

Creative prayer ideas

Creative idea for praying for people in power

On 7 November 2012 our issue in focus was people in power. It was co-incidentally a significant day for those in leadership in our world as it had been announced earlier that morning that Barack Obama had been elected for a second term in the White House and the headlines were dominated by David Cameron's talks with leaders of the Syrian opposition.

We found this a helpful way to get past the two dimensionality and dehumanisation that sometimes surrounds global leaders – typified in the way we so often refer to them by their surnames alone . We often try to get behind the vast numbers in statistics about those living in poverty and need to the individual – as personally loved by God as each of us are – but it's important that we remember this about people in power too. We are instructed to pray for our leaders but sometimes our prayers get disconnected from our hearts – and God's – for these people. We are often angry (sometimes righteously) or distrustful and quick to reduce these individuals – for all the attention they get – to nothing more than stereotypes of cardboard cut-outs.



You could use this idea in a variety of settings. We did it coming out of a time of sung worship focused on the power and humility of Christ which used songs such as Jarod Cooper's 'King of kings, Majesty', Brenton Brown's 'Humble king' and Liz Baddaley's 'Kneel me down' and we prayed together as a group for all of the leaders in turn – each person leading for a different one. But you could use it as a station or an element of led intercessions.

You will need cut out people shapes, pens, a list of leader's names you want to pray for, a flip chart or large piece of paper, a world map and access to a book of names or the internet.

Praying for people in power

1. Make a list of the surnames or official titles of leaders you want to pray for and write this up on a piece of paper or flip chart. We chose:
 - David Cameron – UK
 - Barack Obama – USA
 - Chancellor Angela Merkel – Germany and the Eurozone
 - Robert Mugabe – Zimbabwe
 - Bashar al-Assad – Syria
 - Kim Jong-un – North Korea.
2. Write each leader's name on a cut out person making sure to emphasise their first name. Look up what this name means and write this next to their name. For example, using the list above:
 - *David* means 'beloved'
 - *Barack* means 'blessings from God'
 - *Angela* means 'messenger from God'
 - *Robert* means 'famous'
 - *Bashar* means 'deliverer of good news'
 - *Jong-un* means 'righteous cloud'.
3. Hold each leader one at a time in your hands, remembering that they were created by God to bear a unique part of his image. He has a hope and future for each one, and sees them as his child – a unique individual loved and treasured whatever they have done or are doing. Pray for them as people first – and then as leaders – that they would model Christ's servant leadership and lead their people with humility and respect. Try if at all possible to pray for them just by their first name.
4. Ask God to give you his heart for the leader you are praying for – and pray for them, their nation and their situation using the meaning of their name as a way in if that helps you – whether they seem to match their name or not in your opinion.
5. Lastly, place each leader on the relevant country that they are leading and pray a final blessing on their nation and their leadership of it.