

The Church and Politics

The question of whether a church should be involved in politics usually arises with each election cycle. Along with the political ads, one often hears about candidates visiting churches on the Lord's Day to speak to members of that church. It's a time when a politician suddenly becomes religious and quotes scripture (usually out of context). Churches, like the one at Clarksville, are asked to hold voter registration drives so its members will be sure to vote on election day. What is a congregation to do? Should we involve ourselves in the political process?

Before we answer this question, it would be helpful to understand the work of the New Testament church. The Bible tells us the work of the church is five-fold: worship (Jn. 4:23-24; Heb. 10:24-25), edification (Eph. 4:14-16), limited benevolence (Acts 1:1-2; 11:27-30), evangelism (Matt. 28:18-20) and encouragement (I Thess. 5:11). One can see God has limited the activity of His church.

Now to the question at hand. Should the church involve itself in the political process? Well, in the spirit of politics, it depends. If we are talking about real, true political issues such as education, foreign policy, the economy, welfare reform, taxes, environment, etc. then the answer is no. While I as an individual am free to agree or disagree with others concerning these issues, the church is not to be involved in such activities. Paul points out that our duty as Christians and citizens is to obey the laws of the land (Rom. 13).

If however, we are talking about moral issues that have become politicized, then the answer is yes. It is this author's opinion that many "political" issues of today ought not to be described as such. Topics like abortion (including partial-birth), homosexual marriage, alcohol and gambling issues, etc. are not political issues, these are moral issues! As such, they should be discussed and the voice of the church must be heard! Paul said, *"but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth"* (I Tim. 3:15). Notice Paul said it's the duty of the church to support the truth. If the church remains silent on these issues, how can it be "the pillar and support of the truth?" Obviously, we can't open up the pulpit to political candidates. We can, though, be sure we not only hear lessons regarding these issues, but take what we know to those around us.

As a Christian I can agree or disagree with others who do not share my personal political belief. However, let us understand one thing: God has spoken and He expects His children to adhere to His teachings. If there is to be change in our communities and in our nation, it has to come from people who desire to see God's will implemented in all aspects of our lives. In other words, change will only occur if Christians are vocal about what is right and wrong. Let us have the courage and boldness needed to stand up and support that which is morally right.

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