

Succeeding in Life and Love: The Cost of Freedom Philippians 2:12-18

Prayer Link

Prayers for the Community

American Troops and their families; all families, tribes and nations to know and experience God's peace.

Additional Requests: _____

SUGAR RIVER'S PRAYER MINISTRY IS SEEKING REQUESTS

Did you know that Sugar River UMC has an active E-Prayer Chain? A group of people have covenanted to pray for special requests they receive periodically via email. If you have a request you would like the E-Prayer Chain to pray for, please send it to: amberw@wisconsinumc.org. Amber will send out the request as soon as possible to activate our circle of prayer.

If you would like to become a "Link" on our E-Prayer Chain, please send your email address to Amber at the address listed above. New "links" are always welcome!

Inspirational Link

Thoughts and Insights from Worship

The Word Link

Daily Readings from God's Word

Monday, July 7 – This week we will examine in greater detail God's calling on us as Christians as we seek to be good citizens and to be engaged in the issues facing our world. Let's begin with the biblical teaching regarding how we respond to our leaders. Remember that the leaders – the kings and emperors that Paul and Peter wrote about were not believers – they were pagans and they were often known for their immorality. Yet notice the posture Christians were to have toward their leaders. **Read Romans 13:1-7**. How does this passage speak to Christians today? Does this mean we cannot criticize or question our leaders? How might this passage have troubled American Christians at the time of the American Revolution against Great Britain? Finally, **read I Timothy 2:1-3**. End your devotional time praying for our governmental leaders, for those running for office, and for God's guidance in your own decisions you will make this year regarding our elected leaders.

Tuesday, July 8 – At times American politics seems to tear our nation apart. Among the bright spots following the devastation of September 11, 2001 was the sense of national unity – for a time we were not Democrats or Republicans – just Americans. Early Christians struggled with intense disagreements about certain matters of faith – whether a Gentile convert had to be circumcised; whether Christians were bound by the Law, or free to live under grace; whether meat sold in the markets throughout the Empire, which had been slaughtered according to pagan practices, dedicated to the gods and goddesses, could be purchased and eaten by Christians; and a whole host of other issues. In our passage today Paul teaches Christians how to disagree on these issues. **Read Romans 14:1-23** carefully looking to see where you find biblical principles that might apply to how we disagree today as Christians in the area of politics. In the midst of great acrimony that develops during political campaigns, how can you as a Christian be a bridge builder and maintain the “unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace”? Pray for those with whom you disagree politically, that God will give you a heart of love for them, and the capacity to learn from them, even if you cannot agree with them.

Wednesday, July 9 – For the next three days we will take the time to read through the first letter of Peter in our New Testament. This letter was written during a time when Christians were being persecuted for their faith. They lived in a culture whose values were often the very opposite of those of the gospel. Persecution, coupled with a sense of alienation from the culture, could have led to a state of despair among the believers. Peter is likely writing from the city of Rome – the heart of the Empire – and he calls this city “Babylon” in the letter – Babylon being the ancient city that epitomized all that was evil. Yet Peter challenges his readers, not to despair, but to be filled with hope, and to live their lives in a way that allows Christ to shine through them. **Read I Peter 1** and look specifically for those of Peter’s words which speak to how you are called to live as a Christian in America today.

Thursday, July 10 – **Read I Peter 2 and 3.** How might 2:1 relate to how we engage in politics? How do verses 11-12 shape how we live as Christians? The section on submission to rulers, masters and spouses, is aimed at calling Christians, who had experienced freedom in Christ, to live in such a way toward those non-Christian in authority over them, that Christ was seen in them. What picture of Christ do your bosses, spouse, and those you disagree with politically, see in you? How does 3:8-12 guide us as Christians in the area of our engagement in politics? In other areas of our lives?. Scan today’s readings and use these verses as an outline to guide you in a time of prayer.

Friday, July 11 – Our engagement in politics and our political views can become idols for us – they can become so important that they begin to eclipse our faith – don’t let this happen to you! At the same time we can sometimes simply feel overwhelmed by what happens in our world – leading to feelings of hopelessness. Peter will not have us become idolaters, nor people without hope. I Peter ends with wonderful words of help for us in the Christian life as we seek to live for God. **Read I Peter 4 and 5** and underline or note the verses that speak most clearly to you.

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The Spirit Link

God’s Action Point for My Life

I feel led by God to...