

Does God Care About Politics?

Texts: 1 Tim. 2:1-2, 2 Chron. 7:14

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On a hot and sticky Philadelphia summer afternoon in 1787 delegates from each state argued over the structure of government for a Constitution that would hold together the diverse “dis-united” States. Some of those had been present in that same room eleven years earlier as signers the Declaration of Independence, staking their very lives on what they believed to be a **God-given vision**: a republic that would be ruled, not by aristocratic land holders, but common citizens wealthy in the love of God and neighbor. Their phenomenal victory over England had a **“David and Goliath quality”** revealing God’s power and providence. What followed were years of bountiful prosperity and peace, but mingled with weeds of selfish interests and greed, particularly the portion of the economy built on slavery. That summer 1787, after weeks of wrangling with issues of representation, defense and trade, all were exhausted and near the point of despair. In the final moments of the session the aged Benjamin Franklin struggled to his feet and was recognized by the chair, General Washington, to address the body. America’s premier scientist and rational philosopher amazed many raising the question,

How has it happened, sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understanding?... When we were (in) danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard and graciously answered... Have we forgotten this powerful Friend...or do we no longer need his assistance? The sacred writing (say) ‘Except the Lord build the house, they labor in Vain’... Without His aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel.

In the thoughtful moment of silence that followed all knew truth had been spoken. After a three-day recess the impasse was ended with the adoption of a plan that divided power between two legislative houses and the executive branch. And, in 1789 chaplains began offering prayer at each session, continuing to this day. Peter Marshall and David Manuel describe in their book, *From Sea to Shining Sea*, God’s role in establishing this nation where various expressions of faith could thrive free from civil oppression, **“It was their shared Christian faith-the mortar that held them together through so many crises.”**(p. 10) Though, devout Christian faith has been often attacked, the Spirit of God resurrected dead religion again and again to dynamic faith and holy living reviving the Christian qualities- love of neighbor and respect for all human life which serve as the foundation upon which of the “Grand Experiment” of democracy stands.

Numerous biblical passages call God's people to prayerful action in support of divinely inspired government, though imperfect through human weakness. Franklin could just have well offered 2 Chronicles 1:10ff, where Solomon prays asking God for wisdom and understanding to rule well. God granted his humble prayer by establishing him king over Israel at the peak of their history.

In the vastly different time, the first-century Church under Roman rule, Paul counsels his young protégé, Timothy, in his first letter, 2:1-4. As Pastor he should lead his congregation to faithfully support all kings and authorities with prayers of intercession, requests as well as thanksgiving that they may peacefully practice their devout faith, leading quiet lives of humility and simplicity, bearing witness to God as Savior for all who believe in Jesus as Lord. Paul says again in his letter to the Romans ch.13, ***(1)Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. (4)For it is God's servant for your good.***

The **VISION** of "One Nation Under God" is our spiritual heritage, with neither religion or state overbearing the other. Proverbs 29:18(CEV) says, "***Without (VISION or) guidance from God, law and order disappear, but God blesses everyone who obeys his Law.***" It seems "We, the people" of America have strayed very far from that divine vision upon which this nation was founded. The sincere spiritual fiber that sustained her throughout most of her history is in retreat today before a climate of selfish greed and promiscuity. That may explain in part the crime, strife, moral degradation, and international decline the United States has experienced the last 50 years. God calls us to passionate faith living out his law of love, even in politics. In *2 Chronicles 7:14* He promises:

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

"Does God Care About Politics?" **YES!** Remember Franklin's question, "**Have we forgotten God?**" God expects our politics to reflect the same care and values he expects for our lives, where **God is supreme** whom we love in awe and respect, and love of neighbor is equal with love of self. What are we to do then? It is up to us, my friends. This "Grand Experiment" of democracy was God's idea. **Put first things first: God first, godly living, loving and serving others as Jesus did.**

It is time for RESURRECTION OF THE CHURCH. It is time for REVIVAL. It's NOT TOO LATE!