

LIBERTY LEGAL INSTITUTE

Churches and Elections: WHAT IS THE LAW?

Many churches and pastors feel called by scripture to “equip the saints” to represent Christ in all areas of our society, including the voting booth. Pastors should thus be supported in their goal of helping their members be good stewards in representing Christ in their civic duties. This is especially important in light of the fact that only one out of every four Christians in America is voting.

Unfortunately, many churches and pastors have been given false information in an attempt to scare them from acting as a pastor and impacting their culture for Christ. The law is actually very supportive of pastors and churches in fulfilling their mission to equip their saints. Even as a non-profit corporation, there is very little a church may not do.

Churches May NOT:

1. Endorse or oppose a particular candidate
2. Contribute to or raise money for a candidate (including free use of church list)

Churches May: (among other activities)

1. Register their members as voters
2. Pass out voters’ guides
3. Invite all candidates in a race to speak (It is okay if only one shows up)
4. Speak **DIRECTLY** about specific issues and legislation (abortion, marriage, etc.)

Individually, a pastor can do whatever he feels led to do- endorse, support a member’s campaign, etc. There are no limitations. The few limitations above that exist are only for the church entity and only if the church is a non-profit corporation.

Pastors should not be intimidated from acting as pastors, calling their people to vote and giving them info so they can best represent Christ in the voting booth.

Liberty Legal Institute is the state legal group in Texas associated with Focus on the Family. It protects churches and religious freedoms free of charge. For questions, please call (972) 423-3131.