

## How do Church and State Relate to God's Purposes? Romans 13:1-7

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*Read Romans 13:1-7 and pray that God would grant you spiritual understanding.*

1. If you were in charge of the country (whether you were a king/queen or president), how would you govern? On what basis would you make decisions? Are you willing to bear the consequences for those decisions?
2. We live in times that hate the words "servants", "authority", "master", and "submission". Why do people today hate these words, and why do they play such an important role in the New Testament understanding of God, relationships, and government?
3. What were the rules given to kings in Old Testament Israel according to Deuteronomy 17:14-20?
4. What was Jesus' attitude towards those in governing positions according to John 19:11, Luke 13:32, 22:24-27. Did Jesus believe the right to govern is given by God or that citizens have the right to criticise their rulers?
5. What should be our prayer in relation to the government according to 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and 1 Thess. 4:11-12?
6. If a government rules according to pagan principles, or has a non-Christian as its head, does that mean we don't have to submit to them? What word does Paul use to describe the Christian's relationship to the rulers of his own day in Romans 13:1? You can find the same sentiment in 1 Peter 2:13-14.
7. Romans 13:2 speaks strongly against rebellion against the government. What are the consequences for disobedience in vv.3-4? Are there occasions when Christians were disobedient to their ruling authorities? Take a look at Acts 4:19, 5:29 and Exodus 1:15-21 and their context.
8. Does Romans 13:4 warrant capital punishment from a biblical perspective? What is the Bible's theological reason for the use of capital punishment in Genesis 9:6?
9. What is the relationship between freedom and obedience to the laws of the government in 1 Peter 2:13-16? How might that look in the daily practice of the Christian?

10. During New Testament times, Roman Emperors considered themselves to be gods, requiring homage. Why is significant that Paul calls them “servants” in Romans 13:4? How would Roman governors have thought about Paul’s designation? “Servant” is also a significant word in the Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos where Israel, Nebuchadnezzar, Jesus, and the prophets are all called “God’s servants”. Why do you think that is?
11. If the government is the agent who carries out God’s wrath on evildoers (according to v.4), is it ever right for Christians to hold personal vendettas and carry out revenge? See Romans 12:18-20. What about if the government does not carry out justice, what should be done? See 2 Thess. 1:6-10.
12. What is the purpose of the governing authorities according to the first sentence in v.4? Are there occasions when they are agents seeking evil (cf. 1 Kings 21:1-16)? Who defines whether the actions of the government are good or evil?
13. Why is it required of Christians to pay their taxes in Romans 13:6?
14. What did words like “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor. 12:3; Romans 10:9) and “our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20) mean in the context of the Roman world where Caesar was Emperor and citizenship was with Rome? What does this mean for us today?
15. Are we allowed to benefit from our government in the establishment of our rights, while simultaneously pledging our allegiances to a higher authority, preaching the gospel to government, and calling them to act rightly? See Acts 22:25, Acts 26:28, Luke 3:19 and their respective contexts.