Family Research Council

Voter Resource Guide

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Preface by Tony Perkins

Impact Your Future
About the Author

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www.iVoteValues.org
# Table of Contents

**PREFACE**  
4

**WHY BOTHER?**  
5

**TOP TEN BIBLICAL REASONS**  
9

**1. REGISTER TO VOTE**  
10
- Who May Register and Vote?  
10
- How Do I Register to Vote?  
10
- Should I Register or Re-Register?  
11
- Do I Need a Voter I.D. Card?  
11
- Voter Registration and Assistance  
11

**2. REGISTER YOUR FRIENDS**  
12
- Legal Guidelines  
12
  - For Churches  
12
  - For Pastors  
14
- Organize a Voter Registration Drive  
15
- Use Voter Guides  
18
- Encourage Voters  
19
- Become a Poll Worker  
20

**3. VOTE YOUR VALUES**  
21
- Educate Yourself on Election Issues  
21
- Pick Your Party  
22
- Choose a Candidate  
23
- Vote Your Values  
24

**4. PRAY**  
25
- For the Election  
25
- For Our Nation  
26

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
27
- FAQs About Elections  
26
- FAQs About Voter Registration  
29
- FAQs About Absentee Ballots  
32

**CONCLUDING CHALLENGE**  
33

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**  
34

**CREDITS**  
35
Preface

Voting is a simple act with a significant impact. Americans are blessed to have a representative form of government. As Abraham Lincoln put it, ours is a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” When we vote, we help determine who will lead our nation, make our laws, and protect our freedoms.

Founding Father Samuel Adams once said:

“Let each citizen remember at the moment he is offering his vote… that he is executing one of the most solemn trusts in human society for which he is accountable to God and his country.”

Voting is a privilege, a freedom, and an opportunity that millions in other parts of the world can only dream about. Yet, many Americans strangely choose not to vote. In fact, many are not even registered to vote. Of those who are registered, roughly half don’t vote in a given election, giving up the opportunity to help determine our nation’s leadership and therefore our future.

Americans may offer many reasons for their choice of whether or not to vote and their choice of candidates when they do vote, but Americans of faith have a compelling motivation: the Commands of Christ. Jesus said: “You are the Salt of the earth…the Light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16), and “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (Matt. 22:21). Christ’s instruction has many life applications for Citizens Christians. Among them are: registering to vote, encouraging others to do the same, and then voting His values.

This Voter Resource Guide is designed to help equip you for voter registration, education, and mobilization. In it you will find answers to frequently asked questions, legal do’s and don’ts, practical “How To” help on a number of action steps, and a reference section full of helpful resources. Consider sharing a copy of this resource with other Christians who share your values. Also, check out our website at www.iVoteValues.org.

Remember, how you vote today impacts tomorrow!

Tony Perkins,
President of the Family Research Council
Why Bother?

When it comes to Christians getting involved in the political process and voting, many wonder: “Why bother?” That is a valid question based on some assumptions they may have. Check out the Q & A below. Who knows, you just might help change some minds.

Q – Do Christians have a responsibility to participate in politics?

A – Yes. God established three institutions: the family, the church, and the civil government. Paul states in Romans 13:1 that “the (governmental) authorities that exist have been established by God.” Therefore we are responsible to the divine institution of government. Christians should always submit to the governing authorities, unless the government forbids what God requires (Dan. 6; Matt. 22:5-22; Rom. 13:1-8; Acts 4:18-31; 5:17-29; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).

The principle of submission to governing authorities includes not only obeying the laws of the land, but it also includes participating in government - at all levels possible. Think about it. Since God established government, would He then tell His people to stay out of it? No. God expects us to get involved. Jesus put it this way: “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (Matt. 22:21).

Q – I’ve always heard “separation of church and state,” so as a Christian shouldn’t I steer clear of political involvement?

A – Separation of church and state as established by modern courts is based on a misreading of a personal letter from Thomas Jefferson to a group of Baptists written to assure them that there was a “wall of separation” protecting their religious liberty from government interference. It may come as a surprise, but the phrase “separation of church and state” is found nowhere in our U.S. Constitution and specifically in the First Amendment, which reads: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”
It is unconscionable that so many Christians today have concluded that it is somehow immoral to ‘get political.’ I don’t believe the Founding Fathers intended to exclude people of faith from the process. There is not a scrap of evidence to indicate such.

- Dr. James Dobson, Psychologist and Author

In fact, the vast majority of America’s Founding Fathers were professing Christians and would never have agreed with how our modern courts have re-interpreted the First Amendment—which was originally intended to guarantee, not take away, our freedom of religious expression. The Speaker of the House for the First Federal Congress, Frederick Muhlenberg, also a Lutheran pastor, signed the very Bill of Rights that includes that First Amendment protecting those freedoms. Christians have been involved in government from the founding of our nation and God expects no less of us today.

Remember, we have a representative form of government. Ours is a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” Therefore, if you and I do not actively participate, then we are not fulfilling the totality of Jesus’ command to render to Caesar (Matt. 22:21). After all, if Christians retreat from this arena, then we have allowed Satan to prevail in a place where Christ commanded us to make an impact as the salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16).

Q – How can I get involved and make an impact?

A-There are many ways we can participate in government, such as commenting on proposed legislation, volunteering for the election commission, conducting voter registration, campaigning for a godly candidate, running for office, etc. Obviously the most basic form of participation is voting. America’s Founding Fathers viewed voting as a great privilege and responsibility. So should we. Why not register to vote, encourage your friends to do the same, and then vote your values? Remember, how you vote today impacts tomorrow!

Q – Does my vote really matter?

A-Yes! Consider the following examples:

> In 1801, one vote in the U.S. House broke the tie between presidential candidates Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. By the way, Burr was later charged with treason!

> In 1839, one vote made Marcus Morton governor of Massachusetts and earned him the nickname “Landslide.”
In 1868, one vote saved President Andrew Johnson from being removed from office.

