



When the state usurps the responsibilities of the individual, family, or the Church, it is tyranny.

The affairs of each of the four spheres of government are to be conducted according to God's Word. God promises His abundant blessing upon the society which is obedient to His Law (Lev. 26:1-13, Deut. 28:1-14). But when society as a whole fails to conduct its affairs in a manner ordained by God, the result is that God's judgement is upon that society (Lev. 26:14-36, Deut. 28:15-68).

If the individual, the family, the Church, and civil (state) government fails to fulfill their God-ordained roles, then that society is in danger of collapse.

"He knows not how to rule a kingdom, that cannot manage a Province; nor can he wield a Province, that cannot order a City; nor he order a City, that knows not how to regulate a Village; nor he a Village, that cannot guide a Family; nor can that man Govern well a Family that knows not how to Govern himself, neither can any Govern himself unless reason be Lord, Will and Appetite her vassals: nor can Reason rule unless herself be ruled by God, and wholly be obedient to Him." Hugo Grotius

The mark of a mature man is that he knows what his responsibilities are and he is faithful to fulfill them. Within the context of the family, Church, and civil government, let each of us seek to fulfill the responsibilities that God has given us.

All government is to be in submission to our Lord Jesus Christ:

"Unto us a Son is given: and the government will be upon His shoulders..." Isaiah 9:6

"The Lordship of Christ in all areas of life"

Sources:

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For more information, or further resources, contact:



PO Box 23632, Claremont, 7735
Cape Town, South Africa
Tel: 021 689 4480
Fax 021 685 5884
Email: info@christianaction.org.za
Web: www.christianaction.org.za

What is Government?



Some people, when they hear the word "government", think about the state capital with its large state government office buildings or the State House or Parliament. But that is only one aspect of government.

Basically, government has to do with the way in which people conduct themselves as they carry out their personal and community affairs. The Bible clearly defines four **spheres of government** that are all accountable to God to obey His Word.



"You would have no power at all against Me unless it had been given from above." John 19:11

1. Personal or Self-government is the first and most basic sphere of government (Gal.5:22-23, John 14:21). Each and every person is accountable to God for the way he conducts his life and will be judged accordingly in this life and the next. The more self-controlled, self-disciplined we are, the less we'll need external government discipline from family, church and state. (Galatians 6:7, Rev. 20:12, Proverbs 16:32, 1 Timothy 3:45, 2 Peter 1:6).

Self-government is symbolised by our consciences.



2. Family government is the second sphere of government (Eph. 5:22-6:4). God has ordained the family to consist of one man and one woman, in a permanent union, and the children born to them, or adopted by them. The family is responsible to care for the needs of their children and the elderly (1 Tim. 5:8). Also the family, particularly the father, is responsible for the training of the children, teaching them to walk with the Lord, to love the Lord and to fear Him (Deut.6:4-7, Eph.6:1-4).

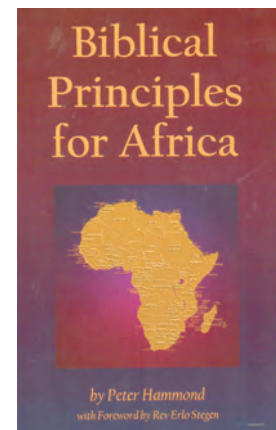
Family government is symbolised by the rod of discipline.



3. Church government is the third sphere of government (1 Tim.3:1-13, Heb. 13:17). The main task of the Church is to fulfill the Great Commission, to **"make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey..."** all that the Lord has commanded (Matt 28:18-20). This includes teaching the full counsel of God (Old and New Testament).

In certain conditions, when there has been a breakdown in family life, the Church has a responsibility to care for widows and orphans (Acts 6:1-7, Jas. 1:27). The Church also has the responsibility to discipline members for moral and doctrinal failures (1 Tim. 5:20, Titus 2:1-15).

Church government is symbolised by the keys of church discipline.



4. Civil government is the fourth sphere of government (Rom. 13:1-5, 1 Pet. 2:13-14). God has ordained the concept of limited state government with its local, regional and national jurisdictions (Ex. 18:18-22). The state government's primary responsibility is to protect its law-abiding citizens from lawbreakers and aggressors. Therefore the maintenance of an army, police force and courts of law, are the Biblical responsibilities of the civil (state) government.

Civil government is symbolised by the sword of justice.



In addition to knowing the God-ordained responsibilities that man has within each of the four spheres, it is crucial to recognise the limitations placed upon each of the four spheres. One sphere ought not to usurp the role of another sphere. For example, raising and training up the next generation is the responsibility of the family, not the state. Conversely, the state has the responsibility of carrying out justice in punishing the evil-doer (Rom. 13:1-7), not the individual (Rom. 12:19). The Church makes disciples of Jesus Christ baptizing the nations, not the state. Individuals or the family control the use of the private property which they own, not the state (1 Kings 21:3).