



Basics of Increasing Informed Church Voter Participation

A. Senior Pastor

Since you have been called to serve as the shepherd of your congregational “flock” and in most cases are the proper authority to approve ministry activities, it is important that a prospective Citizenship Ministry (CMD) Director be **appointed** and **approved** by you personally. We suggest the following criteria in choosing a leader for this ministry:

1. A leader who is highly respected in the congregation (could be a staff member, deacon, elder or other lay leader) and whom you personally respect and trust to be accountable to you.
2. He or she should be **Called** (*has a conviction and passion that we must be godly citizens*), **Capable** (*has leadership skills, people skills and experience in the “battle”*) and **Committed** (*will make this a priority ministry to assure its effectiveness*).
3. He or she will communicate with you regularly as you direct to serve as your “eyes and ears” for what is happening in the community, culture and government that is relevant to the mission of the ministry.
4. He or she will agree to participate in training and educational workshops sponsored by the area Pastor Council for Citizenship Ministry leaders.

***PLEASE NOTE:** Pastor, this ministry will only be as effective as its visible, regular support by you from the pulpit. If it operates as an “unwanted stepchild” ministry it will flounder and become a frustration to you and to those serving in it.*

Conducting Effective Voter Awareness and Turnout Activities

Registering to vote is like getting your driver’s license – it’s great to have, but you must get in the car and turn the key in order to put it to use. One great dilemma of the church has been how many Christians are not registered to vote, but an equal issue is how many “have their license” but rarely if ever use it. Failure to vote Biblically is a de facto stamp of approval on immoral, unjust and corrupt government. Just these basic steps taken in any church will increase the number of Christian citizens voting regularly and will help

elect more godly leaders and promote righteous laws.

Objective

To maximize the number of citizens in each church who are verified to have voted in each election with a goal toward 100 percent.

1. Suggested Plan

One. Place “FaithVotes” or similar inserts into the bulletins to be distributed for the services on the Sunday before the election or when early voting begins.

Two. Set up an information table in the foyer staffed by the Citizenship Ministry team to answer questions about voting locations and other related issues.

- i. Have list of voting/caucus locations in the community available.
- ii. Have a sign up sheet for those interested in staying informed on important moral and policy issues.

Three. Include a special PowerPoint slide in your pre and post service screen presentations designed to increase awareness and encourage participation.

Four. At an appropriate time during the worship service, the Senior Pastor should discuss the importance of voting responsibly. He could then ask each person who is an eligible voter to be willing to make a commitment to vote, and “Stand for Righteousness” by voting in each election according to Biblical principles.

- i. To be effective, the senior pastor must **LEAD** in promoting godly citizenship and voting Biblically. Again, Pastoral leadership is **SCRIPTURAL, ESSENTIAL** and **EFFECTIVE!**

Five. Distribute non-partisan voter guides or other voter education materials*:

- i. As church bulletin inserts, or
- ii. At the doors as people leave the service, or
- iii. By mailing directly to the church list

** Non-Partisan voter guides available for download at www.faithvotes.org*

Recommended Action Items

One. The Senior Pastor can record a 30-second message urging participation and use an automated phone tree system to contact each church household prior to the election and/or caucus. (Sample script available)

- i. Scripting can be prepared by the Pastor, CMD or acquired from the Pastor Council.

Two. Have list of polling locations and extra voter guides available at the church on Election Day.

Three. Citizenship Ministry team could also coordinate childcare and transportation for those with such needs.

Summary

The task of increasing the informed voter turnout in your church is one of the most essential responsibilities of the Christian Citizenship Ministry. Remember that elections are won and lost in the margins – very often by 1 or 2 percentage points or even a few votes. Every vote makes a difference, and every follower of Christ who is an eligible voter has a duty to participate every time!

OVERVIEW: Every American Christian who is eligible to vote does so either:

- a) By default (failing to vote and allowing elected officials to be chosen by those who do not share the same values),
- b) Carelessly by voting out of ignorance or selfishness, choosing ungodly or unrighteous leaders, or
- c) Becoming informed about candidates' positions on key issues, praying and casting a vote consistent with Biblical principles.

Most pastors would agree that options A and B are poor stewardship and have led to ungodly, unjust and corrupt leaders being chosen, resulting in unrighteous government. It is still an accepted statistic that no more than one-third of churchgoing citizens vote in each election – a fact of which we should be ashamed.

Again, it is essential that the Senior Pastor appoint a permanent Christian Citizenship Ministry Director for this ministry as described earlier and in *Christian Citizenship 101* (available at www.uspastorcouncil.org or by calling the USPC office at the number below).