

Even if My Greatest Hopes Comes True

Total Time: 20 min

Note: This prayer guide would be appropriate for politically mixed groups before the election, and for groups that find themselves rejoicing after the election. It can also be used in a personal devotional time.

OPENING | 2 min

PSALM 118:9 (NIV)

*It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.*

PSALM 20:7 (NIV)

*Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.*

When life goes the way we hoped and prayed, we rejoice! We thank the Lord for answering our prayers, and we celebrate the anticipation of a better future. We feel a great sense of relief, and we want to be with others who share our joy. That's good!

Scripture is also filled with cautionary tales about putting our hopes in finite people. Often, when we are in positions of power and influence, we become less sensitive to God's Spirit. Our hearts can become dismissive, numb, or even cold toward those with whom we don't agree, associate, or identify.

Scripture gives us a different approach. We can hold political victory with humility, recognizing that even the best political leaders are limited in their wisdom and impact. We can ground ourselves in Christ and follow the way of Jesus as outlined in the Sermon on the Mount.

BREATH PRAYER | 2 min

Find a comfortable, quiet space for you and/or your small group to rest.

A breath prayer is one that can be said silently or out loud in a single breath while breathing in or out.

We begin our prayer time with one minute of silence. Invite everyone to practice a breath prayer during this silence, saying the first line in their minds as they breathe in, and the second line as they breathe out. It may be helpful to sit with both feet flat on

the floor and with hands open in a posture of opening ourselves to the Spirit and releasing the things we are carrying to God.

*(as you inhale) "Holy Spirit, fill me."
(as you exhale) "I lay my wins and losses before you."*

RESPONSIVE PRAYER | 1 min

One: God of the ages, you are unchanging.

Many: Give us eyes to behold your majesty.

One: Loving Savior, you are sovereign.

Many: We confess that our understanding is limited. We confess that too often we put our hope in a particular political outcome.

One: Ruler of all nations, you are holy.

Many: We pledge our allegiance to you and you alone.

All: Our hope is in you, Lord. You are our deliverer. You are our refuge. You are the only one who is worthy of our worship.

SCRIPTURE READING | 1 min

PSALM 146: 3-7 (NIV)

Do not put your trust in princes,
in human beings, who cannot save.
When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
on that very day their plans come to nothing.
Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God.
He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
he remains faithful forever.
He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets prisoners free.

PROVERBS 24:17 (NIV)

Do not gloat when your enemy falls;
when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice.

SILENT REFLECTION | 7 min

Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your reflection on the following questions and allow emotions to surface. You might want to record your thoughts in a journal.

1. What contrasts do you see in Psalm 146 between human political leaders and God?
2. Where have you felt arrogance around your political views this season? Where have you experienced disgust and impatience with those who don't see things as you do? Where have you been tempted to gloat (Proverbs 24:17)? In what ways have your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions mirrored the world instead of embodying the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)?
3. No politician or political party perfectly mirrors the way of Jesus. Where do you deflect or minimize the words, actions, or policies of your preferred politician or party that do not reflect the kingdom of God? Where have you been tempted to compromise your integrity in order to elevate a party or candidate?
4. Proverbs 24:17 implies that we have choices about what fills our hearts. What practical steps can you take to point your heart toward the way of Jesus when you're tempted toward arrogance, gloating, and deflection? What voices can you surround yourself with that will help you in this?

COMMUNITY PRAYER | 5 min

We invite you into a time of corporate prayers of repentance and affirmation of our allegiance to Christ alone. Reflect silently for 3 minutes, then confess aloud any personal sin or the sins of your communities or people groups. After each prayer, the community responds, "Lord have mercy."

You may want to pray along the lines of the prompts below.

"Even if the election goes the way I am hoping, Lord, I know, that many people will be disappointed, angry, and scared about the future. Give me grace to reach out as a peacemaker without dismissing their concerns, demeaning them, or gloating."

"Even if my candidates win, Lord, I know that they, too, are sinful human beings and may harm some of your beloved children with some of their attitudes and policies. Keep my heart soft, Lord, that I might hear the cries of the hurting and respond as a true neighbor."

"Keep me honest, Lord, so that I might speak with humility about my own party. Give me courage to speak truth to power, even when those in power are on my side."

CLOSING PRAYER | 1 min

One person prays aloud:

Righteous and holy God, we confess
our great vulnerability to the sins of arrogance,
especially when we are in places of success and power.
We choose today to reaffirm our allegiance to You
as the only rightful King on the throne of our lives.
We bring our hopes, dreams, time, energy, and resources to You
To use as You choose, with no strings attached.
We choose today to say, "Even if our greatest hopes are realized,
we will trust and follow You alone because you are beyond any human political leader."
We ask You to give us grace to be honest about the faults of our own party
and to reach out as peacemakers
to those who have been on the other side.

AFFIRMATION AND BENEDICTION | 1 min

The Affirmation is an excerpt from the Confession of Evangelical Conviction --
<https://www.evangelicalconfession2024.com>.

The Benediction is from Scripture, Jude 1:24-25 (NIV)

Read aloud together:

We stand united in our confession of faith in Jesus Christ, resolved to uphold the truth of the Gospel in the face of political pressure and cultural shifts. We commit to being a light in the world (Matthew 5:14-16), and faithful witnesses to the transforming power of Christ's love. We pray that God's Spirit will revive our Church and strengthen Christ's people to be agents of his presence and blessing in this turbulent age.

"To him who is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen."

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