In 1876, one vote in the Electoral College gave Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency.

In 1941, one vote extended the active service provision in the Selective Service Act (Draft) just four months before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In 2000, we had one of the most closely contested presidential elections in American history, and some people are still arguing about who won!

The point is this: Your vote can make a tremendous difference!

Q – All the candidates sound the same, is there any real difference?

A–It may seem that there’s not much difference between candidates. However, many times there is a radical difference when it comes to a candidate’s positions on life, family, and freedom issues, such as:

> Abortion Rights (cleverly disguised as “pro-choice,” but in reality it’s “pro-death”)

> Bio-Medical Issues (e.g., cloning, harvesting stem cells from human embryos which in fact kills pre-born babies, etc.)

> Euthanasia (i.e., right-to-die movement, physician-assisted suicide, etc.)

> Gambling (e.g., lottery, casinos, video poker – which especially hurt the poor who participate, encourage crime, etc.)

> Homosexual Agenda (i.e., the push to normalize, legitimize, and legalize homosexuality through same-sex marriage, same-sex adoption rights, propaganda in public schools, legislation declaring it a civil right, etc.)

> Religious Liberty (i.e., freedom of expression in government institutions, schools, etc. when it comes to the Ten Commandment displays, nativity scenes, voluntary prayer, religious speech, etc.)

Know what the candidates stand for. Closer to the election, visit www.iVoteValues.org and find out by clicking on Whose Values, then on Candidate’s Values for links to helpful websites outlining candidate positions on a wide range of issues.

“The same Jesus who multiplied the young lad’s loaves and fishes will be faithful to multiply the efforts of those of us who honor His name in the political arena.”

- Dr. James Dobson, Psychologist and Author

“Elections belong to the people. It is their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.”

- Abraham Lincoln, U. S. President
Q – Does the office of President have any real influence on the direction of our nation?

A – Yes. Consider the fact that the person elected President will appoint Federal Judges, and perhaps Supreme Court Justices, who essentially will serve for life and influence faith, family, and freedom issues for years to come.

Consider the power and the reach of the Judiciary in the following examples:

> The U.S. Supreme Court opened the door to same-sex “marriage” by striking down the federal definition of marriage in the Defense of Marriage Act-(DOMA). DOMA was passed nearly unanimously by both Houses of Congress and signed by President Clinton.4

> Now Federal Judges have followed the lead of the High Court decision, striking down marriage laws in a number of states and overturning the votes of millions of citizens, including some constitutional amendments that passed by nearly 80% majorities.

Elections have consequences. Think about it. How you vote today can have a huge impact on tomorrow!

Q – What would Jesus do on Election Day?

A– If he was an American citizen, what do you think Jesus would do on Election Day? Would Jesus vote? Or would he stay home? If he did vote, which candidates would he support? Those are excellent questions…

We know that Jesus expects his followers to be salt and light in our culture (Matt. 5:13-16), and that he expects us to participate in government (Matt. 22:21). Based on his teachings, it would be safe to say that Jesus would register and vote. Shouldn’t we do the same? Who would Jesus support with his vote? Don’t you think he would vote for the candidates that most closely represent his values? Isn’t that what we should do on Election Day?

This resource is here to help you do what Jesus would do: register to vote, encourage others to do the same, vote your values, and pray for the election and the future of our nation—because how you vote today impacts tomorrow.
1. Jesus said that the second of two Great Commandments is to “love your neighbor as you love yourselves” (Matt.22:39). If we truly love our neighbors, we will be concerned about the kind of government leaders and laws we all live under. So we can show love for our neighbors in the way we vote.

2. Jesus called us the “Salt” of the earth and the “Light” of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). By implication, we are to influence all areas of life and culture, including the arena of government. One of the main ways we can influence government is how we vote.

3. Jesus commanded: “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (Matt. 22:21). Obviously, the reference is to paying taxes. However, in a democratic republic where we have a government “of the people, for the people, and by the people,” every eligible citizen is expected to vote as well.

4. Paul states in Romans 13:1 that “the (governmental) authorities that exist have been established by God.” In fact, God established three institutions: the family, the church, and the civil government. Therefore we are responsible to the divinely established institution of government to be good citizens (Rom. 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17). One of the ways we can be good citizens in America is to vote.

5. God entrusts every believer with stewardship over time, talents, treasure and opportunities for which we will be held accountable. The ability to vote is a gift to us, and we will answer for what we do (or don’t do) with it. Better to be like the wise and faithful servant who took action and invested than the one who did nothing with what he was entrusted (Matt. 25:14-30).

6. Voting recognizes the equality of all people before God, which is the foundation for our right to be heard and represented. (Galatians 3:26-28)

7. The Bible offers examples of representative government: Exodus 18:21 says: “Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness: and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.” Acts 6:3 says: “Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.” Based on Biblical principal, we select these representative leaders by voting.

8. The same verses about representative leaders who also speak of the kind of character qualities we should look for in those we select to represent us: “able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness” (Exod. 18:21) and “men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3). We should look for candidates who model these values and consider supporting them with our vote.

9. When we vote, we make an alliance with the candidate of our choice. A prophet confronted the King of Judah for his unwise alliance with the wicked King Ahab: “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Therefore the wrath of the Lord is upon you” (2 Chron. 29:2). So we need to be informed before we vote.

10. Elections have enormous consequences: “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked rule, they mourn.” (Proverbs 29:2). How we vote today impacts tomorrow!

“Those who vote blindly the traditional party loyalties of their families instead of shared common core values, beliefs, and convictions are falling short in their roles as Citizen Christians.

- Dr. Richard Land, President,
Southern Evangelical Seminary
1. Register To Vote

Now that you have a good idea why you need to do it, here’s a Q & A on voter registration.

Q – Who May Register and Vote?

A – Anyone who meets the following requirements:

> Must be a U.S. citizen.
> Must be 18 years of age or older.
> Must be registered to vote in the state where you officially live.
> Must be of sound mind mentally.
> Must not have been convicted of a felony resulting in the limitation of your civil rights.

