

Seeking Peace and Prosperity

Scripture Reading — Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7

Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. — Jeremiah 29:7

There is a kind of piety that has no concern for society. But that is not an attitude learned from the Lord.

If anyone might have thought it was justified to ignore the society around them, it was the Jews, carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. But the Lord commanded them to seek the peace and prosperity of Babylon, their home in exile, and even to pray for it.

You could call this attitude “civic spirit”: not just being concerned for oneself, or one’s family and friends, but also for society at large. Some illustrious Jews, those who sought the peace of Babylon and Persia, come to mind: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Nehemiah, Esther, Mordecai. Some served in high office during the years of exile. Today, many believers in the true God show the same example.

Civic spirit involves taking care of society at large. Your service doesn’t have to be as an ambassador for your government; it can be as basic as serving on your neighborhood association, or picking up broken bottles and litter in the park down the street, making it so that where you live is pleasant and safe rather than the opposite. If no one cares about their community, all their relationships will languish.

Prayer

Lord, we pray for our town or city, our country, our world. It can be depressing to hear of so much trouble in the news. Give us a sense of calling; show us what we can do as salt and light in society today. In Jesus, Amen.

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