

SBC leaders urge prayer as Biden embarks on presidential journey

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) – Leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) are encouraging Christians to pray for new U.S. President Joe Biden and his administration following his swearing-in during inaugural ceremonies on Jan. 20.



Greear

J.D. Greear, SBC president and senior pastor of multi-campus The Summit Church in the Raleigh-Durham area of North Carolina, thanked God “again that He allows us to live in a country where we have freedom and peaceful transfers of power.”

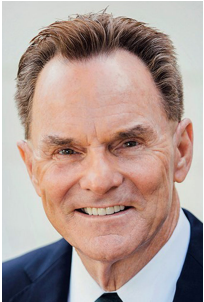
In comments emailed to Baptist Press, Greear asked “all Great Commission Baptists to join me in praying for our new president, Joe Biden, and vice president, Kamala Harris. God commands us to show honor and to lift them up in prayer.”

Great Commission Baptists is a voluntary alternate means of identifying the SBC and convention churches that was approved by messengers to the 2012 SBC annual meeting.

“Among other things, Southern Baptists care deeply about the protection of life, the promotion of prosperity for all, and the preservation of religious liberty,” said Greear. “We pray

that God would grant us those things through the new administration, and we urge the new administration to pay careful attention to them.

“We pray that God would protect them and their families, give them wisdom in making tough decisions, and apply justice to all people and all of life in a way that brings our nation together.”



Floyd

Ronnie Floyd, president of the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville, urged Christians to pray every day for Biden and new U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris.

“Regardless of the political party in power, they are subject to God’s power and we need to pray for them,” Floyd wrote in his weekly newsletter released on inauguration day. “Praying for President Biden and all the nation’s leaders has nothing to do with their party of affiliation. It does, however, have everything to do with your personal responsibility as a Christian.”

Basing his remarks on 1 Tim. 2:1-2, Floyd encouraged followers of Christ to acknowledge God has placed Biden and Harris in their offices, to pray for their protection, to ask God to provide them with wisdom “so they will see what God desires,” and to petition God to help them to make decisions that protect America and allow “us to be able live tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity.”

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Biloxi native Russell Moore, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, encouraged Christians to pray that Biden and Harris “would have the wisdom of humility, a sense of justice, and a mind for peace.”



Moore

Regarding justice, Moore said some things the new president plans to do should gratify Christians, such as protecting refugees whose lives are endangered, halting the separation of children from their mothers at the southern U.S. border with Mexico, and accelerating the effort to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other Biden positions “should grieve us,” Moore said, citing Biden’s expansive support of abortion rights.

“We can pray for President Biden the same way we should pray for ourselves – for success in every good thing that accords with justice, and for lack of success in every bad thing that doesn’t,” he wrote in a column published inauguration day by

The Gospel Coalition.

Moore said, “[I]t might be wise for Christians to watch our own souls by means of the emphases in our prayers. Christians who support President Biden should emphasize in their prayers God changing [Biden’s] mind on unjust or imprudent matters – and those who oppose President Biden should emphasize God granting blessing and success to every just and wise initiative of his.”

In his inaugural address, Biden pledged he “will be a president for all Americans” and called for Americans to end an “uncivil war.”

In a 21-minute speech, Biden focused on a call to unity. He said his “whole soul is in” uniting the country and invited “every American to join me in this cause. Uniting to fight the foes we face – anger, resentment and hatred, extremism, lawlessness, violence, disease, joblessness and hopelessness. With unity, we can do great things, important things.

“I know that the forces that divide us are deep, and they are real, but I also know they are not new. Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal that we are all created equal and the harsh, ugly reality that racism, nativism, fear, demonization have long torn us apart.

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Joe Biden, U.S. President

Biden’s stated effort to unite Americans will face strong challenges policy-wise from conservatives and pro-life

advocates who oppose his intention to roll back regulations under the Trump administration and federal laws that saved the lives of unborn children and barred some of the government funding of abortion and abortion rights organizations.

Biden has announced that he will roll back the Mexico City Policy, which prohibits the use of taxpayer funding for abortions and abortion providers in countries outside the U.S.

He has also promised to reverse such policies as not allowing transgender males to compete in high school sports intended only for biological females, and policies prohibiting the use of opposite sex bathrooms by persons who declare themselves to be other than their gender at birth.