

Your Questions Bible Answers

Should A Christian Be Patriotic?

For many of us, we grew up in environments where Patriotism is emphasized greatly. We are taught to stand for the pledge and remove our hats when the anthem is sung. The 4th of July is a major holiday and military service is honored. Even though the flaws in our society are apparent, a firm belief is held that America is great. However, Christians are reminded that they are not part of this world, that their true home is Heaven (Phil. 3.20). How do we reconcile our call to consider ourselves as exiles here (Hebrews 11.13-16) with our love of country and patriotic duty?

Christians Can Pledge Allegiance To A Government & Be Patriotic

1. No indication that New Testament Christians were required to renounce government allegiance.
 - a. Best example of this is the Roman Centurions and soldiers in the New Testament. Each one of them would have sworn personal allegiance to Rome and to the Emperor.
 - b. Yet, when John preached repentance to them it was not said that they must renounce their allegiance (Luke 3.14).
 - c. When Jesus interacted with Centurions, no requirement was made that they renounce their allegiance to Rome or Caesar (Matthew 8.5-10).
 - d. When the gospel was proclaimed to Cornelius, no requirement was made that he renounce Caesar in order to pledge his allegiance to Christ (Acts 10).
2. Showing proper honor and respect for one's leaders (and by extension one's nation) is required of the Christian (Romans 13.1-7).
 - a. We submit ourselves to rulers (and by extension the nation) because it is God's will.
 - b. We give them honor because God has said to honor them.
 - c. In my opinion, saluting the flag and saying the pledge of allegiance are legitimate ways of showing our subjection to and honor of the governing authorities.

But Christians Must Not Let Their Patriotism...

1. Cause them to think that the world needs their nation rather than the gospel.
 - a. In the 19th century American settlers viewed it as their manifest destiny (i.e. will of God) that they spread both Christianity and democracy to other parts of the world.
 - b. While not spoken of in such lofty terms, the idea remains that the world needs is democracy and freedom as we know it.
 - c. What the world needs is the gospel (Romans 1.14-17)
2. Cause them to ignore the faults of their nation.
 - a. "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people." (Proverbs 14.34)
 - b. "therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness." (1Kings 10.9)

- c. Our love of country must not blind us to wrongdoing and the perversion of justice that has happened in our past and in our present. Patriotism and love for country must not blind us to our faults
- 3. Cause them to look down on others.
 - a. Understand that I love my country and am thankful for the freedom and opportunities it has provided to me and many others.
 - b. But the belief in American greatness is a form of nationalism that often denigrates others.
 - c. As Christians, we must be wary of any belief that may cause us to view others as less than us, for the church consists of all nations and peoples (Isaiah 2.2-4; Daniel 7.13-14; Galatians 3.28-29)
- 4. Cause them to forget that their true allegiance is to God (Phil. 3.20-21).
 - a. Since Christ is my King, my allegiance to Him matters most.
 - b. And my dependence is on Him, not my nation. Only He can save me and complete me.