Voting is a privilege that can be revoked. For example, some convicted felons have limitations placed upon them that disqualify them from voting until their sentence is served.

Q – How Do I Register to Vote?

A – Registering to vote is easy. The National Voter Registration Act allows U.S. citizens to register to vote by mail in most states.

Here are the three simple steps:

1. Obtain and complete the registration form (This can be done online at www.iVoteValues.org).
2. Print it, sign it, address it, and stamp it.
3. Mail it (or take it) to the election official in your state (See www.nass.org or www.fec.gov).

Remember, most states require that you register at least a month before Election Day to be eligible to vote in that election. However, this varies from state to state. Please check the voting laws in your state for specific details (see www.nass.org). You will be notified when you are registered. Then the election office should provide info as to where you can vote on Election Day.

Voter Resource Guide
Q – Should I Register or Re-Register?

A–Here are some guidelines:

> If you have never registered before—Register.
> If you just turned 18—Register.
> If you just became a U.S. citizen or have dual citizenship in the U.S. and have not registered yet—Register.
> If you are registered and want to change your political party affiliation—Re-Register.
> If you are registered and have changed your marital status and/or changed your name—Re-Register.
> If you are registered and have moved or changed your mailing address since the last time you registered—Re-Register.

Q – Do I Need a Voter I.D. Card?

A–Your Voter Registration Card contains all the necessary information you need to vote in local, state, and national elections:

> Your Polling or Voting Place Address and Precinct Number.
> Your U.S. Congressional District.
> Your State Senate and House Districts.

In some states, you must have your Voter Registration Card with you in order to vote. Other states simply require a photo ID. Check with your state for specific details (see www.nass.org).

Voter Registration and Assistance

Contact Information: Federal Elections Commission
999 E Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20463
(800) 424-9530 or (202) 694-1100
or for the hearing impaired: (202) 219-3336
www.fec.gov

Links: The National Mail Voter Registration Form
> Absentee Voting Frequently Asked Questions
www.fvap.gov/vao/vag/appendix/faq
2. Register Your Friends

Christians who are already actively engaging their culture and participating in government often have reservations about leading others to join in and do the same. The reasons are understandable. You may have questions about what is legal or about how to do it. This section was designed with you in mind—to help answer your legal questions and show you how to multiply your impact through your friends, your church, and your community.

Legal Guidelines

A Frequently Asked Question when it comes to political involvement is this: Is that legal? There are legal limits to what you may do, but your hands are not completely tied. In fact, you may be surprised at how much influence you can have. Unfortunately, many are confused about what is and what is not legal given the IRS restrictions on political activity by churches and other tax-exempt organizations. While it is impossible to lay out a definitive list of do’s and don’ts since the IRS interprets what is and isn’t legal, the resource below is offered for general guidelines:

Legal DOs and DON’Ts for Churches

- Teaching on moral issues and civic involvement
  - Yes
- Endorsing or opposing political candidates
  - No
- Educate on political process and political/social/legislative issues
  - Yes
- Contributions to Political Action Committees
  - No
- Distribution of candidate surveys and incumbent voting records (avoid editorial opinions and make sure they cover a wide range of issues)
  - Yes
- Church bulletin editorial where the pastor or staff member endorses or opposes a candidate
  - No
Encourage members to voice their opinions in favor or in opposition to certain legislation  *Yes

Campaigning for candidates  No

Discuss biblical instruction pertaining to moral and cultural issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, etc.  Yes

Fundraising for candidates  No

Support or oppose judicial, department, or cabinet appointments  Yes

Granting use of name to support a political candidate  No

Support or oppose other political appointments of non-elected officials  Yes

Support or oppose judicial candidates  No

Use of church facilities by political candidates (as long as all other candidates are allowed or invited)  Yes

Contributions to political candidates  No

In-kind and independent expenditures for or against political candidates  No

Petition drives supporting or opposing legislation  Yes

Support or oppose legislation unrelated to the church organization  *Yes

Support or oppose legislation that directly relates to the organization  **Yes

Engage in voter registration activities that avoid promoting any one candidate or particular political party.  Yes

*Churches and other 501(c)(3) organizations may support or oppose legislation so long as such activity comprises an insubstantial part of the overall operation (5%-20% - ADF). 501(c)(4) organizations may support or oppose legislation without any limitations.

**A church or any other 501(c)(3) organization may without limitation support or oppose legislation that directly affects the organizational structure and operation. For example, a church may without limitation oppose legislation attempting to repeal the tax exempt status of the church.
Legal DOs and DON’Ts for Pastors

> Preach on moral and social issues and encourage civic involvement. Yes

> Endorse candidates on behalf of the church. No

> Engage in voter registration activities that avoid promoting any one candidate or particular political party. Yes

> Use church funds or services (such as mailing lists or office equipment) to contribute directly to candidates or political committees. No

> Distribute educational materials to voters (such as voter guides), but only those that do not favor a particular candidate or party and that cover a wide range of issues. Yes

> Permit the distribution of material on church premises that favors any one candidate or political party. No

> Conduct candidate or issues forums where each duly qualified candidate invited and provided an equal opportunity to address the congregation. Yes

> Use church funds to pay fees for political events. No

> Set up a political committee that would contribute funds directly to political candidates. No

> Allow candidates to solicit funds while speaking in a church. No

> Invite candidates or elected officials to speak at church services. *Yes

*Churches that allow only one candidate or a single party’s candidate to speak can be seen as favoring that candidate or party. No candidate should be prohibited from addressing a church if others running for the same office have been allowed to speak. Exempt from this are candidates or public figures who may speak at a church, but they must refrain from speaking about their candidacy.
Organize a Voter Registration Drive

One way you can make a positive impact on Election Day is to organize a Voter Registration drive in your local church or community. You will be surprised how many people are not even registered to vote! Contact your Supervisor of Elections and get Voter Registration forms and the guidelines for holding a Voter Registration drive. Ask for posters, flyers, and other materials to help promote voter registration. You may also download and order Voter Registration Resources at www.iVoteValues.org.

