

The Church and Business / Political Engagement

There is no question that God has called the people of His church to be light in a world that is often dark (Matthew 5:14; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5). The central role of God's Church throughout history is to bring the Gospel message to a lost world (Mark 16:15; 1 Corinthians 1:17), with a focus on delivering the Word of God and sound doctrine (2 Timothy 4:1-3). Our spiritual act of worship and reverence of Christ includes renewing minds by the values that define a Christian worldview (Romans 12:2; 2 Peter 1:3-7) and providing sound reasons for why we hold the doctrines and values that we do (1 Peter 3:15-16). It is therefore of paramount importance that the Church faithfully maintains the integrity of its voice in bringing forth the Word of God and the Gospel message.

In regards to engaging the world around us, Christians are called to maintain a healthy respect for government and institutions of this world (1 Peter 2:11-17; Romans 13:1-7), while remembering that we are citizens of a higher, transcendent kingdom (John 18:36; Philippians 3:20). Ultimately, our allegiance is to God over any earthly institutions (Acts 5:27-29). Therefore the Church should never be nationalized or politicized, but instead should be focused on changing spiritual hearts and minds of people, who then transform the world around them (Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:12, 3:15-16).

So we see that Scripture directly provides a charge to the Church to preach the Word and the Gospel; to promote values that are central to the kingdom; and to respect the government, while ultimately obeying God on issues. There is, however, no directive to church or church leadership to directly engage in the political process. Where Scripture is silent, we should not shout. It is thus the responsibility of the Church to humbly determine how to create the possibility for Christians to bring about kingdom-valued change in the culture, while preserving the integrity of the Church's voice to bring forth the Word and the Gospel.

The Bible also teaches that church gatherings are meant exclusively to bring praise to God and to build community among fellow believers. Jesus demonstrated the importance of zealously maintaining this focus by driving out those who took advantage of the presence of believers to further their own business interests (John 2:17; Psalm 69:9). The apostles laid down rules for church leaders to make sure services were conducted in an orderly fashion that did not distract from or discredit the Gospel. (1 Cor. 14:26-40.) And no one who attends a service is to be made to feel unwelcome or inferior by others in the church (James 2:1-4). Collectively, these passages make clear that we should be very hesitant to do anything that detracts or distracts from the business that God transacts with His people when they are gathered together as His church.

Therefore, as a church, Rockpointe will continue to take a direct and unambiguous stand on moral issues that are central to Scripture (see, e.g., Rockpointe's *Position Paper on Biblical Morality*). We will continue to encourage Christians as individuals to exercise their freedom to take those kingdom values into the public square through political or other means. If certain extraordinary circumstances arise that require our involvement as a church with groups or activities that have a political dimension to them, Rockpointe's leadership will approach and present that issue prayerfully and cautiously.

As a general rule, however, we will not directly engage in a church service or on location with political organizations or other efforts (such as political fundraising, petitions, the wearing of political paraphernalia, and so forth). We will not invite or condone individuals promoting their own political, business, or other personal agendas within our church gatherings—not because we object to what those individuals are doing, but because church gatherings are not the time or place to do it. And we encourage all Christians to remember that, whatever we choose to do, it should always be done in a spirit that honors everyone; loves the Church; fears God; and respects government (1 Peter 2:17).