



Leader's Guide for the Sermon, "Church and Politics"

Philippians 3:20 | Pastor Dave Bennett | Series: Elephant in the Room | January 11, 2026

Session Overview

This week continues our Elephant in the Room series, addressing difficult but important topics the church must face honestly. Week two focuses on Church and Politics, exploring how followers of Jesus engage earthly systems while remaining anchored in heavenly citizenship.

Rooted in Philippians 3:20, this session reminds us that the church is not called to save the world by taking it over, but by offering the world a compelling alternative shaped by the Kingdom of God.

Session Flow (60–75 minutes)

1. Welcome and Icebreaker (10 min)

Example Question:

"Why do conversations about politics tend to feel more emotionally charged than most other topics? What makes them so difficult to talk about calmly?"

Purpose:

To acknowledge the emotional weight of political conversations and establish a posture of humility and listening.

2. Scripture Reading (5 min)

Read Philippians 3:20 aloud.

Optional: Also read 1 Peter 2:11 to reinforce the idea of believers as spiritual foreigners and exiles.

3. Discussion (40–50 min)

Use 6–8 of the following questions depending on time and group size.

Encourage reflection on identity, allegiance, and formation rather than partisan debate.

Discussion Questions

1. Pastor Dave compared election season to a tense family dinner. Why do political discussions so quickly become personal or hostile?

Leader Note: Help the group identify fear, identity, and tribalism as underlying forces.

2. What does it look like when politics begin to inform faith instead of faith informing politics?

Leader Note: Keep the conversation reflective, not accusatory.

3. Scripture says our citizenship is in heaven. How does that identity challenge both political disengagement and political obsession?

Leader Note: Emphasize distinction without withdrawal.

4. The church is called to offer an alternative response to the world. What might that look like in everyday life?

Leader Note: Guide the group toward lived witness over control.

5. The early church didn't campaign; they lived differently. Which examples from the sermon stood out most to you?

Leader Note: Highlight forgiveness, generosity, and hospitality.

6. Jesus refused political factions but never avoided truth. How does His example guide our engagement today?

Leader Note: Point to courage without cruelty.

7. Why does formation through community shape us more deeply than winning arguments?

Leader Note: Encourage stories of shared life and practice.

8. Be engaged, but not enslaved; informed, but not inflamed. Which part of this invitation speaks most to you right now?

Leader Note: Transition toward application and prayer.

4. Application and Prayer (10–15 min)

Invite group members to reflect on where their hope and identity are most firmly anchored.

Ask: “What would it look like for your heavenly citizenship to more fully inform your earthly citizenship?”

Allow a moment of silence before inviting anyone to pray aloud.

Closing Prayer Suggestion

Lord Jesus, thank You that our citizenship is in heaven and our hope is secure in You.

Guard our hearts from fear, rage, and misplaced allegiance.

Teach us to live as a distinct people shaped by love, truth, and courage.

May Your Kingdom shape our lives more than any earthly power.

Amen.