

Allow Ads

REV. SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ on National Day of Prayer: Teaching Our Children to Pray the Micah 6:8 Way

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[Pastor Samuel Rodriguez](#)



COMMENTARY

When I look into my granddaughter's eyes, I see the future. I see a little girl who will one day grow up and go out into the world to make a difference.

And I wonder: What will her world be like?

I truly believe the holiness of this present generation will determine the health of the next generation. As a father and grandfather, it is my responsibility to teach my children and grandchild "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

This starts with prayer. How we teach our children and grandchildren to pray — not just telling them to pray but showing them how to pray — will have a mighty influence on the world they will inherit.

Do Justice

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once [prayed](#):

"Our loving Father, from Thy hand have come all the days of the past. To Thee we look for whatever good the future holds. We are not satisfied with the world as we have

found it. It is too little the kingdom of God as yet. Grant us the privilege of a part in its regeneration. ...We are looking for a new earth in which dwells righteousness. It is our prayer that we may be children of light, the kind of people for whose coming and ministry the world is waiting.”

Some may wonder what doing justice has to do with prayer, but I would suggest that doing justice begins with prayer. And not just the prayer, “God, bring justice,” but “God, use us in your work for justice.”

We must start with prayers of repentance. We must ask God for forgiveness for how we have failed to see the image of God in one another, how we have failed to love our neighbors as ourselves. We must commit to turning from our prejudices and biases and pursue biblical justice. It is critical that our children and grandchildren — especially our young ones — learn this from us.

Love Kindness

We ought to teach our children and grandchildren others-centered prayer rather than self-centered prayer. Apostle John reminds us, “The one who loves God should also love his brother” (1 John 4:21).

The more we pray for others, the more we learn to love them and to show them kindness. Rev. Billy Graham said, “You cannot pray for someone and hate them at the same time.” This is why we are admonished by Christ to pray for our enemies. It does not negate the pain we have felt or the injustice done to us, but it places our hurt in the just and loving hands of God. As we pray for others, God will transform our hearts. We cannot love kindness, nor can we teach our children to do so, unless we allow our hearts and minds to be changed by the Holy Spirit.

Walk Humbly

It is especially important for our children and grandchildren to see our vulnerability in prayer. One of the most powerful, beautiful prayers we can ever pray is the prayer of desperation: “I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24). That is the prayer one desperate father prayed thousands of years ago as he begged Jesus to save his son who was afflicted by a demon. It is the same prayer I prayed as I watched my daughter fight for her life last summer.

In July 2020, my family was stricken with COVID-19. While I was asymptomatic, my daughter ended up in the intensive care unit, barely able to breathe. As she inched closer and closer to death, I wept and wept and wept.

And I prayed, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

Through that horrible time, powerless to do anything about my daughter's suffering, I learned a hard, but important, lesson: The God who masters the outcome is the same God who manages the process.

I had to trust him through the process as well as believing him for the outcome, whatever it would be — whether he healed my daughter or not.

When the desperate father cried out to Jesus, he was not turned away. His words were a confessional declaration disrupting every notion of self-dependency. Admitting unbelief, doubt, anger or sadness is not weakness. Our children and grandchildren need to see us pray like this.

If we desire a more just, equitable, and peaceful world for our posterity, then we need to teach them to pray — and pray with them — the Micah 6:8 way.