Where there are fear and suspicion,
All: Let there be confidence and trust.

Reader 2: Where there are tyranny and oppression,
All: Let there be freedom and justice.

Reader 1: Where there are poverty and disease,
All: Let there be prosperity and health.

Reader 2: Where there are strife and discord,
All: Let there be harmony and peace.

A Jewish Blessing*

Leader: Let us pray together.

My God, our creator, continue to create a world of equality and just living where the whole of creation enjoys life at its fullest; where there is neither the ruler and the ruled; nor the powerful and the powerless; nor the dominant and the dominated, but where all experience God's grace and live happily knowing that it is God, the giver of life, who cares for all of us.
Amen.

Angeling B. Esquierdo, Phillippines*

Closing Blessing:

Leader:

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers,
half-truths, superficial relationships,
so that you will live deep within your heart.

All: Amen.

Leader:

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you will reach out your hand to comfort them and change their pain to joy.

All: Amen.

Leader:

And may God bless you with the foolishness to think that you can make a difference in the world, so that you will do the things which others tell you cannot be done.

Source Unknown. Canada.*

All: Amen.

**Taken from 600 Blessings and Prayers from Around the World, compiled by Geoffrey Duncan.*