



A Guide to
Answering Political Questions

Introduction



In the weeks leading up to the presidential election, there are many questions that are being asked. When we look deeper into these questions, we can see that God is giving us an amazing opportunity to put his love on display. Rather than living in fear of the election or arguing about political positions, we welcome this season as an opportunity to point towards the beauty and truth of God's kingdom.

Below are fifteen frequently asked questions you might deal with in this season. Each question was answered by Resonate Staff women and men. While no answer is going to be a 'one size fits all' or 'fix' a situation, the intent is to offer a perspective that help us think deeper, pray more, and seek truth by sifting through God's word and discussing it in community. The answers to the questions below are not intended to be holistic or theological treatises.

We hope you can see three truths woven throughout this guide:

First, as believers we seek another kingdom...the kingdom of God. We know that human institutions are all broken and exist to reveal our need for God. Let's use this election season to point towards God's kingdom.

Second, we believe that truth is critical, but truth must be shown through love. Taking time to listen to people, to ask questions, and to pray for people might present an opportunity to speak truth in such a way that someone can hear it. The tone we adopt in all conversations really matters, and our hope is that you can sense a gentle and loving tone in the answers below.

Third, God is calling us to be in relationship with people — not to change or convert them, but to introduce them to the God who loves them and wants to be in relationship with them. We know that as we pray for people, listen to them, eat with them, serve them, and share our stories with them, God will do the work of changing their hearts. God is not wanting someone to just change their political views. That agenda is far too small for our great God. He wants to change their hearts and their destiny as they discover his love for them.

We hope this guide will give you godly courage and compassion for your family, friends, and coworkers as you engage in potentially difficult conversations, praying that God will bring many to himself.



Table of Contents

The following questions were answered by various staff members of Resonate. Click on the link to go to a specific question.

1. [What is Resonate's political position?](#)
2. [What is a Christian's hope in any political season?](#)
3. [How should I vote?](#)
4. [Are Christians required to vote?](#)
5. [Should we post about politics on social media?](#)
6. [Does sharing my political opinion help share the gospel?](#)
7. [How do I love others who have different political opinions?](#)
8. [How do I stay in fellowship with someone whose political opinions are different than mine?](#)
9. [How do I create a safe space to talk about politics?](#)
10. [How do I shepherd my family about politics?](#)
11. [How do I vote if I don't like either candidate?](#)
12. [How do I read the news when it is always biased \(on either side\)?](#)
13. [What are the most important political issues to consider when voting?](#)
14. [What is the place of the government vs the church?](#)
15. [Should I stay at a church or be a member if my political views don't align?](#)

What is Resonate's political position?

In our modern day and age, where we often use our political standing as the lens to which we view the world, the question that naturally comes up is, "What is my church's political position?" The answer is found not in a political ideology or party, as any entity that is made by people is inherently flawed. In searching for wisdom, Resonate desires to look to Scripture as our unshakable foundation and to Jesus as the model for the posture and position we want to reflect as we engage the world. As we look at Jesus, we might ask, "was Jesus conservative or liberal?"

Jesus constantly drew his strength and wisdom from scripture and continually quoted the Mosaic Law. He lived by the unchanging truth and inerrant Word of God (Matthew 5:17-18). Clearly Jesus loved teaching about how the Kingdom of God would be brought about by the fulfillment of the old testament prophecies. In this sense, Jesus was very much conservative.

However, Jesus also often challenged the traditions of his time to make radical changes. He was very critical of the religious leaders who created oppressive religious practices that focused on the external instead of internal motivations (Matthew 23:25-26). Jesus repeatedly challenged old ways of thinking and brought radical, new insights in order to further understand God's heart and kingdom. In these ways, Jesus was very much liberal.

In the end, it is too simplistic to call Jesus conservative or liberal. Jesus would have been considered more conservative than today's conservative right (i.e. Matthew 5:28 "anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery") and more liberal than today's progressive left (i.e Mark 10:21 "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor").

Under this model, Jesus reveals he does not fit a particular label or political position. He was not about any kingdom built on earth, but rather used earthly kingdoms to point to His Kingdom. So for Resonate Church, in terms of our political position, we strive not to enter a political debate about a specific party, but rather, like Jesus, to use these man-made institutions to point us to what is greater — the Kingdom of God.

What is a Christian's hope in any political season?

To put our hope in something means "it is what we trust it to fix what we see as broken." God is the only place where we can place our hope if we do not want to be disappointed by the outcome, both on earth and eternally. To place hope in a political candidate, law, or policy means that when they don't win, we will be left feeling crushed and hopeless. Placing our hope in King Jesus who is in control and whose plan to restore what's broken is unfolding at this very moment leaves your hope firm and unfading. Jesus is good and unchanging, so His plans are good and unchanging. Knowing that Jesus' plan is sure and that He is the one in control, in spite of who gets elected or what laws are passed, is our hope in every political season.



