

FIVE WAYS CHRISTIANS IN A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM CAN INFLUENCE SOCIETY

1. Keep informed. Issues cannot be judged correctly unless one is attentive to them. This can be accomplished through familiarity with a variety of periodicals, newspapers, magazines, documentaries, and other television news programs. If you can, plan on taking one or more college courses in political science or government. Finally, it is important that Scripture be studied on a regular basis to provide a framework from which to view the events and issues which impact society.

2. Pray. First Timothy 2:1-4 directs that we should pray for those in leadership positions within our society. The benefits of prayer are immense, for it leads to peace (*shalom*), order, balance, and positive relations within the community.

3. Vote. By exercising their power to vote, Christians are able to exert an influence in the world. Learn to be a conscientious voter by differentiating important issues from lesser concerns. Know the issues. During election years, make it a point to watch a debate.

4. Seek political influence. This can be accomplished by debating, writing, and working within the political system. Christians can influence each other and even non-Christians by writing letters to newspaper editors and elected officials, thereby presenting a Christian perspective on relevant issues.

5. Accept a political vocation. Not every Christian will feel comfortable with a career in public office, but there is a great opportunity of service to those who demonstrate the interest, willingness to work hard to further public decency, improve livelihood, and shape society. Being a professional politician is not the only route to a political vocation. School boards, community committees, social action groups provide arenas of influence in society.

From "How to Recognize a Christian Citizen," *Christianity Today*, April 19, 1985.

Key Questions

1. Is a Christian ever obligated to disobey the state?
2. Should a Christian disobey the state in all matters of conscience or only when confronted with an order to deny his faith?
3. Should a Christian only disobey the state when prompted by the Holy Spirit?
4. Should a Christian ever use power tactics when set at odds against the state, especially if it would be for the benefit of the Christian faith?
5. Would the best way to remedy Church and state tensions be by maneuvering as many Christians as possible into political office?
6. Is there anything wrong with a Christian voting into political office an antiabortionist who is also pro-homosexual?
7. Should the state be allowed to impose a religious standard upon the Church?
8. Does the Church have the right to endorse policies which would inhibit the state?
9. What would it be like if we had no government? Can people exist without government?
10. If every legal consideration has been engaged to enforce a good law or change a bad law with no positive results, is it suitable for responsible citizens to engage in civil disobedience?