



Dear Houston's First family and friends,

Through the years, I have been invited to attend numerous types of events and have met with leaders in various arenas. Those in political realms—local, state, or national—always seem to bring the most questions. I thought it would be helpful to share my heart and thoughts.

First, my heart's desire is to be used by the Lord to be a difference maker both locally and nationally. I desire to have the heart of Billy Graham, though I may never have his ministry impact. I have always respected his ability to minister to presidents of different parties and political views. During his life he was able to minister to 13 presidents—six of which were Democrats and seven Republicans. I was inspired by the book written about him entitled *The Preacher and the Presidents* by Nancy Gibbs. I recommend it, if you have interest.

It is my view that if a sitting mayor, governor, or president invites me to an event, I will accept the invitation unless I am biblically opposed. For example, I would not attend the signing of a bill expanding access to abortion. I respect the office and therefore the invitation. I have eaten dinner and attended events with politicians from local, state, and national offices, both Republican and Democrat. My son once asked me what I would say if I met a previous president with whom I disagreed on numerous policies. I replied to my son, "I would look him in the eye, shake his hand and say, 'Mr. President, it is nice to meet you.'"

Secondly, it is my hope that members of our church are glad I am in an environment to minister to those who they may politically disagree with. I believe God has opened doors for me that are very unusual and, therefore, I walk through them in faith. I strive to represent the Lord as an ambassador of Christ every place I go, whether it is the grocery store, city council, the Governor's Mansion, or the White House. Our statement of beliefs, the Baptist Faith and Message, says this in Section XV: The Christian and the Social Order:

"Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love."

Please pray for me to shine Christ's light wherever I go.

Third, we live in difficult times in our nation. Of course, our church does not endorse specific candidates, but we are committed to championing issues of biblical theology that are also a part of our government's influence. For example, we stand unapologetically in support for, but not limited to, the rights of the unborn, traditional marriage, and religious freedom.

Finally, I strive to pray regularly for whoever is in the mayor's office, governor's office, or Oval Office. I have been faithful to do this throughout my tenure as pastor during numerous administrations. For example, one year, I prayed for every Houston City Council member and sent them a note letting them know they had been prayed for by name. I encourage you to pray regularly for governmental leaders, as well.

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."—1 Timothy 2:1–2

God bless you, and I hope you have greater clarity into my heart and godly desire to impact our city, state, and nation.

In Him,
Pastor Gregg Matte