

WEEK 1: GOOD GOVERNMENT

For Starters

What was the attitude towards government and politics in your home growing up?

As we start these set of studies, it is worth being honest about the fact that politics can be divisive. Some of us are very passionate and others are not. While these studies aim to keep us focussed on what the Bible says, we realise that some political issues might come up. It will be important that we be quick to listen and slow to speak and that we let our unity in Christ stand above politics.

Today we commence our consideration of the Christian and the State by looking at the purpose of government.

From the Word

Read Romans 13:1-7 and compare it with 1 Peter 2:13-14 and 1 Timothy 2:1-4.

1. What reason does Paul give in Romans 13 for submitting to governing authorities?
2. Do you find this difficult to believe or accept? How is it to be understood?
3. Look up the following passages and discuss what they show us about God's authority over civic leaders: Daniel 2:21; Exodus 9:13, 16; Isaiah 44:28-45:1; John 19:11. How does this make you feel?
4. What does it mean that rulers are a terror to bad conduct? (verse 3)
5. Look again at the first part of verse 4 and also consider the similar statement in 1 Peter 2:14. We tend to be cynical about our governments, but in what ways do you see government promoting what is good for us? List them and then stop and pray a prayer of thanks for all these things.

6. Paul is clear that an important role for our rulers is to punish the wrongdoer. How are we to understand in the light of Jesus' instruction to turn the other cheek?
7. The passages we have looked at show us the purpose for government. Do you see anything in these verses or anywhere else in Scripture that help us answer the question, what type of government system is preferred? Do you think a biblical case can be made for liberal democracy or any other form of government?
8. What is the command to us in Romans 13:1-7? Are there any ways in which you fail in this? Why is that so?
9. When we looked at Psalms last term, we noted God's authority over nations and rulers that mock and oppose him. What is required of all people in all positions everywhere according to Psalm 2:10-12?

For Prayer

Pray for our civic leaders, especially here in Queensland as an election is near.

Pray for judges in our courts as they do the difficult work of bearing the sword.

Pray that we would honour God by wilfully submitting to the law of the land.

Give thanks that Jesus is our true King and his throne is unshakeable.