



I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Pray for and live in peace

“Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” These are the famous words of JFK (John. F. Kennedy) from his presidential Inaugural Address on January 1, 1961. Wise words! Rather than seeking to be served by others or by your country, seek to serve your country and others. Certainly, a country filled with such humble servants and attitudes would be blessed with peace, unity, and strength.

Such wise thoughts don’t belong only to worldly leaders of the past though. Our God desires the same thing. As we live under a government that he has established for our good, God wants us in turn to serve our government. But not to worry! This doesn’t mean you have mandatory community service, military training, or political campaigns in your future! (Though, feel free to do so if the Lord moves your heart in such a way.) Rather, God wants us to serve our communities and our government in simple, humble ways.

The verses for our consideration this week help us to understand some of these ways we can show love and serve others. So what can I do for our country? Pray! Paul told the young pastor Timothy that he (and now we) can offer petitions, or requests to God, on behalf of the government. For example, we might pray for God to strengthen and support those who have difficult and challenging jobs. We can also pray fervently for God to give wisdom and diligence to those who lead. Other prayers we can offer include prayers of thanksgiving for those who lead. Yes, you heard me right—*thanksgiving*. Even if we disagree with those who lead and their laws or policies at times, we can still be thankful that we have leaders whom God has allowed into positions that serve our good.

When we have attitudes that are eager to serve our country through our humble living and fervent prayers, we will in fact accomplish much. We will do the very thing that Paul wrote at the end of verse two—we will contribute “peaceful and quiet lives” that let the light of Christ shine through us in all we can do. What a profound joy, then, that as we serve Christ in love, so also we serve our neighbor and our country. God bless us in such service!

Prayer: Lord of all, in this coming week of national thanksgiving, give to me a humble heart of thankfulness that is eager to pray for and serve others, including those who serve me in our government. Amen.