



Jeremy White, Lead Pastor
Valley Church

May 16 & 17, 2020

Church and State – A Message for Times Like These

Introduction:

Five Postures for the Church:

Posture #1: _____ (acceptance) – Romans 13:1-6

Three basic possibilities for human government:

_____ (absence of government)

_____ (over-bearance of government)

_____ (presence of government without over-bearance)

Romans 13:1

Posture #2: _____ (asking for permission)

Acts 21:22, 40

Acts 22:25, 29

Posture #3: _____ (negotiation)

Posture #4: _____ (taking legal action)

Posture #5: _____ (peaceful resistance)

Big Ideas and Take-Aways:

- Postures 4 & 5 should be the rarest of occurrences among Jesus-followers, reserved primarily for times of egregious injustice
- There is freedom for Christians to disagree on these postures concerning when and how they might be implemented or applied
- Let's commit to pray for our pastors, our churches and our state and local leaders as negotiations take place
- Let's commit to caring first and foremost about the gospel in relation to everything else

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Personal Life:

1. From what you know via historical knowledge or personal experience, why do you think these issues concerning the relationship between church and state are often so contentious even among believers?

Ponderings:

2. Thinking through the following scenarios, which in your opinion should be considered serious issues of Biblical injustice, and why?
 - Local businesses being placed under “one-size-fits-all” state orders to remain shut down
 - Peaceful demonstrators forced off of State Capitol grounds by law-enforcement acting under orders from the governor
 - Churches being classified as “non-essential” for early reopenings
 - In-person recovery ministries and counseling services being shut down for months on end
3. With so many shades of grey to consider related to these issues, what in your opinion is the best posture for the church to take at this present moment in our local context? Why do you believe this to be true?
4. What fears are you currently dealing with as we anticipate trying to implement various reopening procedures based on state and county directives?
5. At what point, if ever, do you believe the church should proceed to some form of Posture #4 or #5 in the days or weeks ahead? How do we know if and when a circumstance has reached that level?

Promptings:

6. The greatest two weapons we have in our spiritual arsenal are prayer and love. Prayer is how we implement faith internally. Love is how we walk that faith out externally. Talk about some ways in which you will walk prayerfully and lovingly in the days ahead. Try to give specific examples for others to learn or draw from.