

10 Principles of Civic Engagement

Adapted from Justin Giboney and Chris Butler (The & Campaign)

1. See People, Not Political Abstractions

Christian Value: Human Dignity/Imago Dei

“With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not be so.” — James 3:9-10

- Your neighbor is more than who they voted for.

2. Be Aware of the Flaws on Your Side

Christian Value: Self-Examination

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” — Psalm 139:23-24

- Our ideological tribes are not perfect and we must be willing to challenge them.
A good practice: make a list of the ways your "tribe" or political party is currently wrong in certain areas.

3. Identify the Virtue of the Other Side

Christian Value: Charity and Common Grace

“And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet, he is actually not far from each one of us.” — Acts 17:26-27

- Before you critique, know what good your opponent is trying to achieve.

4. Practice Public Grace and Courtesy

Christian Value: Kindness and Self-Control

“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?” — Matthew 5:46-47

- Our public engagement is part of our Christian witness.

5. Exercise Media Hygiene

Christian Value: Wisdom and Understanding

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.” — James 1:19

“If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.” — James 1:26

- Diversify your media diet.
- Garbage in, garbage out. The information you take in matters.
- "Social media is undermining democracy." —Jonathan Haedt

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6. Have an Affirmative Posture

Christian Value: Fruitfulness, Light

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” — Micah 6:8

- Know what you are for, not just what you are against. Adopting this posture in modern politics is massively counter-cultural.
- Cast a future that is Spirit-infused, Bible-centered, and morally informed.

7. Discern Partisan Talking Points

Christian Value: Discernment

“The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thoughts to his steps.” — Proverbs 14:15

- Facts > Narratives

8. Pray for Your Political Opponents

Christian Value: Pray for your enemies

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” — Matthew 5:43-44

- Prayer is the most significant experience of the Christian life. Prayer breaks down walls of hostility. It’s hard to hate someone you regularly pray for.
- Pray specifically, not generally.

9. Get Involved

Christian Value: Self-sacrifice, love, stewardship

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” — James 1:22

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” — James 1:27

- Local > National. The reality is: local involvement will carry greater lasting impact than whoever wins the presidency.
- The Church is the vessel through which God intends to change the world.

10. Commit to Move Forward Constructively

Christian Value: Perseverance, Peacemaking

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” — 1 Corinthians 15:58

- Accept the results, but keep advocating.
- The kingdom standard of living (the Beatitudes/Sermon on the Mount) that Christ has called all of His followers to doesn’t shift or change based on who wins an election.