Five Steps for Hosting a Successful Church Voter Registration Drive

Christians can have a positive impact on elections and ultimately our nation’s future. Elections determine our leaders, who in turn decide whether our nation honors biblical marriage, protects life in the womb and allows the freedom to express our faith in the public arena. Yet every election, millions of Christians fail to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens. We can help our people obey Christ’s command to participate in government (Matt. 22:21) by encouraging voter registration and voting Christian values.

If you already have a Culture Impact Team, Christian Life Committee, Salt and Light Team, Issues Concern Group, or the like, they may be assigned this responsibility. If not, recruit and appoint a team that will run point on voter registration, education, and mobilization efforts among your congregation. The team or committee would be responsible for the following five action steps:
Step 1: Ask:
Get permission from your pastor and church leadership so that you’re under biblical authority. When asking, emphasize that voter registration is:

➤ **Biblical.** Selecting godly leaders is rooted in biblical principle (see Exod. 18:21; Prov. 29:2), and that process begins with registering to vote. Part of a pastor’s responsibility is to preach the whole counsel of God to the people of God (Acts 20:27), which includes instruction about how we are to influence the direction of public policy and government as the salt and the light (Matt. 5:13-16).

➤ **Simple.** Recent federal laws have made voter registration easier than ever, with a national registration form that’s acceptable in most states. It is often easier than filling out the release form to go on a church mission trip or an application for summer camp. Visit www.iVoteValues.org and click on “Register to Vote” for more info.

➤ **Legal.** The IRS says church voter-registration drives are legal, and even encouraged, unless they endorse or oppose candidates. (Legal Tips Below)

Step 2: Prepare:
Here is a suggested game plan:

➤ **Contact** your county clerk’s or secretary of state’s office to obtain registration forms and learn collection procedures. Voters can mail their own forms, but it’s more effective to collect them from members and then volunteer to mail or return them in bulk. Some states, like Texas, require you to be deputized before doing that. Other states may require a valid ID. For a list of state voter-registration policies and contact info, visit www.eac.gov, and click on “Register to Vote.”

➤ **Schedule** registration drives to coincide with patriotic-themed, July 4th worship services and 30-60 days preceding an election. The Sunday nearest July 4th is a perfect time to focus on our biblical and patriotic duty as Christian citizens and specifically to encourage voter registration. Also, conduct voter registration “at least three consecutive Sundays leading up to the month before the election,” advises Cureton. Many states have a voter registration deadline 30 days before elections, so plan ahead.

➤ **Advertise** your registration drive on the church website, newsletters, PowerPoint slides, bulletins, and other church communications. However, the pastor is the key to promotion because when the pastor leads, the people will follow. The Toolkit DVD has more promotional resources, including a video and graphics.
Step 3: Register:
On the Sunday your pastor preaches on Christian Citizenship, here are two ways to conduct the non-partisan voter registration drive:

- **Pews.** The most effective method is to have ushers distribute voter registration forms in the pews, allowing church members time to fill out the forms before they are collected. “That way you don’t miss anyone,” says Rev. Rick Scarborough of Vision America.

- **Tables.** If your pastor prefers a more passive approach, set up a patriotic-themed table in a high-traffic area of the church. Recruit a team of volunteers and train them. Have plenty of registration forms and pens.

1. **Take the initiative.** Fr. Frank Pavone of Priests for Life advises: “Stand up, don’t sit, and don’t just let people walk by. Speak to them, saying, ‘Good morning, can I help you fill out this form?’” If already registered, ask if they have moved since the last election; if so, re-register them.

2. **Provide assistance.** “Lead people step-by-step through the process so they don’t feel like any question is stupid,” says Pavone. Look over the form and ensure it is complete.

3. **Keep records.** “Ask those who register if you can place them on a list for follow-up by the Culture Impact Team,” advises Cureton. (visit www.CultureImpact.org) Follow the law on record keeping.

If the pastor doesn’t feel comfortable with either approach, ask for permission to call members who aren’t registered. Start by comparing your church mailing list with voter registration records, which are public information. Offer to mail them a voter registration form or point them to www.iVoteValues.org, ask them to click on “Register to Vote,” and begin the process. They can help “Register a Friend” as well.

Step 4: Stay Legal:
Tips from Peter Gentala, former ADF attorney:

- Emphasize registration, not politics.
- Allow people from every political party to register.
- Don’t make issue statements like “do your part for pro-life candidates” that can be construed as endorsements.
- Don’t tell people who you’re voting for during registration.

For more information, visit: www.AllianceDefendingFreedom.org or call 800-835-5233. Also, consult the Legal Dos and Don’ts Card in the Voter Impact Toolkit.

Step 5: Follow-up:
Have a plan to translate voter registration into values voting:

- **Collect** the forms and deliver in person or by mail to your county election office.
- **Ask** the pastor to urge voter participation as the election approaches.
- **Encourage** voters to vote early and those who will be out of town to request an absentee ballot.
- **Contact** those on your list a week before the election and remind them to vote.
- **Provide** a sign-up sheet and childcare or transportation to the polls for those who need it.
- **Direct** people to www.iVoteValues.org for more on voting their Christian values.
Use of Voter Guides

Voter guides are an excellent resource for educating and mobilizing potential voters. Many times, voters are unaware of a given candidate’s positions on faith and family values and important moral and social issues. Voter guides provide this valuable information in a way voters can understand. It is important for you to choose which voter guide will be most helpful and one that is legal.

“I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.”

- Thomas Jefferson, U.S. President, Chief Author, Declaration of Independence

Q – Are Voter Guides legal?

