



Prayer at City Council & Board Meetings Strategic Action Toolkit



**CONGRESSIONAL
PRAYER CAUCUS
FOUNDATION**

faith
IMPACT
NETWORK



**NATIONAL STRATEGIC
CENTER**



“Know Your Rights”

There has been a concerted effort to intimidate local government leaders into forfeiting their free exercise of religion by using a false narrative of separation of church and state. This resource will equip government leaders to know their rights.

Every American has a right to believe in God, or have no belief at all. Every American who has faith has the right to live it in every aspect of their lives, and government leaders are no exception. We simply cannot be convinced that we can only practice our faith in our hearts and in our homes.

A government official asking people to pray with him or her is certainly not new. George Washington issued the first presidential call to prayer on October 3, 1789. He wrote, “It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor.” Since then, there have been over 130 presidential calls to prayer, and in 1952, President Harry Truman signed a law making the National Day of Prayer an annual event.

To this day, Congress and statehouses open their sessions with prayer. Also, over a thousand federal and state government leaders who are a part of the American Prayer Caucus Network pray regularly in their official capacity. We need to equip our local government leaders with this valuable information.

History is on our side, but frivolous lawsuits or leaders acquiescing to the threats, furthers their agenda to redefine the Free Exercise of Religion.



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Talking Points and Legal Precedent

- The Supreme Court stated, "We find no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government to be hostile to religion..." (*Zorach v. Clauson, 1952*)
- The Constitution does not require separation of church and state, but it expressly guarantees that **each citizen has the right to freely exercise his/her religious beliefs openly.**
- The attempt to force prayer out of the public arena is intolerant of religion and actually is hostile to religious people which is directly contrary to our national tradition and our First Amendment rights. (*Lynch v. Donnelly, 1984*)
- "state-sponsored prayer is **constitutionally permissible.**" (*Marsh v. Chambers, 1983*)
- "As a practice that has long endured, legislative prayer has become part of **our heritage and tradition...** similar to the Pledge of Allegiance, inaugural prayer, or the recitation of 'God Save the United States and this honorable Court' at the opening of this Court's sessions." (*Town of Greece v. Galloway, 2014*).

1. [Full Talking Points with Legal References](#)
2. [History of Prayer in America](#)
3. [The Truth about the Separation of Church and State](#)



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If your local government WANTS to protect prayer...

Follow these easy steps to ensure that there is an official policy in place that will protect the right to pray.

- 1) Print out the applicable model prayer policy.
- 2) Present the Model Policy and Talking Points to a like-minded City Council and/or School Board Member via an in-person meeting or email and ask if they will add it to their next meeting's agenda for consideration. If you cannot identify a like-minded Member, email your request for Consideration (along with the supporting documents) to the City Clerk and/or the Clerk of the School Board and request they be distributed to all Council/Board Members for consideration.
- 3) If the Council/Board opts to add the policy to the agenda for a vote, plan to attend the council meeting where the vote will occur.
- 4) If allowed, plan to have some people willing to speak in support of the policy. Be sure to check in advance for any applicable rules and deadlines that might apply to speaking at the meeting such as signing up before the meeting begins.
- 5) Review the talking points provided [HERE](#) and share them with others who are speaking.
- 6) Encourage other supporters to attend as well even if they don't speak – the outward show of support will be noticed and considered.

Model Prayer Policies:

- 1) [Policy on Public Prayer at Municipal Meetings, Events, and Other Gatherings](#)
- 2) [Policy on Public Prayer at School Board Meetings](#)
- 3) [Policy on Public Prayer at School-Related Events and Gatherings](#)



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If your local government DOES NOT WANT TO open in prayer...

Follow these easy steps to ensure that prayer is part of their meeting regardless of their position or politics.

Sign Up to Speak:

- 1) Ascertain the date and time of your next City Council or School Board meeting.
- 2) Contact them to determine the policies and procedures regarding citizens speaking at their next meeting. (Ex. When do I need to sign up by? How do I sign up? How long do I have to speak? What time should I arrive? How should I address them prior to speaking?)
- 3) Download the [“Prayers in Congress”](#) Resource Book.
- 4) Click on the month of the meeting and scroll to the specific date. Print the prayer for that day.
- 5) On the day of the meeting, arrive on time with your notes and be sure to speak clearly and project so that everyone can hear you.
- 6) Once it is your turn to speak, address the Mayor/Chairman and the body as a whole. Then, begin, “On this day in *(blank year)* the following prayer was prayed on the floor of the United States Congress.” Upon finishing, thank the board for their time.
- 7) Encourage other supporters to attend as well even if they don’t speak – the outward show of support will be noticed and considered.



[Click here](#) to tell us about your successes!

[Click here](#) for more ideas and Faith Impact Opportunities!

For more information, contact

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04

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