

Prayer chain - pray for the 'mountain' of politics (authorities, government, justice)

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The **public powers** are the (competent) authority, the power that reigns over us. This is theirs by right as the government of the legitimate and legally elected people. There are also dictatorships, which unfortunately are far from representing the ideal of a just government - at the service of all the people. **Public powers** exercise authority and power. **Authority** is the ability to make laws and regulations, and **power** is the ability to impose and enforce them. This is called law enforcement.



The highest **Authority** and the **Sovereign one** is the God of heaven, who is made known in the Bible, the Word of God. However, God does not immediately manifest Himself as the highest Lord, because He has delegated the "rule" over the planet to man. He remains the rightful King above all kings, and he holds world politics in his hand: *He dismisses and He appoints kings (Dan. 2:21)*. Sometimes regimes go away faster than they started. God uses governments, even dictatorships - even if sometimes it seems we only perceive so little - to ultimately achieve **His goal**. All governments should in fact be convinced that the **Ten Commandments are always "good"** for any society. Christians are the salt of the earth, and "until he comes" a **natural resistance** in the face of widespread degradation and anarchy.



In our country, there are six levels of "public powers": (1) The Federal State (Belgian), (2) the communities (Flemish, Wallonia-Brussels, German-speaking), (3) the regions (Flemish, Walloon, Bruxelles-Capitale), (4) the provinces, (5) the towns and municipalities, (6) not to mention the European level which tends to gain more and more influence. The highest authority at all levels is the parliament. So with **six governments and parliaments**, we are a **very complex country**. This alone is already a matter of prayer. King Philip is our **head of state** His function is more of a ceremonial nature, but he may possibly influence the formation of the (federal) government.

Public power is a servant of God.

In his letter to the Romans (13:1-6), Paul explains that God established higher authorities; that **Christians are supposed to obey** the authorities, pay their taxes, in short, be **responsible citizens**. *"Render to Caesar what is Caesar's" (Matt 22:21)*. The authorities can therefore intervene where necessary. The Word of God establishes an exception: *when a Christian must obey the Word of God rather than men (Acts 4:19)*.

The State and the Church

The State and the Church each have **their own ground and their own task**: to one the **civil /secular** interpretation and to the other a **spiritual** interpretation (*"My Kingdom is not of this world", John 18:36*). The State must not interfere in the (internal) affairs of the Church and the Church must not be officially engaged in earthly politics (but rather, for example, confront

authority with the Word of God). The prophets in the Bible(especially the "minor prophets") often express criticism towards kings and rulers, make protests against **social injustice**, the exploitation of the weak, justice that is below the mark, etc.

Call to prayer for the authorities

Paul also gives us the following assignments in *1 Tim. 2:1-2*: *"I urge then, first of all, that **petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving** be made for all people, for **kings** and all those in **authority**, that we may live **peaceful and quiet lives**, in all godliness and holiness"* (NIV). When we pray for the authorities, the blessing comes to us (as well as to the Kingdom of God). The spread of the gospel is not hindered (or less so). In addition, it is good to pray for the authorities as follows. Mainly: whether they become Christians or as Christians they do their work in good conscience. But also: that the officials (non-believers) **respect God's prescriptions**. And that they follow the general "directive" of Jesus (*Mk 9:35*), that is to say *that the one who would be the greatest is called to serve and not to dominate all others*.

At that moment, we see something happening in this text: *"**The heart of the king** (authorities) is in the hand of the Lord like streams of water. He leads him where he wants"* (*Prov 21,1*).

How should we pray? Along the following lines:

Give thanks for:

- **Peace** in our countries, our great **freedoms** and rich possibilities: **food, clothing and housing, religious freedom and freedom of conscience, health care, education**, etc.
- Our **authorities**: the king and his family, minister-presidents, ministers and parliamentarians, burgomasters(i.e. mayors)
- Our historic **Christian heritage** in Europe: the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ, the salt which is spread throughout society.
- May Christians be, light and salt, **examples** of loyalty and have a positive, yet wisely discerning attitude towards the authorities.
- **Christian organizations** and political initiatives, such as the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) and related national and regional parties and movements, which always defend Christian values and norms beyond party boundaries (name them specifically).

Ask forgiveness for:

- **Our own** lukewarmness, lack of compassion and perseverance, lack of prayer for politics or commitment towards it.
- For the fact that **our country** has, to a large extent, **abandoned** the Lord and with Him the references that are good for us.

Pray (and plead) for:

- **Stable governments** at all levels, with as many people as possible who still take God into account.
- That born-again **Christians** be elected to the highest levels.
- **Contacts** between Christians and people within the authorities: may God open doors, so that the gospel breaks through at all levels.
- For justice and **integrity**: that corruption be tackled and a transparent policy be pursued.
- Authorities that take into account **biblical and Christian values** such as a sense of responsibility, subsidiarity, openness, solidarity, the natural family, the value of human life and respect for the order of creation.

- For a **broad religious freedom**: that the government to value and involve the **churches as co-workers (partners)**, and not to reject them as a threat (against secularism which wants to ban all religion from public life)
- For current **prophetic Christian voices** to be heard more clearly in the media (not silenced).

Concrete prayer topics by level:

- For the **federal** level:
 - for social justice: a fair (re) distribution between **rich and poor**, so that the gap does not widen further,
 - the **natural family** as the norm: supporting rather than undermining marriage,
 - **respect for life** (unborn, elderly),
 - pay attention to creation, a green environment and a healthy lifestyle,
 - wisdom in **migration policy** (who is allowed asylum and who does not?), with the **integration** of (real) refugees,
 - against **anti-Semitism** and **racism**,
 - tackle **crime** firmly (pray for the police),
 - for a good community solution: a positive attitude/sharing between Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels (no polarization),
 - that Belgium play a positive role in foreign policy, be a **peacemaker in conflict zones** (including Israel)
- For policies at **Walloon and Brussels** levels: pray for the practical development of these values: solidarity, safe **neighbourhoods** with opportunities for all **young** people, fair contracts and working conditions
- For the **European** level:
 - for equitable care for the poor, a wise balance in economic solidarity
 - that **pro-life** groups speak out with a stronger voice (on abortion and euthanasia)
 - that countries and regions can do a lot on their own (Europe must not become a Superstate),
 - for **migration policy**: that the EU have an open heart for (real!) refugees, and a good **integration** policy; that many Muslims find Christ here (pray for the Arab Churches in Belgium and Europe)
 - that the EU to promote laws that highlight and **strengthen** the ordinary **family**: against pressure groups based on gender ideology
 - for plans to respect **nature** and **natural resources** in order to prevent more serious **disasters**.
 - for a genuine **peace process** in conflict zones, through consultations and agreements, with genuine attention to **human rights**. Among other things also, secure borders for **Israel**...
- Pray **concretely for the politicians** that you know and that God puts on your heart; naming them individually.
- For **foresight and vision in the spiritual battle**. Behind what we see, there is a "war" going on. *The "mystery of iniquity" is fully at work (2 Thess. 2:7,8)*. Focus your prayer on what you know to be true, without looking for "conspiracy theories" anywhere, in random people. Of course, we see some who preach a **world religion**, a global **economy**, a world **leadership**. We also see a cultural battle "to the death" of **free thought** (humanism, secularism), indifference and **extremism against** Christian foundations... Ask God how to pray. You can possibly fast with an open Bible...