A – Contrary to the propaganda that is often spread by certain groups seeking to silence the Christian community, individuals, churches, and ministries may distribute voter guides. Don’t be intimidated by those who declare all voter guides illegal. That said, be careful which voter guide you use.

Q – How can I be sure the voter guide I want to distribute is legal?

A – For a voter guide to be legal:

> Its questions and surveys must have been sent to all candidates, though the candidates are not required to respond to the questions.

> It must have information on candidates from both parties and cannot expressly or implicitly support or endorse any of the candidates or take a position on the issues. No editorializing, just the facts.

> It must be inclusive of a broad range of issue positions (at least 7), not just those of concern to a particular ministry or church.

Check www.iVoteValues.org in advance of the Election for voter guides that comply with IRS law.
Encourage Voters

Here is the obvious: The only way candidates win an election is if they have more votes than their opponents. Candidates get votes when people vote for them. The only way people can vote is if they are registered. Unfortunately, not all otherwise eligible voters in the average church congregation are even registered to vote, which is a good reason to hold voter registration drives at your church! Then the challenge is to mobilize those who are registered to "get out the vote!"

1. Preparation (get these items from your Supervisor of Elections):
   > A list of all the registered voters in your precinct is usually available from your Supervisor of Elections’ office. This will help you determine whom to visit in your neighborhood.
   > Get a map of your precinct or neighborhood.
   > Order a voter history of previous elections. This lets you know who has voted in previous elections.

2. Prior to the Election you will need to obtain plastic bags to hang on doorknobs containing information about the election and important issues that will be decided. It is unlawful to place campaign information in mailboxes.

3. Make sure you have sufficient resources and literature. It is also important to include absentee ballot information.

4. Contact your friends, neighbors, and people in your precinct, encouraging them to vote in the election. Include the following:
   > Date of the Election (also Early Voting period if applicable)
   > Polling place address
   > Phone number to call for those needing a ride
   > Phone number to call for those who can provide a ride
   > Information on absentee ballots
   > Other information, if necessary

5. Decide how many helpers will be needed as callers, babysitters, and drivers on Election Day, and begin to recruit from your list of workers.

6. Walk your Precinct. If possible, enlist several friends or neighbors to
work with you. Plan to walk the neighborhood the weekend before the election to distribute non-partisan voter guides and other educational literature. Typically, voters remember the literature they read just before an election.

7. Additional Mobilization Activities

> Voter registration drives.

> Organize a “Meet the Candidates” night at the church, community center, or public gathering place. Make sure to invite all the candidates in writing. Excluding candidates would be considered as electioneering.

> Write letters to the editor, make calls to talk radio programs, make Facebook posts and tweets, etc.

> Set up e-mail networks and phone banks to remind people to vote.

> Provide transportation to the polling places and childcare at the church to help people get to the polls and vote.

8. Early Voting and Election Day Activities

> Vote and encourage family and friends to vote.

> Hand out voter guides at a legal distance from the polling place. See your Election Supervisor for details.

> Volunteer to drive voters to the polls or arrange to have drivers or car pools for voters.

> Work with a “poll watcher” to notify your volunteer workers to call those “who have not voted.”

Become a Poll Worker

A poll worker is someone stationed at the polls who assists the voters on Election Day by answering questions and helping with the equipment. They also help tally the votes after the election. The poll worker plays a vital role in the exercise of American democracy, particularly at the point of protecting the integrity of the election. Visions of recounts and “hanging chads” from the 2000 election remind us of the importance of honest poll workers. Remember, this is not a volunteer position. Poll workers typically earn around $100.00 for the day’s work and are trained by the Election Supervisor.
How to become a poll worker:

- Each poll worker must be a registered voter.
- Applicants must complete an application form obtained from the Election Supervisor’s office.
- Each applicant must attend an orientation meeting before Election Day.

If you are a poll worker working a precinct other than your own, you will need to order an absentee ballot from the Election Supervisor several weeks before the election. Requirements for poll workers may vary from state to state, so be sure to check your local Election Commission.

Visit this website for more details: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/become_a_poll_worker.aspx

3. Vote Your Values

When you vote, you will vote someone’s values. The only question is: Whose values will you vote? Yours or someone else’s? This section offers help on how to vote your values.

Educate Yourself on Election Issues

If you want to make your vote count, it is vitally important to become educated on the key issues of the upcoming election. www.iVoteValues.org is a great place to start. There you will find many helpful links, many of which are also listed below:

- Issues from an Evangelical Christian Perspective:
  www.AFA.net
  www.CitizenLink.org
  www.CWFA.org
  www.ERLC.com
  www.FRC.org

- Candidate Positions on Election Issues:
  www.vote-smart.org
  www.ontheissues.org

- Election News:
  www.bpnews.net
  www.cnn.com
  www.cnsnews.com
  www.foxnews.com
  www.usatoday.com
  www.washtimes.com
Pick Your Party

Before you choose a party affiliation, make sure you know what each party stands for and what its views are on moral issues and your core values. Every four years preceding a presidential election, each major political party adopts a new party platform at their national convention. The ideological foundation of each party and its candidates will affect how each approaches government, makes and enforces the laws, and protects and defends our basic freedoms.

You may visit the major national party websites to explore their core values and positions on the issues as articulated in their platform.

The Democratic National Committee website is www.democrats.org.

The Republican National Committee website is www.gop.org.

Other Parties may be found on the web as well. Project Vote Smart (www.vote-smart.org) is a non-partisan site offering info on candidates from a wide variety of political parties.

Examine the party platform info in detail. Be careful to compare each party’s platform and its candidate’s positions on the issues with the values that are important to you. Only then can you make an informed decision on which party you most closely identify with. If you wish to register with a major political party or simply register as an independent, make sure you indicate that on your registration card.

Admittedly, when we look at political parties and their candidates, we sometimes feel like we are being forced to choose between the lesser of evils.

“I have been alternately called an Aristocrat and a Democrat. I am neither. I am a Christocrat.”

