



The Bible and Elections

We can't end hunger in our own country and overseas unless we have leaders in our federal government who make this a priority.

Introduction

The leaders we elect make decisions that impact people who are poor and hungry here in the United States and around the world. Congress and the administration can lead in moving toward a world without hunger. They can do this by enacting policies and programs that create jobs, strengthen the safety net, invest in human capital development, support community-initiated public-private partnerships, and support international efforts to end hunger and poverty worldwide.

Scriptural Reflection

The leaders we elect make the decisions for our country. Romans 13 underscores the importance of good governance and maintaining justice. In 1 Kings 10:9, the queen of Sheba said to Solomon after visiting him in Jerusalem, “[the Lord] has made you king to execute justice and righteousness.”

The Scriptures also show that wise leaders uphold justice and the common good, especially for those who are poor and needy (Psalm 72:12-14). Leviticus 19:15 and James 2:2-4 call leaders to govern without partiality.

“Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we



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have obtained access to this grace in which we stand.” These words from the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans (5:1-2a) invite us to count on that grace and work together to end hunger. In this place of grace, we as citizens and residents of this country, are free to be fully engaged in the politics of hunger.

After the people of Israel returned from exile in Babylon, the governor, Nehemiah, was able to ask the king of Persia to supply resources for the rebuilding of Jerusalem because of his faithful role in the governance of Persia (Nehemiah 2:1-9). Earlier, Joseph served the good of his people through his active participation in

the Egyptian political structure of his day (Genesis 41).

In our democratic country, as we seek to care for our neighbors and God's creation, we are called to involve our



selves in electing wise and just leaders. Our country was founded on the idea that “we the people” are responsible for selecting our own leaders. It is from the people that authority is given to those who govern, and so we as Christians should participate in the processes of putting in place the type of leaders called for in Scripture.

Our involvement in elections can include giving time and money to candidates who have demonstrated their commitment to reducing widespread hunger and poverty.

Because of our democratic election process, constituents can ask questions and receive information about a candidate’s position on issues of hunger and poverty. We can also share that information with our friends and neighbors—to help them cast their votes for the best candidate. In this way, we continue in the tradition of the prophets, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, who called nations and their rulers to account for their behavior.

Our participation in elections is an extension of our ongoing advocacy with Congress. Political campaigns, town hall gatherings, and meetings with candidates provide opportunities for us to “Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and destitute” (Psalm 82:3). When we involve ourselves in elections, we “speak out for those who cannot speak...[and] defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9).

What You Can Do

1. Pray for candidates running for office, and all those who participate in the elections process. Ask God to direct candidates to uphold justice and care for people in need and that those in the Christian faith be examples of humility and grace.
2. Attend town hall meetings and other gatherings to meet candidates. Ask candidates to state their positions on measures that reduce hunger and poverty.
3. Share information with your friends and family about candidates’ positions on issues of hunger and poverty.

Prayer

O God, our Creator, through our elected leaders and our government, you sustain all you have made. We pray especially for people who are seeking election to political offices in our country. Grant them integrity and wisdom to focus on matters that strengthen our government and protect the most vulnerable among us. Give us courage to challenge candidates to address issues of hunger and poverty. As we prepare to cast our votes, may we be guided by your vision of justice and mercy. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

WHAT IS BREAD FOR THE WORLD?

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation’s decision makers to end hunger and poverty at home and abroad. God’s grace in Jesus Christ moves us to reach out to our neighbors, whether they live next door, in another state, or on another continent. With letters, emails, phone calls, and visits, we urge Congress and the administration to change the policies and conditions that allow hunger to persist.

The individuals and churches involved in Bread for the World represent a broad range of Christian traditions. We embrace and reflect the growing diversity of culture, ethnicity, and religious practices. The empowerment of women, people of color and those most affected by hunger give depth and breadth to our witness to God’s love and care for all.

In our efforts to create hope and opportunity for people who are hungry, we find insight and inspiration from the Scriptures. For many Bread members, the sacraments, the ancient creeds, and the liturgy are sources of strength and joy as we seek to share God’s abundance with those who struggle with hunger and poverty.

JOIN US

Bread’s work is made possible by contributions from tens of thousands of individuals and thousands of churches across the country. We invite you to join us by visiting www.bread.org/join or calling 800/822-7323.

Also, join us in praying for an end to hunger—and receive suggested prayers every other week—by visiting www.bread.org/prayer.