

Faithful Politics, Week 8 — Politics for Exiles: Seeking the Welfare of our Political Communities as Citizens of Another Kingdom

Small Groups: read and discuss Tim Keller’s NYT piece, “How Do Christians Fit Into the Two-Party System? They Don’t.”

1) *As you read this, what stands out? Is there anything you find helpful, challenging, clarifying, or frustrating?*

2) *As you think about the the two pitfalls Keller highlights (political withdrawal or “package deal” partisanship), what are some of the dangers of either route? Do you find yourself more tempted to one or the other? And if so, why do you think that is?*

(Remember, there’s a good chance your group includes a variety of perspectives—please be gracious and respectful.)

Here’s the reality Keller’s tapping into: **every time Christians enter the public sphere (i.e., advocate, vote, or participate in the world of politics), we do so as exiles; as people who shouldn’t fit neatly into any human agenda.**

Jeremiah 29:4–7: [4] *“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: [5] Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. [6] Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. [7] But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (ESV)*

Two realities we need to hold together:

- 1) The Kingdom of Jesus is “not of this world” (John 18:36) — there will always be some level of tension whenever we participate in earthly “kingdoms.”
- 2) God calls his people not to withdraw from the world, and to “seek the welfare” of the communities he’s placed us in (Jeremiah 29:7) — which involves some level of engagement in systems that are fallen and imperfect.

Four questions to help us flesh this out:

- 1) What shapes my convictions?
- 2) Who am I willing to partner with?
- 3) How do I relate to believers who weigh things differently?
- 4) Where do I find hope and stability?