

# Praying for Political Enemies

Total Time: 20 min

**Note:** This prayer guide would be appropriate for politically mixed groups as long as the political enemies are not named. It can also be used in a personal devotional time.

## OPENING | 2 min

### MATTHEW 5:43-45 (NIV)

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."*

### LUKE 6:27-28 (NIV)

*"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."*

### 1 PETER 3:9 (NIV)

*"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."*

In today's politics, people on every side have concluded that their opponents are not well-meaning, patriotic Americans who simply disagree with them about the best policies for the future. Instead, each side cites significant reasons to believe that their opponents are knowingly or unknowingly participating in truly evil schemes that are actively harming innocent people and will lead to the destruction of everything we hold dear in our country.

Loving our enemies is utterly impossible apart from God's Spirit. But because He commanded us to do this, we can be confident that he also will enable us to do it.

## BREATH PRAYER | 2 min

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

A breath prayer is one that 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 bring all my feelings to You."*

## RESPONSIVE PRAYER | 1 min

One: Jesus, You experienced cruelty and injustice.

**Many: You are not distant; you know the pain of those who suffer under brutal regimes.**

One: Compassionate God, your heart is always turned toward those who are vulnerable and suffering.

**Many: You are Rescuer. You are Deliverer. You are Savior.**

One: God of justice, you hold all to account.

**Many: You do not turn a blind eye to evil.**

One: God of mercy, you cause the sun to rise on both the good and evil. You give rain to both the just and the unjust. (Matthew 5:45)

**Many: Give us grace to receive your mercy.**

One: Holy Spirit, you enable us to live in obedience to your call.

**Many: Fill us and guide us, Lord.**

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

## SCRIPTURE READING | 3 min

### MATTHEW 5:43-48 (NIV)

*This is part of Jesus' most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount.*

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own

people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

### PSALM 62:5-8 (NIV)

Yes, my soul, find rest in God;  
my hope comes from him.  
Truly he is my rock and my salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.  
My salvation and my honor depend on God;  
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.  
Trust in him at all times, you people;  
pour out your hearts to him,  
for God is our refuge.

### PSALM 109:1-8 (NIV)

*This is an example of an Imprecatory Psalm in which the writer is brutally honest with God about his feelings toward his enemies.*

My God, whom I praise,  
do not remain silent,  
for people who are wicked and deceitful  
have opened their mouths against me;  
they have spoken against me with lying tongues.  
With words of hatred they surround me;  
they attack me without cause.  
In return for my friendship they accuse me,  
but I am a man of prayer.  
They repay me evil for good,  
and hatred for my friendship.  
Appoint someone evil to oppose my enemy;  
let an accuser stand at his right hand.  
When he is tried, let him be found guilty,  
and may his prayers condemn him.  
May his days be few;  
may another take his place of leadership.

## SILENT REFLECTION | 5 min

Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your reflection on the following invitations to pray. Allow your emotions to come to the surface and record your thoughts in a journal.

In the first Scripture here, the Matthew passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commands His followers to love their enemies. The next Scripture, the excerpt from Psalm 62, gives us insight on the process for doing that, especially in verse 8 (“pour out your hearts to him”). The third passage, the excerpt from Psalm 109, is an example of what it looks like to pour out our hearts to the Lord with raw honesty when we are dealing with enemies.

Jesus’ words in Matthew remind us that loving our enemies is not the same as trying to conjure up affection. Loving our enemies is a choice not to return evil for evil, but instead to pray for them whenever they come to mind. Of course, we don’t pray that our enemies would succeed in doing evil, but we can pray that they would experience the transformative love and mercy of God.

Take some time to write your own version of Psalm 109. Name names, call out evil! God already knows your heart and He longs for you to come to Him in your anguish. Pray that the enemies you named would experience the transformative love and mercy of God. Plead for God’s help to love well and to receive and reflect His goodness towards your enemies.

## 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.

*“Holy God, even when we were your enemies, you loved us and died for us (Romans 5:6-11). We confess that we have not been willing to treat our human enemies with the same mercy that You have shown to us. Forgive us, Father.”*

*“Lord, we recognize that our desire for justice for those who are most harmed by cruel leaders and policies comes from you. Father, you are the one who delivered your people from bondage in Egypt. Jesus, you are the one who delivered people from all kinds of diseases and evil spirits, and on the cross you delivered us all from the ultimate enemy. We confess that often we have tried to bring about deliverance and justice in our own ways instead of listening to your Spirit and following your lead. Forgive us, God.”*

*“Lord, you have commanded us to love our enemies. By faith, we choose to say yes to you even though we know we cannot do this without your Spirit. We present ourselves to you, weak as we are, and ask you to use us in accordance with your purposes.”*

## CLOSING PRAYER | 1 min

*One person prays aloud:*

Holy and righteous Lord,  
You oppose those who harm anyone made in your image.  
Yet you also love them and desire for them to know and experience your mercy.  
We pray that their hearts would soften  
And that they would become attentive and obedient to your voice.  
Show us how to live as peacemakers in this divided world  
for your name’s sake.  
Amen.

## 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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