How should I vote?

For a follower of Jesus, we gain wisdom on how to vote by asking some fundamental questions: “What does God want?” “What does God say?” Remember, if we believe in the Sovereign God, whatever the political landscape may attempt to tell us, whoever the candidate is, or whatever the statutory language on the ballot measure is, we know that ultimately this isn’t the government’s world or even our world. This is God’s world. Nothing happens in this world, good or bad from our perspective, outside of the wonderful sovereign gaze and care of our Lord.

So how should we vote? Well, what does God say about that proposed law or what that person says they stand for? The Bible is our ultimate resource for what God says, so look there! If we keep looking closely, we’ll find that it has answers to all sorts of questions like making decisions on voting.

If you do research online, don’t purposefully search for the answers that you want to hear, but actually ask the questions you’re looking for answers for. The Gospel Coalition (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org>) and Got Questions (<https://www.gotquestions.org>) are some great resources that explore all sorts of questions without politically motivated bias.

Talk to other members of the church. Remember, your brothers and sisters are God’s hands and feet and people who have the Holy Spirit living in them! He uses all of God’s children to speak to each other. And remember too that the church isn’t just your friend sitting next to you. We have a whole history of wisdom from believers to learn from if we get reading!

Of course, last but not least, talk to Jesus about the candidate or the issue that you are considering through prayer. What is he telling you? If you engage with the Lord in the run-up to voting, when it comes to actually filling the little bubble with some pen ink, he will give you peace with your decision. And if later you feel like you (or your neighbor) voted for the wrong thing, we can all rest assured that whichever way we vote, God is, always has been, and always will be in control.

Are Christians required to vote?

The simple answer is “no.” Though voting is a tremendous privilege and potential force for good, not every Christian may want to exercise that privilege for a variety of reasons. The only Christian obligation is the obligation to love (Romans 13:8), and it is entirely possible for a Christian to fulfill that obligation by choosing to vote or by choosing to withhold their vote.





Should we post about politics on social media?

Everything we do should be filtered through the grid of Jesus' commands. Asking questions like: "Is this loving to my neighbor?" "Does this build up or tear down?" "Does this make much of Jesus or distract from Jesus?" "Does this align with the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)?" Questions like these help to slow us down and wisely process before we post and comment. Think of what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:23 — "All things are lawful, but not everything is beneficial." In this heated and divisive cultural moment, the thing that you are allowed to do might not always be the thing that is beneficial for you to do.

Following the lead of the Spirit, looking to be salt and light (being different, standing out) in this moment, and always aiming to love like Jesus should be the aim of your engagement whether online or in person. Instead of going down the rabbit hole of social media this season, maybe God is calling you to share a meal with someone you disagree with and practice the Jesus-kind of love that is radical and revolutionary!

Does sharing my political opinion help share the gospel?

Understand that Christians do not have to be afraid of the political season. It is a golden opportunity to listen to others as they share what their hope is in. If you listen to another person's political position and articulate it back to them, it can often give you a chance to share how the Gospel transcends any political view point.

Christians can, do, and should have political opinions. However, at the risk of alienating others or putting up obstacles to the Gospel, we should be listeners rather than speakers (James 1:19), people who welcome a diverse view of political opinions (1 Corinthians 9:22), and ambassadors of a better message than any political party (2 Corinthians 5:20).





How do I love others who have different political opinions?

We love others with different political opinions through the same power and strength that we love others with differing religious views, parenting styles, cultural upbringings, etc. — through the power of the Holy Spirit. The same power that raised Jesus from the grave lives in you! If you desire it and if you ask for the strength, wisdom, and courage to love others, the Holy Spirit of God can give you the power to love anyone regardless of their views or opinions (Zechariah 4:6).

How do I stay in fellowship with someone whose political opinions are different than mine?

If people were to describe who you are, what would they say? Would your political opinions be a part of the first 5 or even 10 things mentioned?

For a vast majority of people, to say that their political opinions are a defining feature of who they are is dismissive and falls short of capturing the beauty, the essence, and the story of who they really are. In other words, to discern who a person is simply from hearing his or her political opinions is a short-sighted pursuit and tempts us to forget that he or she is a fellow human, made in God's image. Nothing helps you to remember both the humanness and beauty of a person like hearing their story.

