

Participant Handout

Week 1: Where Faith and Politics Meet

Focus Scripture

When [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:16-21)

Taking It Home Exercises

- ∞ Read 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12-16, 20-22. Bringing the ark into Jerusalem was a great event in the life of the people of Israel. King David danced before the ark as it was entering the city. This decreased Michal’s view of him and his leadership. How do you respond to a political leader who is talking about or publicly practicing his or her faith? Is your reaction different if the faith is of a different tradition than yours?
- ∞ Read Mark 12:28-31. How did Jesus outline the two elements of his Kingdom message—personal salvation and responsibility to others?
- ∞ Read Isaiah 58:2-9. Can you identify at least one political policy or belief that you hold which these prophetic words challenge or deepen? What is it, and how are you challenged to think differently about it?
- ∞ Read Acts 5:27-32 and Romans 13:1-7. How do you, as a Christian, determine when to “go along” with political decisions or policies you may disagree with and when to follow your conscience and “stand up and be counted”? Have you ever taken a personal risk because you felt “obeying God” required it?
- ∞ Read 2 Samuel 12:1-9. It’s natural for most of us to curry favor with those who have power. Is there any place in your life where you believe it may be important for you instead to “speak truth to power”? What can Nathan’s example teach you?