

Praying For Nixon

Washington

About 350 supporters of President Nixon gathered on the steps of the capitol yesterday to begin what they said would be a 72-hour fast and prayer session.

Standing beneath American flags and signs saying "God Bless President Nixon," the crowd heard speeches decrying the impeachment proceedings against Mr. Nixon as no solution to the "Watergate morality."

"We should take note that both Hitler and Lenin took power on the heels of leaders made impotent by constraints upon their office and lack of cohesive support," said Neil Salonen, president of the National Prayer and Fast Committee.

The organization, which claims a nationwide membership of about 25,000, was founded in January by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, head of the Unification Church of America. Moon, a Korean, sponsored several weeks of pro-Nixon activities in the capital earlier in the year.

Salonen said some of those at the capitol had come to Washington for a week of

rallies and anti-impeachment efforts by the Citizens' Committee for Fairness to the President.

Rabbi Baruch Korff, chairman of the Citizens Committee, addressed the rally, briefly, saying the group is emulating the "founding fathers who, 198 years ago, declared a day of prayer, a day of fasting."

"Now that we are undergoing a crisis of the gravest dimensions, it is incumbent upon us to seek spiritual divine guidance," he said. Korff's remarks were met with applause and cheering from some of the tourists who paused to watch the rally.

Salonen said each member of the group had been assigned a member of Congress to pray for. "We are praying that God will be with them as they near their critical decision . . ." he said.

The group was predominantly young and white, many bearing signs.

"Who elected the press?" said one sign. "Let God decide," said another.

Associated Press