



Follow the Leader

Scott Hawkins - Chief Sinner

In this week leading up to the Federal Election I have received a steady stream of emails telling me about which are the "Christian issues" and who I must instruct my congregation to vote for this Saturday. That is both demeaning and offensive, and I won't be doing that. I trust that you will prayerfully vote in a way that is informed by your faith. However, come Saturday night the results will be in and you may be happy, or you may be disappointed with the outcome, or you may have no real confidence in any side of the political spectrum this time around. Whatever the outcome, what should our response be?

Naturally any new or rejigged government will have policies that we are thankful for and others that we find very hard to swallow, but what we do about that is very important.

- We can complain and get angry on social media. And although I think Christian resistance and protest is important, whingeing and whining is not.
- We could throw our arms up in the air in disbelief and say something like, "What else would you expect from politicians!"
- We could disengage from the political process for a while until the next State Election.
- Or a radical alternative might be to actively pray for our elected officials, recognising that God has placed them over us, and that we serve Him as we pray for them.

Romans 13:1-7 says, *"For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God."*

Paul's entire argument here is based upon a fundamental premise: God is sovereign. He possesses ultimate authority. He is the sole authority of His creation. All human authority is delegated to men by God. No one has authority independent of God.

Scripture exhorts us to pray for those in authority. Paul advises his young disciple Timothy and those fellowshiping with him to: *"make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for everyone, for kings and for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour"* (1 Tim 2:1-3).

When we think about what sort of rulers Paul lived under, we realise that we don't have to agree with our authorities or wait until they become believers to pray for them. The early Christians had to live under tyrants like Nero. There was no democratic state. Yet they recognised that government was a God-given institution necessary for the upholding of justice and order, and the limitation of evil.

We may disagree with the judgment and policies of our political leaders, and wish for greater character in them as persons. But we are still exhorted to pray for them.

An ancient church prayer for political leaders, that we may wish to pray now, was: *"Grant to them, Lord, health, peace, concord, and stability, so that they may exercise without offence the sovereignty that you have given them. Master, heavenly King of the ages, you give glory, honour, and power over the things of earth to the sons of men. Direct, Lord, their counsel, following what is pleasing and acceptable in your sight, so that by exercising with devotion and in peace and gentleness the power that you have given to them, they may find favour with you."*

Pope St. Clement of Rome (As found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, par. 1900)

Sunday Gatherings July 2016

July 3 - Who we are as a people

Tony Crossett

Community Focused

July 10 - Who we are as a people

Scott Hawkins

Authentic

July 17 - Open Table

Doug Faircloth

Communion

July 24 - James

Scott Hawkins

July 31 - James

Doug Faircloth

Open Table Brunch - July



Sunday 17 July 2016
10.30am

Join us on Sunday 17th July for Open Table Brunch! This is a time to share food, communion and get to know each other a little better. Please bring along your favourite brunch to share.

If you are available to help out on the hospitality team with set up, clean up and pack up please speak with Karen Nickson.

Open Table will be on every 4 weeks, so mark the following dates into your diary:
14th August, 11th September, 9th October, 6th November and 4th December.

Please RSVP by Monday 11 July to katrina.mackay@urbanlife.org.au

prayer @ urbanlife



Sunday 17 July 2016
4pm

For those who have a heart to pray, for each other and our future as a church, please join us for 'prayer @ urbanlife' on Sunday 17th July at 4pm.

This will be an ongoing event which will run every 4 weeks on the same date as Open Table. Dates for the rest of 2016 are 14th August, 11th September, 9th October, 6th November and 4th December.
