

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday
 Bible Study..... 9:00 A.M.
 Worship 10:00 A.M.
 Training Class5:00 P.M.
 Worship.....6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:
 Bible Study 7:00 P.M.



Weekly Bulletin
 June 28, 2020

**Law Enforcement:
 God's Design and My Duty**

by Steve Klein

Throughout the Bible narrative, the role of civil authorities is often on display. Misuse of power is commonly seen, exposed, and condemned from Genesis to Revelation. Principles of justice and equity laid down in Scripture form the foundation of the better parts of our legal system even today. God's purpose for civil law, and His expectation that His people submit to it, is also often expressed in Scripture. No passage is clearer on that subject than Romans 13:1-7. Please read the text carefully, noting the words I've highlighted in bold, and then consider a few thoughts with me:

- (1) **Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities.** For there is no authority except from God, and **the authorities that exist are appointed by God.**
- (2) Therefore **whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.**

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(3) **For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.** Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

(4) **For he is God's minister to you for good.** *But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister,* an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

(5) Therefore **you must be subject**, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

(6) For **because of this you also pay taxes**, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing.

(7) Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

All must submit to the governing authorities because they are appointed by God. To disobey them is to disobey God—unless their law would compel one to disobey God's law (Acts 5:29).

God's intention is that rulers make people afraid to do bad things. They are to be "a terror" to evil works. They carry lethal weapons for a reason. They are there to protect good people from bad people.

Do they always do that? No. Law enforcement is sometimes corrupt and oppressive. Paul was well aware of that as he writes the epistle to the Romans. Had he not been beaten and thrown in jail by civil authorities in Philippi (Acts 16:22-23)? Had he not witnessed the Roman proconsul Gallio fail to lift a finger against blatant violence and injustice in Corinth (Acts 18:11-17)? Wasn't Nero, one of the most inhumane rulers in human history, sitting on the throne of Rome at this time? Yet, by inspiration of God, he says "you must be subject" to the gov-

erning authorities. And the apostle Peter, writing in this same time period, tells Christians to "honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17).

But not only are we to be subject to and honor civil law enforcement, we are to pay our taxes to support it! "Because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing." THE REASON given in God's word for paying taxes is to support civil law enforcement.

God's word is a sharp two-edged sword that cuts deeply and equally into any person who is not aligned with its truth (cf. Hebrews 4:12-13).

Wherever injustices exist in law enforcement, they should be reformed by law. That's something Christians CAN get behind. Failing to fund law enforcement, failing to respect it, taking away its ability to use lethal force, or doing away with it altogether must not be supported by any God-fearing person.



In addition to the excellent thoughts in this article, when we do **pray** for these civil authorities (1 Timothy 2:2), let's **pray** that they enforce the law with **justice** and **equity**. That is exactly what God wants from His "ministers." That's how He rules (Deuteronomy 10:18), and He expects them to do the same (2 Samuel 8:15; 1 Kings 3:28). Likely there will always be oppression from rulers, and along with that violations of justice and righteousness (Ecclesiastes 5:8), but we must keep praying—and praising those who do strive for God's ideal.