

2nd Opinion: Praying for political leaders makes a significant difference

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A former Texas legislator told me the other day of sitting in his chair on the House floor, considering a bill, and thinking about what the Bible says. This man is not a regular churchgoer now, but that day in Austin, he remembered the Bible talking about loving the children. He voted for the children of Texas in a vote that shocked some people and promised to cause him political difficulties.



Ferrell Foster I don't share his name because we were just visiting about different matters, and this was a passing part of the conversation.

He next said something important for today. Someone complained to him recently about one of this year's presidential candidates. The former legislator asked the complainer if she had been praying for the candidate.

Two good points come from this brief conversation. Let's work backwards.

It's important that we pray for people running for office and for those who

win, even if we don't like the winner. When we pray honestly for someone, we begin to identify with that person. We think about his or her struggles, abilities and opportunities. We begin to feel a genuine closeness with the person.

I have heard public prayers for public officials that were more political statements than entreaties to the God of the universe. Prayer, at its best, includes deep humility. The Creator is allowing me to have a conversation. That's amazing. That should be humbling.

God understands our world, our nation, our state, and our communities better than we do. God is sovereign, so we should not act like we are.

One of the things I've told my now-grown kids is that Jesus is never on the ballot. We are voting for flawed individuals in need of God's grace and guidance.

We pray for politicians because it matters to them. The men and women we elect are thinking and working to do the best job they can for their constituents. Your prayers may ignite a reminder to care for children, pursue justice or restrain evil in the mind of a legislator or other official, as it did with the former lawmaker I mentioned.

The issues governments address are massively complex, with all sorts of unintended consequences to actions. Government has an important responsibility, but it never is going to solve all of our problems—never. We invest time and money in pursuing good government because anarchy is destructive and dangerous. The Bible notes God uses government to restrain evil. But it is wrongheaded to think government can solve all our problems.

What all of us need most in regard to politics is humility and civility. ([Click here](#) for a Christian Life Commission resource about civility.) None of us has all of the answers. We need God's help and guidance.

Let's put our faith in God, not politicians, but then let's pray for and work with the politicians to pursue the wisest courses possible. It's part of God's plan and our responsibility.

Ferrell Foster is director of ethics and justice for the Texas Baptist [Christian Life Commission](#).