– Benjamin Rush, Founding Father
Just because there isn’t a perfect candidate or a party platform that completely agrees with your views and values doesn’t remove your responsibility to vote. In that case, it is important that Americans of faith voice our opinions, so that the candidates know they will be held accountable by their constituents, and that their positions on the issues matter!

Choose a Candidate

Choosing a candidate can be a daunting task, especially when it seems on the surface that there’s not much difference between candidates. However, upon closer inspection, there is often a radical difference when it comes to a candidate’s positions on faith and family concerns, such as:

> **Abortion Rights** (cleverly disguised as “pro-choice,” but in reality it’s “pro-death”)

> **Bio-Medical Issues** (e.g., cloning, harvesting stem cells from human embryos which in fact kills pre-born babies, etc.).

> **Euthanasia** (i.e., right-to-die movement, physician-assisted suicide, etc.)

> **Gambling** (e.g., lottery, casinos, video poker—which especially hurt the poor who participate, encourage crime, etc.)

> **Homosexual Agenda** (i.e., the push to normalize, legitimize, and legalize homosexuality through same-sex “marriage,” same-sex adoption rights, propaganda in public schools, legislation declaring it a civil right, etc.)

> **Religious Liberty** (i.e., freedom of expression in government institutions, schools, etc. when it comes to 10 Commandment displays, nativity scenes, public prayer, religious speech, etc.).

Know what the candidates stand for and how their positions on the issues relate to their party’s platform. A great way to find out is by consulting the “Candidate’s Values” section at www.iVoteValues.org. Also, there are other voter guides produced by various organizations that narrow the somewhat broad info provided in the party platforms.

“Ultimately, our loyalty belongs not to any political party or candidate but to the Lord Jesus Christ. On the Day of Judgement, I believe God may ask some of us about why we voted the way we did.”

- Tony Perkins, President, Family Research Council
Here are a couple of general items to consider when choosing a candidate:

> **Convictions.** Shouldn’t Americans of faith consider supporting candidates who promote biblical values and opposing candidates whose positions are contrary to biblical teaching? Our nation’s first Supreme Court Justice, John Jay, said: “It is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation, to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.”

> **Character.** Founder Noah Webster said: “In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide...look to his character... When a citizen gives his suffrage (vote) to a man of known immorality he abuses his trust; he sacrifices not only his own interest, but that of his neighbor, he betrays the interest of his country.” Remember Solomon’s wise words: “When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, they groan” (Proverbs 29:2).

Consider voting for the candidates who most closely represent your values!

**Vote Your Values**

First, make the commitment to vote on Election Day. In 2004, with 60.1%, over half of Americans voted in the presidential election. In 2006’s mid-term elections, only 40.4% of eligible Americans voted. In 2008, that number rose slightly above half to 56.8%. Of self -described evangelical Christians, numbering around 60 million, the percentages are worse. While nearly 50% voted in 2004, the number fell back to 34% in 2006. In 2008, 50.8% voted, and fell back again to 45% in 2010. 2010 was admittedly an unusual off-year election for its turnout, and 30% of all voters self-identified as evangelical, which was the largest self-identified category (Public Opinion Strategies exit polling). A total of 90.7 million voted in 2010, which means that 27.21 million or 45% of evangelicals voted in that election or 30% of the electorate. In 2012, self-identified evangelicals made up to 27% of those who cast ballots. That is 35,178,935 of 60 million evangelicals voted, yielding 58.6% voter turnout.

While this turnout was the best in recent history, it is still disappointing. Indeed, this sort of apathy is indefensible, especially among the Christian community, which has been commanded by Christ to engage our culture as salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16) and participate in government (Matt. 22:21). So go against the rising tide of apathy in America–Vote!

However, don’t just vote for the sake of voting. Take it one step further and vote your values. Every candidate has his or her own set of values and positions on important issues.

Think about it. Where a candidate stands on the issues is far more important than the party he or she belongs to and all the campaign promises and slogans.
Here’s the question: Do the candidates you plan to vote for share your values? If not, why vote for those candidates? Shouldn’t you strongly consider voting for the candidates who believe like you do when it comes to your values and the important issues of our day? Be sure to vote your values. Better yet, vote His values!

4. PRAY

Election Day is approaching, and there is much at stake. In many ways, the future of our nation hangs in the balance. We encourage all concerned Christians to devote themselves to focused prayer for the election, for your state, and for our nation.

Pray for the Election

> **PRAY** that God’s people would feel the need to engage the culture and be involved in government just as Jesus taught (Matt. 5:13-16).

> **PRAY** that all Christians in America will register to vote for the Election (Matt. 22:21).

> **PRAY** that God would help all Americans realize that where the candidates stand on key issues is far more important than the party he or she belongs to and all the campaign rhetoric.

> **PRAY** that Americans of faith would learn the truth about every candidate’s position on important issues.

> **PRAY** that God would make the choice between candidates clear as voters weigh these candidates and their positions against biblical values (Prov. 3:5-6).

> **PRAY** that Americans of faith will vote their values instead of their political party or pocketbook (2 Chron. 19:2).

> **PRAY** that the Lord would protect the election process both nationally and locally from dishonesty and fraud (Prov. 20:23).

> **PRAY** that God would give us godly men and women as leaders who fear the Lord and honor Him (Prov. 29:2).

> **PRAY** that God would give us leaders who value the fact that America is a beacon of hope and freedom for the entire world and that our nation must be defended (Prov. 8:15-16).

“Vote your values instead of your political affiliation or pocketbook.”

– Tony Perkins
President,
Family Research Council
Finally, PRAY that God will bless your efforts to engage our culture and claim it for Christ, beginning with your vote. Remember, how you vote today impacts tomorrow.

Pray for Our Nation

>PRAY for our government officials (1Tim. 2:1-2). Specifically, pray for:
>  > The President and Vice President
>  > The Cabinet and the Congress
>  > The Supreme Court and the Judges
>  > Those who serve as local officials

>PRAY that all our leaders would come to know Christ and follow Him (1Tim. 2:3-4).

