

What is the Role of the Church in the State?

Intro: The separation of Church and State has been a hot topic for the last couple of decades. The "government" doesn't want the church meddling in state affairs and the "church" doesn't want the government meddling in religion. The notion that the US is a Christian Nation has been eroded by lawsuits, the removal of public displays of the Ten Commandments, the removal of prayer from school, and a host of discriminatory practices against anything that might be religious in nature. The Red State/Blue State dichotomy disintegrated into a Religious Right and Irreligious Left name-calling match, even though there were Christians and non-Christians, liberals and conservatives in both camps.

So, what is the biblical mandate about a Christian's role in both government and state affairs? How involved should the church be in politics? This week you'll have the opportunity to see what the Bible teaches about the church's role (that would be *your* role) in affairs of the state.

What the Bible Teaches: Break into Groups of Four, read the following Bible verses, and discuss the questions. You may want to jot down notes and thoughts on the back of this page.

What did Jesus teach about our relationship to the government - by word and example - in the following passages?

Matthew 22:17-21; Luke 21:12-13; John 19:6-11

What do these passages teach us about the church's (your) relationship to the government? (You may also want to discuss the difficulties of obedience to these passages - and whether or not you are required to be obedient.)

Titus 3:1-2; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14; Romans 13:1-7

Use the following passages to discuss whether or not a Christian has a place within the government - then discuss what that role might be.

Romans 16:23; Romans 12:8

What I Believe: Take ten minutes for silent reflection and thought. Ask yourself what you believe about the church and state. Use the back of this page to formulate a response to the question:

“What is the role of the church in the state?”

Write your final response here: _____

Articulations: Pair up with one other person and share your response with one another. Take five minutes each. Try to *not* look at your written statement; instead, try to tell your beliefs from your heart. This will prepare you to share whenever you are asked about what you believe.

Therefore: Jesus said His followers should Go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). One of the first steps in making disciples is being ready and able to share the reason for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15), in other words, knowing what we believe, why, and then being able to share it. Sharing your faith is important. This week, find someone—it can be *anyone*—and articulate your belief about this issue. If you have an unchurched/unreached friend whom you can share with, all the better (you can always say you have a homework assignment from church and you'd like to share it with them). Be ready to talk about your experience next week over the meal at your House Church.