

## Conversation Starters

- What thoughts or feelings come up when you hear “church and state”?
- How have you navigated through those thoughts or feelings?

## Discuss

**The interplay between church and state is usually accompanied by much confusion. Jesus made it clear that His followers should render to whatever ruler is in power what is due them, while never turning away from their ultimate allegiance to God and His mission. And Paul tells us there is no governing authority that has not been established by God, so we should obey that authority to honor God.**

*“Now tell us what you think about this: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?...He [Jesus] saw through their trickery and said, ‘Show me a Roman coin. Whose picture and title are stamped on it?’ ‘Caesar’s,’ they replied. ‘Well then,’ he said, ‘give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.’” ([Luke 20:22-25, NLT](#))*

*“Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. ([Romans 13:1, NLT](#))*

- What does Jesus’ response teach us about His authority and mission?
- Are there areas of your life that you need to submit to governing authority?
- How does our call to honor God through submission to government authority change your perception of governing authority?

**Going further than obedience, we are also called to pray for our leaders - Christian or not - so that you might lead peaceful lives with the freedom to pursue faith and that whoever is in authority would come to know and experience the love of Jesus.**

*“I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.” ([1 Timothy 2:1-4, NLT](#))*

- When was the last time you prayed for your government leaders?
- In what ways can you pray for them?
- How does this remind you of Jesus’ mission?

**While a Christian’s basic call by God is to submit to governing authorities, when that authority causes us to choose between submission to that authority or submission to God - either by making you disobey God or being forbidden to do something that you must to honor God - we are to choose to honor God.**

*“The captain went with his Temple guards and arrested the apostles, but without violence, for they were afraid the people would stone them. Then they brought the apostles before the high council, where the high priest confronted them. ‘We gave you strict orders never again to teach in this man’s name!’ he said. ‘Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!’ But Peter and the apostles replied, ‘We must obey God rather than any human authority.’” ([Acts 5:26-29, NLT](#))*

- What difference is there between laws allowing the disobeying of God versus laws requiring you personally to do something that would make you disobey God?
- Do you prioritize honoring God first in politics?

## Next Steps

**Applying these principles in our everyday world is very tricky and Christians will (and have) often land(ed) in different camps when trying to honor God. Because we are not a Christian nation, this tension is only going to get more intense and trickier to navigate. While we’ll need to be prepared to face the scenarios as they come up with God’s love, wisdom and sharp minds, today we can pray for our nation and leaders.**

Oct 14: [The Grounds Online Book Club: “A Gentle Answer”](#)

Oct 17: [Habitat for Humanity Serve Day](#)

Oct 20: [Let’s Talk: Race and Faith](#)

## Further Reflection

Read [Luke 20:20-26](#); [Romans 13:1-5](#); [1 Timothy 2:1-4](#); [Acts 5:26-29](#); [1 Peter 2:13-14](#); [4:15-16](#).

## Pray

God, everything we have is from you, including power and authority. Thank you for your leadership and trusting us with being stewards of all that you’ve given us. Please forgive us when we dishonor you with it, and help us to correct any wrongs. Watch over our leaders, guide them as they lead and help them to know you. Give us wisdom to navigate when we are confused and to honor you in all that we do.