>PRAY that God would give our leaders wisdom and discernment as they govern (Psalm 72:1; Prov. 21:1).

>PRAY that God will release those taken captive by Satan and give sight to those who have been spiritually blinded (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

>ASK Him to bring revival to the hearts and lives of the saved (2 Chron. 7:14).

>ASK God to soften all our hearts and make them open to the Lord (Ezek. 36:36).

>PRAY that the innocent, the oppressed, and those unjustly treated would be rescued and protected (Prov. 24:11).

>PRAY for policies that respect human life, the sacredness of marriage, and the right to religious freedom; that compassionately care for the needy and responsibly care for the environment (Prov. 29:2).

Remember the prescription God gave us: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

Our faithfulness in prayer will inevitably lead to action. As James put it: faith without works is really no faith at all. In other words, we are saved by faith alone, but a faith that saves is never alone. It involves action.

Following Jesus’ teaching on our role as salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16) and our civic obligation (Matt. 22:21) has direct application to the culture and the realm of
government. Our prayers and concerns for our nation should lead us to participate in government and engage the culture as often as possible. That participation includes registering to vote, encouraging others to do the same, and then voting our values. Remember, how you vote today impacts tomorrow!

Other Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs about Elections

Q – What Is Voting?

A – Voting is a simple act with a significant impact. Voting is the way that “we the people” elect individuals who will lead our government, make our laws, and protect our freedoms. It is also one of the ways Citizen Christians can function as salt and light to bring about change in our nation.

Voting is a privilege that many people in other parts of the world can only dream about. Voting is a great privilege, but it is also a great responsibility. Exodus 18:21 says, “Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.” Acts 6:3 says: “Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.” Voting is foundational to our form of government, and it is inexcusable for Christians not to obey the command of Christ to participate in government by voting (see Matt. 22:21).

Q – What is a Primary?

A – A primary is a preliminary election, where voters go to the polls to select a candidate for office. The winner of each parties primaries then face off. It’s kind of like the playoffs in football. Win and you advance to the next level.

Primaries were first used back in the mid-1800’s. They were created in an effort to cut down on fraud by giving the power directly to voters instead of party bosses. By the early 20th century, primaries were used for statewide and presidential elections as well.

"It is a moral outrage that more Christians do not take their voting responsibilities seriously. If they did, this would be a very different nation, and a better one."

- Dr. James Dobson, Psychologist and Author
A primary can be nonpartisan, open and closed. A nonpartisan primary is where candidates are not listed by party affiliation. They are mainly used in local and judicial elections. In an open primary, any registered voter of any party can vote on all candidates. In a closed primary, only registered party members may vote for the party’s slate of candidates. Only nine states have open primaries.

Q – What is a Caucus?

A – A caucus is a primary that is limited to registered party members only. Members vote for delegates to the county and state conventions at small party meetings across the state. Those delegates then select representatives to go to the national party convention. The delegates who go to the national convention cast the actual votes for the candidates they want to run for office.

Only 14 states hold presidential caucuses instead of primaries. Some states have recently moved to a caucus system from a primary system to save money, as fewer voters take part in caucuses.

Q – What is the Electoral College?

A – The President and Vice President of the United States are not elected by popular vote, but by the electoral college—a system devised by the founding fathers in the Constitution.

When people cast their votes, they’re actually voting for party slates of electors pledged to the candidates. Generally, the candidate who wins the most number of popular votes in a state wins the state’s entire slate of electoral votes. The candidate with the majority of electoral votes—at least 270 out of 538 possible—wins.

Each state is allotted as many electors as it has members in Congress. States with larger populations have more electoral votes. So it is possible to win the popular vote but not the presidency. That actually happened in the 2000 Presidential Election. The electors are chosen by a variety of methods according to state—including through primaries, party conventions and party organizations.
If no candidate wins a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives has to decide the presidential election. Don’t laugh. After the 2000 election, we know that anything could happen!

Q – *What is a National Party Convention?*

A convention is an official gathering of party representatives to choose their candidates for office. National party conventions are held the summer before elections in November. At these conventions, delegates from each state cast votes for candidates.

The delegates are chosen at state primaries and caucuses. Each state, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the various U.S. Territories, is allowed a certain number of delegates that reflects the size of the state’s population.

FAQs About Voter Registration

Q – *Do I need to show identification to register to vote?*

A–No. It is not necessary to show any form of ID to register to vote. However, it is a good idea to bring ID to your polling place on Election Day.

Q – *Do I have to register for every election?*

A–No. The only cases in which you would need to re-register would be if you moved, changed your name, or wished to change your party affiliation (see Register or Re-Register? above).

Q – *I live in two different states. Where should I register?*

A–You cannot register to vote in two places at the same time. In this case, you would have to choose a state and only register and vote in that state.

Q – *Does each state have different voter registration requirements?*

A–Yes. Each state has its own unique guidelines. Contact your local Supervisor of Elections or see www.fec.gov or www.nass.org.
Q – Can I register for my husband or wife?

A–No, you cannot sign the voter registration form for anyone else, even if that person is your spouse. However, you may take the Voter Registration Form and give it to other people to fill out and sign, and you may deliver or mail in signed forms for others. Again, you cannot sign the Voter Registration Form for anyone but yourself.

Q – Let’s say I have been convicted of a felony, and have served my time. Can I register to vote?

A–Yes. You can register to vote if your sentence is complete and your civil rights have been restored.

Q – Let’s say I have a Student’s Visa, or a Green Card. Can I vote?

A–No. You must be a United States citizen in order to vote.

Q – Let’s say I am a student and old enough to vote. Can I register to vote where I go to school?

A–Yes. You can register to vote in the state and/or county where you are going to school. However, remember that you can only register in the state in which you have established official residency.

Q – What if I were homeless? Could I register to vote?

