

At-home Bible Study: Citizenship Questions

The church and the state are two vastly different entities with hugely different God-given purposes. What kind of relationship does God want them to have? What kind of relationship does God want us to have with them? How can we be both Christian and citizen?

Today: The church is not the state, and the state is not the church!

When the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God, it is speaking about God's rule in the hearts of believers through the Word—what we call the holy Christian Church (note the capitalized C on Church here). But God also rules over the governments of the world. We often refer to that as God's other kingdom, or second kingdom, or kingdom of the left—what we commonly call the state. Is the distinction between the two kingdoms clear?

Read  **Romans 1:16.**

How does God build this kingdom, generally speaking?

How does God build this kingdom, thinking specifically of our congregation?

Why is it perfectly appropriate to call this a kingdom?

God often shows a need and then fills that need. He did that right away with Adam in the Garden of Eden. (Read  **Genesis 2:18-22** to review.) What needs prompted God to establish the church?

Read  **Romans 13:1-7.**

What is the purpose of God's other kingdom?

What tool has God given to his other kingdom to carry out that purpose?

What needs prompted God to establish the state?

Marty says, "We need to curb violence with more laws about guns and weapons." Luther says in response, "We can't do that, because that would infringe on our right to bear arms." Both positions fit in with the purpose of government as God established it. How?

Read  **Ezekiel 36:26.**

Civil government can only address outward behavior. Civil government cannot change the heart. What is the only way heart problems can be truly addressed?

Jim says, "Our country is really struggling right now. If we had prayer in public schools, that would change things in the right direction." List AT LEAST TWO reasons why Jim's thinking is **dangerously wrong!**

To sum it up:

Why is it GOOD for the church to be the church and the state to be the state (and not try to do the job of the other)?

Write a prayer thanking God for the blessings of the different entities of the church and the state.