



WCF Prayer:

Chapter 23 - Of The Civil Magistrate

Great God and sovereign Lord,

You are Lord and King over all people and all things in this world.

We marvel at your wisdom that in this fallen, sinful world you have placed over humanity various authorities to rule us, each under your sovereign rule.

We recognise that this delegated rule is for first and foremost your glory but also for the good of humanity.

Lord, we are saddened that in a fallen world, force is sometimes required to ensure our safety and well-being. Yet, we recognize the authority you have granted the state to use physical force when necessary to defend society and maintain peace.

We pray for those who bear this heavy responsibility. Grant them discernment as they exercise power, that they may be a constant encouragement to those who do good and a just deterrent to those who do evil.

We thank you that as Christian children, it is right for us to serve in these places of public responsibility when given opportunity. Lord what privilege it is to serve in this capacity to assist in maintaining a godliness, justice, and peace in accordance with the laws of our land.

We are saddened that in this capacity might have to call for war or serve in wars. Lord, please steer society in such a way that if such an occasion should arise, it would be for a just cause.

We recognise Lord God that there are limits to the authority exercised by civil rulers and their authority is not the same as that within your church.

We pray for help to maintain this distinction to ensure that civil authorities never assume to themselves the administration of the Word of God or Sacraments or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

We acknowledge Lord God that it seems there are times when the civil powers may have to excise an authority and duty to ensure order, unity and peace even within your Church, that your truth may be kept pure and entire. To this end Lord God we pray that your wisdom may be exercised.

We recognize that in extreme times of crisis within your church, where blasphemies and heresies rise, or where corruption and abuses in worship and discipline take root, civil rulers may be used by your hand to assist in calling your church to account, to settle and rightly administer again the responsibilities of your Church. May their intervention always lead back to a godliness.

Lord these rulers have huge responsibility in and for society. We recognize the duty you have placed upon us to pray for those who govern society.

We ask that you would assist us in maintaining respectful hearts. Assist us to be diligent in our civic duties: help us to pay every tax determined as fitting and to obey all lawful commands with integrity. We recognize our need to be subject to their authority, not out of fear, but because our consciences are directed by your Word."

We see clearly that our obligation to obey does not vanish even when leaders fall into religious or moral error. We acknowledge that their legal authority remains intact, and no believer—regardless of their position within your church—is exempt from the call to due obedience.

We acknowledge before you that no person in church leadership—regardless of their title or office—holds the right to remove civic rulers from their place of authority. We recognize that these spheres of power are determined by you alone.

We further affirm that your church has no right to deprive these leaders of their positions, their possessions, or their lives. Even in the face of blasphemy or immorality, we commit to honouring the boundaries you have set, seeking to harm no one, but rather to trust in your ultimate justice.

We praise you for your infinite wisdom in structuring your world this way.

Be honoured and glorified we pray.

Amen.