

What is GBC's position on the Christian's involvement in politics/military/police etc.?

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The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith,

Chapter 24

Paragraph 1: “God, the supreme Lord and King of the whole world, has ordained civil authorities to be under him and over the people, for His own glory and the public good. For this purpose he has armed them with the power of the sword, to defend and encourage those who do good and to punish evildoers.” (Romans 13:1-4)

Paragraph 2: Christians may lawfully carry out the duties of public office when called to do so. In performing their office they must especially maintain justice and peace (2 Samuel 23:3, Psalm 82:3-4), according to the wholesome laws of each kingdom or other political entity. To carry out these duties they are authorized now under the New Testament to wage war in just and necessary situations (Luke 3:14).

Paragraph 3: Because civil authorities are established by God for the purposes stated, we should submit in the Lord to them in everything lawful that they require. We should submit not only for fear of punishment but also for the sake of conscience (Romans 13:5-7, 1 Peter 2:17). We ought to make requests and prayers for kings and everyone in authority, so that under their rule we may live a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Pastor Tim has remarked how when he is asked by a member of our church “What is the church doing about (Insert problem here)?” his response is, “I don’t know, what *are you* doing about it?”. He reminds us that the church is not some pie in the sky, hidden group of thinkers. The church is *us*, the body, and we are commanded to **be doers of the Word** (Romans 2:13, Matthew 7:24-27, James 1:22).

When it comes to being a faithful servant of Christ in our everyday lives, we often find ourselves talking about how broken everything is around us, but how many of us can say we take our instructions and go forth from our comfort zones to be doers? We should all step outside that comfort zone.

For many Christians, stepping out of the comfort zone and into Doership may include serving within the government in some capacity to try to ‘make a difference’. But in a system that is broken in so many ways, how does a faithful Christian serve while remaining faithful?

The Christian's Involvement in Government, Law Enforcement, and the Military

First of all, we must all recognize that Romans 13 clearly establishes that “there is no authority except from God”. In Luke 3:14, when tax collectors and soldiers asked John the Baptist what they shall do, John did not tell them to quit their jobs working for the government, he told them not to take more than they are authorized and to be content with their wages.

So, if you are called to serve in government, you should answer that call. But we must be careful to serve in a moral and ethical manner, never taking more than was offered in service and never exercising authority not given to us.

BUT another important distinction we must make and constantly re-evaluate is the directive to serve according to the *wholesome* laws of each kingdom. For example, Daniel faithfully served the king, until the king’s orders required direct disobedience to the one true King of Kings (Daniel 6).

“We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

For those who choose to serve in civil administration, law enforcement, or the military, we must constantly recognize the following:

1. Pray first. We ought to make prayers and intercessions for kings and all who are in authority (1 Timothy 2:1–2). Prayer should be our first response, not our last. Ask God for discernment not only for yourself, but also for those under whose authority you serve. Except where circumstances demand immediate action—such as an officer using force in defense of himself or another—we should seek God’s wisdom before acting.

2. We must obey God rather than men. When the commands of men conflict with the commands of God, the faithful Christian must stand on the side of obedience to God (Acts 5:29). These are often the moments when fear makes obedience most difficult, but we should recognize that **these may be the very moments for which God placed us in that position.** A soldier ordered to kill innocent civilians must refuse. A police officer who witnesses unjust force must intervene. A person exercising civil authority must refuse to enact, enforce, or participate in something that requires disobedience to God.

3. Guard against abusing the authority entrusted to you. Christians serving in positions of authority must continually examine whether they are using their office for its proper purpose or for personal advantage. A police officer or soldier may graciously accept a voluntarily offered discount, for example, but expecting or demanding special treatment because of one's position turns public authority toward personal benefit. John the Baptist specifically warned soldiers against extortion and dissatisfaction with their wages (Luke 3:14).

4. Remember that authority is a stewardship. When serving, remember that we are exercising authority within an institution God has ordained (Romans 13:1–4). Authority is therefore not ours to use however we please; it is something entrusted to us. Every exercise of that authority should promote justice, restrain evil, and serve the good rather than corrupt the institution we have been entrusted to serve.

5. Exercise authority impartially and justly. Personal affection, anger, political loyalty, wealth, status, race, friendship, or hostility should not determine how we exercise authority. Scripture repeatedly condemns partiality in judgment (Leviticus 19:15; James 2:1–9). The Christian entrusted with civil authority should seek to do what is just regardless of who stands before him.

6. Never confuse lawful authority with moral righteousness. Something does not become righteous merely because a government has authorized it, a legislature has enacted it, a court has upheld it, or a superior has ordered it. Civil authority itself remains subordinate to God. The Christian must therefore continually measure his own actions against Scripture rather than assuming that what is legal is necessarily what is right.

Consequently, the Christian should evaluate modern government service principally by **what the office requires him to do**, rather than merely by the title attached to the office.

The relevant question is not simply, “*May a Christian be a police officer?*” or “*May a Christian be a soldier?*” The deeper questions are: *What authority is being exercised? For what purpose? What actions does this position require? Can those actions be performed faithfully before God?*