



# World Christian Fellowship

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## Praying for leaders

Wisdom is one of our greatest needs.

As finite, fallen creatures, navigating the twists and turns of a complex, chaotic world, we often find ourselves at a loss for what to do next. And that's only when we stop to consider the tough decisions.

Perhaps even more significant is the wisdom we exercise naturally in all the little decisions in life we don't pause to ponder. The overwhelming majority of our actions are not premeditated, but decided instinctively, without reflection.

What comes out in these moments is either a trajectory of life with self at the centre or walking in various measures in step with the Spirit.

The stakes are even higher for leaders, who are making decisions for others.

### **Tale of Two Wisdoms**

**James 3:13–18,**

**James 3:15**, *This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.*

- There is a kind of wisdom, exercised by humans, and human origin.
  - There is another kind of true wisdom, exercised by humans, but of divine origin.
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- One is heavenly, spiritual, and godly.
  - The other, “earthly, unspiritual, demonic”

Fortunately, our Father is an exceedingly generous giver, and he loves to respond with favour when we humbly petition him for wisdom.

**James 1:5**, *But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

It is good to pray often for wisdom for yourself and it is one of the most important things you can pray for your leaders.

**James 3:17**, *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.*

We will use this scripture as a guide for praying for what our leaders would be.

## 1. Pure

Pray for your leaders' purity.

Sexual purity, yes, especially in our highly sexualized society, but "pure" here is so much more than simply that.

Pray that they would be pure in their conduct, blameless, meaning "above reproach".

**1 Timothy 3:2**, *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach;*

**Titus 1:6–7**, *if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. <sup>7</sup> For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,*

Pray that their motives would be pure, not mixed.

**2 Corinthians 7:11**, *For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

Pray that their minds would be pure, not distracted.

**Philippians 4:8**, *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things*

Pray that the words of their teaching would be pure, not deceptive.

**2 Corinthians 2:17**, *For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.*

**James 3:1**, *“We who teach will be judged with greater strictness”*

Pray that their counsel would be pure and not lead others into sin, and that they would be wise in deciding whom to empower to represent the church as fellow leaders.

**1 Timothy 5:22**, *Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure.*

Pray that they would lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and be free to run with endurance the race that is set before them.

**Hebrews 12:1**, *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

## **2. Peace-Loving**

Pray that your leaders would love peace. Leaders in the church should not be quarrelsome.

**1 Timothy 3:3**, *not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous;*

They should not be indifferent to peace (peace-neutral), but rather peacemakers (literally, “peace-loving”).

Pastors should not be “aggressive” quick to argue and pick a fight. Rather, they should be the kind of men who “have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels”

**2 Timothy 2:23**, *But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.*

**1 Timothy 4:7**, *But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.*

They must be willing to go the extra mile to keep others from getting swamped in silly arguments.

This means that it is essential for church leaders to correct others. Being genuinely peace-loving means loving peace enough to move toward conflict and controversy for the sake of seeing peace come from it.

Pastors who are truly peace-loving don't avoid conflict, and don't enjoy picking a fight, but are eager to engage with disagreement for the sake of bringing about the peace of agreement in the truth.

Pray that your pastors would hold firm.

**Titus 1:9**, *holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*

Such rebuke is not fight-picking, but peace-making, purging the church from gospel distortions, and ushering in the peace that we enjoy when we share in the truth.

**James 3:18**, *“A harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace”*

### 3. Gentle

Wisdom from above is gentle. In a world that says you must assert yourself and grab the bull by the horns to make a difference, divine wisdom runs in a different direction.

Knowing that our Lord is sovereign and engaged, and building His church, enables the Lord's servants.

**2 Timothy 2:24-25**, *And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,<sup>25</sup> in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,*

Pray that your leaders would have enough confidence in God to trust his will and ways and play their part in his plan with patience and gentleness.

### 4. Open to Reason

Good leaders are good listeners. Wisdom from above teaches a leader that he emphatically does not know it all, and desperately needs the help and insight of colleagues and congregants, and even his critics, to gain fresh perspective and continue to learn as he's leading.

"Pray that your leaders would have enough confidence in God to trust his will and ways."

Leaders in the church are teachers.

**Hebrews 13:7**, *Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.*

**1 Timothy 3:2**, *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach;*

**2 Timothy 2:24**, *And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,*

**Titus 1:9**, *holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*

They must do more than listen. They must speak. But it is essential that they be nothing less than good listeners.

**James 1:19**, *“Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.”*

Yes, “every person” — and every leader all the more.

Pray that your leaders would be quick to hear, open to reason, and easily persuaded by good sense, argument, and rationale.



## 5. Full of Mercy and Good Fruit

True wisdom is inevitably practical. It comes out in action.

**James 3:13**, *“By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom”*

The church in particular, such good fruit includes mercy.

Leaders who are simply just, and not merciful, have no place in the church. The church is the most mercy collective on the planet. Her leaders must know God’s mercy for them and show God’s mercy to others.

It’s true for every Christian, and all the more important for leaders.

**James 2:13**, *“Judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment”*

## 6. Impartial

Impartiality is an especially important virtue for leaders. It’s bad enough when anyone plays favourites and treats others unfairly, but when it takes root among the leadership, the effects multiply. The whole church soon suffers.

The impartiality of God is a clear, and often overlooked, theme in the New Testament.

**1 Peter 1:17**, *And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear*

**Galatians 2:6**, *But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favouritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me*

**Romans 2:11**, *For there is no partiality with God.*

**Acts 10:34**, *Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.*

**Luke 20:21**, *Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favouritism, but teach the way of God in truth:*

**Ephesians 6:9**, *And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

**Colossians 3:25**, *But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.*

Pray that the wisdom that comes from Christ would make his under-shepherds increasingly fair and impartial.

**James 2:1**, *My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.*

**James 2:9**, *but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.*

**1 Timothy 5:21**, *I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.*

## **7. Sincere**

Sincerity now brings us full circle to purity at the beginning of the list. The term literally means “without hypocrisy.”

Pray that your leaders would practice what they preach, that they would be doers of God’s word and not teachers only.

Pray that they would have the spirit of the apostles.

**2 Corinthians 2:17**, *“We are not, like so many, peddlers of God’s word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ”*

Pray that they would be free from people-pleasing and too much concern with public relations.

Pray that the leaders of Christ's church would renounce "disgraceful, underhanded ways" and "refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word," but that in a world of spin, posturing, and deception, they would lead "by the open statement of the truth"

**2 Corinthians 4:2**, *But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*