

The Biblical Examiner

An Examination of the Biblical Principles Involved in Issues at Hand.
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Public Servants?

1 Corinthians 3:5

Ministers, *one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master; a servant, attendant, minister.* This includes *those through whom God carries on his administration on earth, as magistrates, Ro. xiii.4; teachers of the Christian religion, 1 Co.iii.5; 2 Co. vi.4; 1 Th.iii.2.*

The word *minister*, when used in connection with the church, even though at times appears to refer to a servant of man or of a group of people (local congregation) and involves serving men and churches, obviously means a servant of Christ; Christ as head of His Church. This Biblical minister is first and foremost, a servant of *the Lord Christ*. (Most ministers today are *ministers*, servants of the State.)

This leads us to conclude some things.

First, in the church. Paul here in this passage and in the next chapter (see below), points out that he is a minister of God, not of the church, nor of any man in any way, shape or form. This not only applies to him, but to all who are sent by the Lord to churches as pastors. The usage of this word in regard to others, such as Timothy and Epaphras, confirms this.

Many churches view the pastor as their minister, rather than the minister of Christ, which is unscriptural. They treat him as their employee rather than an 'employee' of the Lord.

Look at what this does. This leads to the despising of this office by the people, "After all, he is our minister isn't he?" This leads to the people exalting themselves against the office of minister. Was this not the problem Moses faced with Miriam (Numbers 12), and later, Korah (Numbers 16)? Both stood against Moses as though he were their servant or steward. In both instances, Moses told the rebels that they were standing against God, because he was God's servant, not theirs.

I realize that there has not been a man since that could hold a candle to Moses in his faithfulness over the house (congregation) of the Lord (Hebrews 3), except Paul. But we are clearly told that these men were faithful ministers of God. Both made it extremely clear that the Lord did not make them accountable to

man, but to Himself. Those who sought to make them accountable to man were judged as being in rebellion against God.

Second, regarding the civil magistrate; those through whom "God carries on his administration on earth, as magistrates, Romans 13:4." The magistrate is a servant of God, not of man. God gives evil, covetous magistrates to an evil, covetous society; godly magistrates to a godly society, Isaiah chapter 24 (v. 2); 30:8-17; 50:1; Jeremiah 5:31; 8:10, and many more passages. Read some of the OT prophets and note the reason that is given over and over for the destruction of the people of God, Jeremiah 13:10; 15:3-7.

Now, look at the implications. The democracy movement today leads to the idea that the civil magistrate is the servant of the electorate, thus our servant. This permits a rebellious attitude toward him, even in the hearts of God's people.

This is contrary to the word of God. He is God's servant just as is the minister of God's word, the pastor. (Cf. Daniel 4:17.) This means that when someone says that the civil magistrate is our servant, this is the same as saying that the minister of the Gospel of Christ is a servant of the people, not a servant of Christ. (Then we get upset that the people treat the office of minister with disrespect.)

This means that the same regard toward this office of minister (civil magistrate) is required by God, as is to be given to the office of minister (pastor) of a local church. In other words, he is a minister of God, not a minister of the people, even though he may carry the title of, "Civil Servant." Public opinion might regard him as a Public Servant, but God's word does not. Both the civil magistrate and the people must realize that he will be judged by God according to his faithfulness under God; the people will be judged according to their regard and submission toward this office, under God.

Let us be quick to add that any law which is not in conformity to the principles of God's law, is not a law. God does not require the people to obey unlawful leadership from either the civil authority or from the ecclesiastical

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