



October #116-2021

Author

Ian Jeal

Canopy of Prayer



Dear Praying Friends in Europe,

'Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship.' Acts 8 26-27

Listening and responding to God's prompting is an important part of prayer. How often do we feel that once we have prayed about something, our part is finished? Are we too often content to let go of our prayers and then let God do his bit, never imagining that we might be part of the answer? In these verses from Acts we see that, not only did Phillip respond to God's call, but the consequences were the conversion of a man of influence.

Is it enough to simply pray for those in authority?

As we see in this account of Philip, sometimes we need to go further in our call to pray for all those in authority. I remember the time when a member of Parliament shared her experience of being asked by numerous Christian organisations for her help, but never once had one of those organisations offered to pray for her.

Paul urges us in 1 Timothy 2:1-2 that "petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all those in authority." It is good to read and to be informed about the challenges that our leaders face and the decisions they have to make in order to pray effectively for them. Sometimes though we need to be prepared to go further and get our hands and feet dirty. In society, politics and politicians are often regarded as lepers, something or someone we should not get too close to in case we get contaminated; even in the church some hold this view.

I think we are all capable of expressing our views to one another on this or that policy that is being carried out by those in leadership and we often complain when we feel they are getting it wrong. We are in the enviable position of never actually having to make the tough decisions that maybe cause someone to lose their job, determine life or death issues or rule if our nation goes to war or not. Those in leadership, particularly political leaders, do sometimes have to make conscientiously difficult and challenging decisions. So is it enough to simply pray? Could we as Christians also look for ways in which we can be more supportive?

Having spent 20 years as a missionary working around politicians I have learnt that, yes, prayer is important but also we need to understand that being aware of the needs of the individual is just as important. Not many of us may have the privilege of being able to go into a Parliament and see the hearts of those who seek to serve their constituents, but we can all seek to be used more by God.

I once heard it said that prayers have feet, and they are often ours. What this means is that if we pray for those in authority we need also to be willing to go and to get involved. In the words of Isaiah, 6:8 'Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"' And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" This may seem daunting but it does not need to be; it may be a simple question of sending a letter of encouragement to a Member of Parliament when they speak or act in an

area that interests you; or writing an email of support when you hear about a personal issue like illness or bereavement. Perhaps you could arrange to meet with your local MP or Councillor, so that you can ask "How can I pray for you?". It's not confined to politicians; how about a word of encouragement to your pastor or your boss at work? Like Phillip we need to keep our eyes open to the needs not only of those around us but also to those who have authority over us. Acts 8:29 'The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." The result of his obedience contributed to



the establishment of the church particularly in what is now Ethiopia.

I give thanks for all those who have heard the call and gone to the places of authority around Europe - and indeed the world - to serve those in authority, to pray with and for them and to serve them in their attempt to serve society. There are many prayer groups within many national Parliaments all across our continent as well as in the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, that seek to draw politicians, civil servants, parliamentary assistants and advisers together to discover and grow their relationship with Jesus. Praise the Lord!

Let us pray

- For those working to foster prayer in our institutions and parliaments.
- For ourselves to have open hearts ready to hear the voice of the Lord calling us to action to pray and encourage those in leadership, and especially politicians.

Additional Prayer Points:-

- Pray for those who may find it difficult to afford more expensive gas and electricity prices this winter, and that governments will put measures in place to protect the most vulnerable.
- Pray for solutions to be found in the ongoing argument over the possible withholding of funds from EU member states who violate the rule of law

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Update:-

The European Commission has presented its first ever comprehensive [EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life](#). This EU strategy is not limited to policy actions within the European Union but includes all external relations. The Commission "will step up engagement in the education sector to promote full compliance of education material with UNESCO standards of peace, tolerance, co-existence, and non-violence." Tomas Sandell of ECI said "This is a strategy document which we as European citizens can take great pride in"