

# *The Pastor's Guide to* **PATRIOTISM VERSUS POLITICS** DO'S AND DON'TS FOR CHURCHES

Each day the news media demonstrates there is an ongoing battle over religious liberties and our ability to live out our faith in our daily lives. The willingness to speak out on issues of the day is critical when it comes to matters of government officials and public policies that impact our faith, our families, and our values on a daily basis.

There is a lot of misinformation about what churches are allowed to do in the political arena – misinformation that is spread by liberals and groups who don't want to see conservative people of faith speak out nor have an impact. They attempt to scare pastors from participating by claiming that if they get involved, their church will lose its tax-exempt status. A good question to ask someone in the church who disagrees with "political" involvement is, "Where does 'politics' start and spiritual life stop?" While some key issues may have been politicized, they are still spiritual.

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A man of God is to preach the Word of God; no matter the topic. Our Founding Fathers recognized our rights are given to us by God alone but sought to create a system of government to protect those rights. Being a pastor in America does not forfeit your First Amendment protection of free speech. However, being a pastor without First Amendment protection does not negate your responsibility to speak the truth.

In fact in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, free speech is coupled with freedom of religion. Our Founding Fathers were wise in this association that protecting freedom in the pulpit protected all other liberties.

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Today in the United States of America, we have the great right, privilege and responsibility of choosing our law makers. It is patriotic to make sure your people are registered to vote. It is patriotic to teach them how to vote using the guideline of Biblical values.

***Don't be intimidated or withdrawn from the arena.  
Know the facts and have an impact!***

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EDUCATE | ENGAGE | ENCOURAGE | ENTREAT | EVANGELIZE

**AWAKE AMERICA MINISTRIES**

HOST OF THE CAPITOL CONNECTION

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**A CHURCH MAY:**

- ▶ Conduct non-partisan voter registration drives
- ▶ Conduct non-partisan voter identification drives
- ▶ Conduct “get-out-the-vote” drives, encouraging members to vote
- ▶ Conduct petition drives regarding legislation or other issues
- ▶ Distribute non-partisan voter education information
- ▶ Educate church members on legislative and political matters
- ▶ Discuss doctrine as it applies to politics, legislative matters, or candidate positions
- ▶ Introduce political candidates and allow them to address the congregation
- ▶ Host candidate forums where all candidates are invited and allowed to speak
- ▶ Support or oppose political appointments (such as judges or cabinet officials)
- ▶ Make expenditures on behalf of referendums
- ▶ Pastors may personally endorse candidates, but not as a “church endorsement” from the pulpit. Any other public endorsement where the pastor’s title and church name are used should include a disclaimer such as: “title and affiliation for identification purposes only”

**A CHURCH MAYNOT:**

- ▶ Endorse or campaign for candidates for elected office in the name of the church
- ▶ Contribute money or make “in kind” contributions, (such as resources or services), to a candidate, political party or political action committee
- ▶ Distribute materials that endorse a particular candidate or political party
- ▶ Allow candidates to solicit funds from the congregation (from the pulpit)
- ▶ Create a church political committee that would do any of the above

**TAKE AWAYS**

The list of things that CAN be done in a place of worship is much longer than what cannot be done.

The important thing is churches don’t need to avoid all political activity simply because some of it is prohibited.

*If churches and people of faith don’t stand up and speak out for their values, then who will?*

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Be sure to check our our *Quick Reference Guide to Voting Biblical Values* on our website:

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