Remembering that, like you, people are not defined by their political opinions helps us to stay in fellowship with them and with anyone else who is different from us. Even then, it can be hard to remember that. But we don't need to agree or even like someone to sacrificially love them. One of the most powerful ways we can love both the people we agree and disagree with is to pray for them. We can pray for them to find enduring hope in Jesus and for God to help us see them for who they really are. So would you pray for that person whose political opinions are different from you? It's hard to stay distant from someone you are praying for.



How do I create a safe space to talk about politics?

In the election season, talking about politics can be scary. Some of us have lost friends and family over political discussions, resulting in deep hurt that makes us hesitant to address these topics. But how can we create a safe place to talk about politics? Are there some principles that we can keep in mind for conversations in the break room with coworkers or around the family dinner table with friends?

Here's three principles that might help:

1. Be curious, not judgmental. In all discussions, remember that people have formed their various opinions by their experiences and influences. Here's a few questions that will help us first listen and understand: "Can you explain more about that idea?" "What experiences shaped that belief or idea?" "What are the pros and cons of that idea?" Questions like these can be disarming and helpful to creating a safe place to talk. Being genuinely interested and asking questions can help us empathize and understand different perspectives.
2. Remember, you won't win anyone over by arguing. Arguing seldom brings about the results we are trying to achieve. Proverbs 15:1 says, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Rather than arguing, refer to the first principle and start with curiosity. Ask questions, seek to understand, and then ask more questions. If the person just wants to argue, then you might just need to dismiss yourself from the conversation knowing that nothing good will likely come out of it.
3. Remember the gospel. Asking great questions, holding back judgment, and not arguing all takes a lot of patience. When we remember that God loves us, that he is in control, and that ultimately, his way will come to pass, we can enter into a conversation without needing to win. In the gospel, we've already won! We know the beginning of the story (Romans 3:23 - We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God), we know the middle of the story (2 Timothy 3:1 - But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty), and we also know the end of the story (Romans 16:20 - The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet). Remembering the good news enables us to create safe places for discussion, even about politics.

How do I shepherd my family about politics?

Connect with your kids! Children may be hearing various commentaries about the upcoming election in their schools, from friends, on social media platforms, etc. Parents, share with your kids about your perspectives, values and convictions based on your faith and Scripture as it relates to political candidates and laws. Have age-appropriate conversations with your kids that allow space for them to ask questions and help them form their own thoughts. Every person is entitled to their own opinions and it is inevitable that people will disagree with one another, even within their own families. This is normal. As Christian parents, lead and model for your children what it looks like to abide by God's command that we "...live peaceably with all." (Romans 12:18)

Care for your kids! Children are aware of the heightened emotions and tensions around this election season. Parents, speak hope into these different feelings by talking about the reality of sin and brokenness in this world and our great need for Jesus. Take time to pray with your kids over anything causing you and/or others anxiety and trust that he will provide his peace in all things (Philippians 4:6-7).

Commission your kids! Lead the family to respect the office of President and to understand that there is no such thing as a perfect leader. With that, the hope and future of this country and our lives do not and cannot depend on whichever candidate wins the election. Instead, we see Jesus as the only perfect Ruler and we live in submission to his authority and his commands because he is for our good and his glory. Parents, see this political season as an opportunity to disciple your families towards Jesus' ultimate rule and reign. His reign extends through all the universe and his term transcends all of time. That is a promise we can all rest in. "...He shall reign forever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

Resources that helped formulate this response:

- <https://churchleaders.com/children/childrens-ministry-articles/336851-five-spiritual-lessons-our-kids-can-learn-during-this-election.html>
- <https://www.russellmoore.com/2016/09/07/talk-children-election-2016/>

How do I vote if I don't like either candidate?

Some have said that political choices are like choosing the lesser of two evils. When we are confused and trying to discern between choices like these, it is a great time to pray (James 1:5-8). We should always seek what God wants to do with all of our choices, including how we vote. Ask God to show you which candidate will move his values forward, not your own. Which candidate is going to do the most good for kingdom values (Micah 6:8). Ultimately, trust that no matter who wins an election, God is building a kingdom that will never end and will one day give us a ruler in Jesus who is just and will reign forever (Daniel 2:44)





How do I read the news when it is always biased (on either side)?

We all have opinions, preferences, and biases that are built from our cultures, upbringings, and perspectives. Often the most trapped person in the world is the one who thinks they are unbiased. When we feel the freedom to admit our own biases, we are also free to see others' biases for what they are: biases. When reading the news, there is no such thing as an unbiased perspective. However, what is most helpful is when we learn to recognize and acknowledge the bias and feel the freedom to learn from it. The most helpful way to recognize and acknowledge bias is to listen to all sides. Proverbs 18:17 says, "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him." Tim Keller once gave this advice to young preachers, "If you listen to one preacher, you'll become a clone, and if you listen to two preachers you'll be confused, but if you listen to several preachers you'll begin to find your own voice." The same advice might be helpful as we think about listening to the news in this political season.

