

Is the Church called to Activism or Passivism?

Society is in unrest with many social causes calling for “justice”. Absalom campaigned for justice, too. A Christian should personally be just in all dealings with all humanity for testimony’s sake, 1Thess. 4:6-12. But does the Lord Jesus in His NT Scriptures point the church to activism (being joined with the world’s way to change society)? Or are we called to passivism (not being directly joined with them)? Could there be a higher calling in the Lord Jesus Christ?

CALLED TO BE AN ACTIVIST – NT Scripture teaches and shows by example that the church is called to activism – in the house of God, Christ’s body, the church. Paul taught the Corinthian church that God will judge those without, but we are to *judge* those within the assembly. Paul told Titus to “**rebuke with all authority**” ungodliness among believers. No matter how some spin the Lord Jesus’ social involvement, a simple observation shows that the Lord’s letters to His churches deal with the gospel, believer’s lifestyle, and in-house church issues. Peter taught that while God will judge the world, “**that judgment must begin at the house of God.**” For example, parents discipline their own children but not other’s. (See 1Cor. 5:12,13 / Titus 2:15 / 1Pet. 4:17).

CALLED TO BE A PASSIVIST – Yet NT Scripture teaches and shows by example that the church is also called to passivism – in the area of government, etc. For example, while Titus was told to rebuke believers sharply, he was also told concerning governmental powers and magistrates to, “**speak evil of**

A REVERSAL OF ROLES – Often the church judges the world to correct wrongs on abortion, discrimination, sexual sins, and biases in justice, etc. But when it comes to sin and error in the house of God, we are told *not to judge* but show grace. This is the opposite message of Scripture to the church: “**Judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth,**” 1Cor. 5:9-13. We owe society (sinful and suffering) the saving gospel of reconciliation and a loving holy testimony while leaving its judgment to God. And one saved person at a time makes a societal footprint.

It is in the church where we are to work for equal justice and pure beliefs. Notice the issues dealt with to the Corinthian church (who lived in a depraved society) were not the social world but the spiritual. They ranged from the unity of truth by not dividing from each other (discriminating) by labels in front of their Christian identity, to sexual holiness, to marital commitment, to believers’ consciences, to headship and head coverings, to the Lord’s supper, to the order of the gifts in the assembly meeting, to love, and to the true gospel. Is that where our activism is? (See 1Cor. 1-16).

The world means by non-discrimination to *not* judge others for their skin *or sin*. But the church is to model *no* discrimination (the true kind) by not respecting persons as it judges sin justly and impartially, 1Tim. 5:20-21. All believers regardless of nationality, class, or social vocation from a slave to a master, are equally accepted in Christ, Col. 3:11, 22-25. This equality is to be displayed in the church meeting where *all* the brothers may prophesy regardless of income, skin tone or education due to all having the gifts of the Spirit, 1Cor. 14:31. Do we discriminate today and only

let the “professionally educated” be involved in teaching and leadership? It’s only God’s church where all are spiritually ‘E Pluribus Unum’ (out of many, one) – “**all one in Christ Jesus,**” Gal. 3:28.