A–Yes. However, you must provide an address where you receive your mail, so that your voting precinct can be determined and so you can receive your registration card. Some voter registration forms provide a section for homeless people.

Q – Can I use a nickname when registering to vote?

A–No. You should use your full legal name—the same name you use when you sign legal documents.

Q – I am currently registered to vote, but now I have a different name and/or address. What do I need to do?

A–All you need to do is fill out another voter registration form.
Q – Can I choose a business address for registering?

A–No. You must register to vote using your current residential address. You cannot register using a business address, a former address, or the address of a piece of property you own. You must register where you live.

Q – How do I change my party affiliation?

A–Again, simply re-register and choose the party affiliation you desire.

Q – Do I have to choose a political party?

A–No. It is not necessary to choose a political party when you register. Some states do have “closed” primary elections that only allow those registered as Republican or Democrat to vote in their party’s primary elections. In some states, independents and those who choose “no party affiliation” cannot vote in primary elections. Check your state’s requirements for primary elections (See www.nass.org).*

Q – How do I find out where I will be voting?

A–After you register to vote, you will be sent a Voter Registration ID Card. It will have the name and address of your polling place on it. Usually, this location is near your home. You can only vote at that specific location on Election Day. If you will not be able to make it to that location on Election Day, you must request an absentee ballot in advance. Other polling places are often made available during early voting.*

Q – Once I register, when will I receive my new voter registration card?

A–When you can expect to receive your Voter Registration Card varies. To be safe, count on it taking 4-6 weeks to arrive in the mail.

Q – Where can I find a sample ballot?

A–Usually, your local newspaper will print a sample ballot before Election Day.

Q – What hours are the polls open on Election Day?

A–This varies from state to state, but generally, the polls are open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM.*
Voter Registration and Assistance Links:
The National Mail Voter Registration Form
Absentee Voting Frequently Asked Questions
www.fvap.gov/vao/vag/appendix/faq

* Please note that answers to specific questions may vary from state to state. Please see www.nass.org or www.fec.gov and enter your location for specific answers.

FAQs About Absentee Ballots

Q – Why would I need an Absentee Ballot?

A – Absentee ballots allow individuals who cannot get to their voting locations on Election Day to cast their votes by mail.
Absentee ballots are useful for individuals who are traveling or who will be out of the area on Election Day. International Business People, College Students, Vacationers, etc. who are going to be providentially hindered from being near their established place of residence on Election Day should request an absentee ballot and vote.

Q – How do I obtain an Absentee Ballot?

A – You may request an absentee ballot by contacting your Supervisor of Elections. Remember, it is important to request an absentee ballot early, so you have plenty of time to receive it, vote, and get it back to the elections office by your state’s deadline (check www.fec.gov or www.nass.org for these dates).

For more on Absentee Voting, see www.fvap.gov/vao/vag/appendix/faq
Concluding Challenge

The purpose of this resource is to help you take action. Remember what Jesus taught about engaging our culture as “salt” and “light” (Matt. 5:13-16) and participating in government as involved citizens (Matt. 22:21).

As “Salt,” we are to preserve the world from decay, flavor it with good, and create a thirst for God. As “Light,” we are to dispel the darkness, show the way for the lost, and stimulate growth in other believers. That’s what Jesus did. He also participated in government in the ways that were required (Matt. 17:24-27).

Based on His teachings and example, if Jesus were in America preparing for Election Day, it would be safe to say that He would register to vote, encourage others to do the same, and then vote for the candidates who most closely represent His values. He would also pray for God’s will to be done in the election.

Since we are followers of Jesus, shouldn’t we do the same? The Bible says: “Christ...is your example. Follow in His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). Let’s follow in His steps by registering to vote, helping others do the same, voting His values, and praying for God to bless America with godly leaders.

Remember what Jesus taught about engaging our culture as salt and light...
Additional Resources

www.iVoteValues.org is a great place to start. There you will find many helpful resources, some downloadable, as well as links*, many of which are also listed below:

**Voter Registration and Assistance Links**
The National Mail Voter Registration Form:
Absentee Voting Frequently Asked Questions:
www.fvap.gov/vao/vag/appendix/faq

**Other Government Links**
www.whitehouse.gov
www.house.gov
www.senate.gov
www.supremecourtus.gov
thomas.loc.gov

**Election News**
www.bpnews.net
www.cnn.com
www.cnsnews.com
www.foxnews.com
www.usatoday.com
www.washtimes.com

**Political Commentary**
www.FRC.org
www.heritage.org
www.worldnetdaily.com
www.nationalreview.com
www.weeklystandard.com
www.conservativechronicle.com
www.townhall.com
www.spectator.org
www.CWA.org

**Issues from an Evangelical Christian Perspective**
www.AFA.net
www.CitizenLink.org
www.ERLC.com
www.FRC.org

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For More Information about voting, voter registration, etc., contact the Federal Elections Commission.
Federal Elections Commission
999 E Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20463
(800) 424-9530
or (202) 694-1100
or for the hearing impaired:
(202) 219-3336
www.fec.gov

For more information on legal issues for churches and religious organizations, contact:
Alliance Defending Freedom
15100 N. 90th Street
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260
Phone: (800) 835-5233
www.AllianceDefendingFreedom.org

Liberty Institute
2001 West Plano Parkway, Suite 1600
Plano, Texas 75075
(972) 941-4444
Website: www.LibertyInstitute.org
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**Credits**


5. Noah Webster, *Letters to a Young Gentleman Commencing His Education to which is subjoined a Brief History of the United States* (New Haven: S. Converse, 1823), 18-19.


Unless otherwise cited, all Scripture cited is from the New King James Version.
It is unconscionable that so many Christians today have concluded that it is somehow immoral to ‘get political.’ I don’t believe the Founding Fathers intended to exclude people of faith from the process. There is not a scrap of evidence to indicate such.

- James Dobson, Founder and President of Family Talk

To order additional voter registration resources, please visit www.iVoteValues.org

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