



THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY COMMISSION
OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

How Do We Understand the Relationship Between Church and State?

CHURCH AND STATE: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Bible teaches that both the Church and the state have distinct roles to play in society. The Church's primary mission is to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of all nations, while the state's role is to uphold justice, maintain order, and protect citizens.

THE CHURCH AND STATE OPERATE IN DIFFERENT SPHERES OF AUTHORITY

God has given distinct powers to the Church and the state. The state is granted the power of the sword to punish evil and maintain order, but it has no authority in religious matters, which is why it must not establish a particular religion. This is to protect the Church from the control and corruption of the government, all while recognizing that the Church, through Christian activity as faithful citizens, can influence the state.

ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENT AS CHRISTIANS

As Christians, we are called to engage with the government and use our voice to promote justice and righteousness. However, we must do so in a way that is consistent with biblical principles and respectful of the government's authority. This includes obeying the law, paying taxes, and praying for those in authority.

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are many ways that you can make a difference in the relationship between Church and state. Here are a few suggestions:

- *Educate yourself about the issues:* Learn about the relationship of Church and state and the issues related to religious freedom in your community.
- *Pray for those in authority:* Pray for government officials and elected representatives, asking God to grant them wisdom and discernment.
- *Advocate for religious liberty:* Write to your elected representatives, expressing your support for robust protections of religious liberty.
- *Be an ambassador for Christ:* Live out your faith in a way that reflects the love and grace of Jesus Christ, sharing the gospel and showing compassion to those around you.



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