What are the most important political issues to consider when voting?

For believers in Jesus, what matters most when we vote isn't how we each feel about a person or issue, but how Jesus does. This begs the question, "Okay, well then how does Jesus feel? What does Jesus think?" This is when we must reorient our views to his. Consider three things that might help us reorient our views to his:

First, Jesus knows the whole world is the Lord's and everything in it. Even more so, Jesus died to save it (John 3:16-17). Second, Jesus knows that God cares about every single thing that he has created. No human or law without God is good or trustworthy, not even one (Romans 3:11). No person or bill is infallible, only God is infallible. Third, when talking to the pharisees about politics in Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus makes it clear that the most important understanding to gain from the law is "to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and to love your neighbor as yourself."

From there, look deeper at what Scripture says on a particular topic, talk to your brothers and sisters, pray to the Lord to give you wisdom, and do your other research. And when the Lord gives you peace, thank him as you take your next steps.





What is the place of the government vs. the church?

A government is responsible for creating and enforcing the rules of society, defense, foreign affairs, the economy, and public services (National Geographic Society). The church, on the hand, has been commissioned to make disciples who make disciples, of all nations, for the glory of God (Romans 13:8-10). The church can partner with the government to further the mission of the church and can wisely leverage those opportunities. When the government, either knowingly or unknowingly, impedes the mission of the church, the church must prayerfully, humbly, and courageously consider what its response should be.

Should I stay at a church or be a member if my political views don't align?

The most important rallying point for unity in a local body of believers is not your ethnic background, economic status, or the way you vote — but the good news of the risen Christ and his Kingdom! When Jesus takes the primary place in the church, everything else becomes secondary. In fact, the beauty of the unity in Christ's Kingdom is that there are different tribes, tongues and personalities, all together in love. This kind of unity amidst diversity is what exalts Jesus in a world that is so easily divided on secondary items. So yes, it is highly encouraged to stay rooted in your local body even when others don't share your political views — if we are called to love our enemies, then we must learn how to love the people that don't agree with us.

But here is one caveat: if the church is platforming their political views in a way that is one-sided and overshadows Jesus' other-worldly Kingdom, then it might be a good sign to pray about leaving to find a community that makes sure politics are submitted to the true King Jesus. While it's not encouraged to leave because of differing views, it is encouraged to find a church that lives in this world and is yet not of it, knowing it is a part of a better and eternal Kingdom with a better King!





For Further Reading and Study

For further research and study, you might consider the following resources:

- <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2021/01/15/a-christians-response-to-politics/>
- <https://jdgrear.com/when-should-the-church-make-political-statements/>
- <https://www.9marks.org/article/how-to-hold-your-tongue-about-politics-and-thereby-not-split-your-church-over-things-the-bible-doesnt-talk-about-an-addendum/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-features-early-church-unique/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/dethrone-politics/>
- [Compassion \(&\) Conviction, Justin Giboney, Michael Wear, and Chris Butler](#)
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-books-christianity-politics/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/bigger-fish-to-fry-politics-and-the-priority-of-disciplemaking>
- <https://churchleaders.com/children/childrens-ministry-articles/336851-five-spiritual-lessons-our-kids-can-learn-during-this-election.html>
- <https://www.russellmoore.com/2016/09/07/talk-children-election-2016/>

Conclusion

We hope that this “Guide to Answering Basic Political Questions” has been helpful to you. As you continue to pursue Jesus and love others, make sure that you spend time in prayer and reading of God’s Word. Use the language in this guide to equip you to meet about and discuss these topics in community and with Resonate leadership.

Here’s a final thought as we bring this guide to a close.

In Isaiah 6:1, we read, “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne.” In all of Israel’s history, King Uzziah had been one of the best kings, bringing about peace and justice to all of Israel. When Uzziah died, there must have been a panic. What’s going to happen now? Who’s going to take over? Will the next king be as good as Uzziah?

Isaiah’s response to these questions is beautiful. “I saw the Lord!” Isaiah is telling all of Israel that God is sovereign. He always has been and always will be. But Isaiah also adds the description, “sitting upon a throne.” What Isaiah is telling us is that God is not pacing around in Heaven, scratching his head wondering what to do next because Uzziah died. God is not worried. He is in control. He is the Lord.

The most important reality in any season, including the elections of 2024, is that we see the Lord and remember that he is not worried about the future, but rather, he is using it to draw all people to himself.

Let’s prayerfully consider how we can use this political season as an opportunity to live in the gospel and to show and spread God’s love to all around us.





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