

Weekly Spotlight: Political Advocacy and Christian Community

It seems timely during an election season to communicate the policies Trinity's Session (elders and pastors) developed more than 20 years ago. After receiving requests to distribute material that critique political candidates, the Session dedicated two meetings to Bible study, prayer, and dialogue. The elders and pastors concluded that participating in such political advocacy would distract from the preaching of the Gospel and create conflict, since sincere Christ-followers often reach differing conclusions on political issues.



Instead, we encourage members to be well-informed and prayerful as they exercise the privilege of voting. Bible study makes us more aware of God's concern for justice and God's expectation that we love our neighbors. Knowing God motivates us to elect good leaders who pursue policies that serve the common good. Yet we don't presume to instruct Christians as to their political ideology, and neither will we allow outsiders to use the congregation to advance their ambitions.

The Bible provides principles as to how we behave in the political realm. 1 Timothy 2:2 instructs us to pray for our civic leaders, regardless of how we feel about them. 1 Peter 2:17 says "Show proper respect to everyone" as we "honor the king." Titus 3:2 says "Remind the people...to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all people."

Therefore, let's be wary of forwarding emails that might spread gossip. If we receive an e-mail that is derogatory, we shouldn't forward unless we know the information to be true. Depending on who wrote the original e-mail, it may be an outright lie or a half-truth—something taken out of context. Check it out through an independent rumor-exposing website like www.truthorfiction.com, www.factcheck.org or www.snopes.com.

It's not that Christians shouldn't talk about controversial issues or the upcoming elections. But to honor God, whenever we discuss politics, let's do so with an attitude of mutual respect. One of the best gifts we can give our nation is to build up strong Christian communities of diverse people united in our Lord Jesus Christ!