

## How then should we vote in November?

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Casting a vote is one of the most important responsibilities of a South African citizen.

By voting (or not voting) we shape the future of our society because we put people in extremely responsible positions.

We have a responsibility to ensure that the right people get elected.

It is disastrous to stay away from the polls. We abdicate our responsibility and privilege to assign governance to worthy office bearers.

Voter apathy tears away at the very foundations of our democracy.

To vote is not merely a right, it is a God-given responsibility.

God calls us to be salt, light and yeast in society. We have a collective social responsibility to fulfil this calling.

Many people fought hard and even died to gain the privilege of universal franchise in South Africa.

Exercise your freedom to help decide who will take care of our collective future.

It is the right thing to do.

The next important question is who gets your vote?

We should all apply our minds to this important question.

In South Africa voting choices too often follow a traditional, set pattern.

Many vote according to historic loyalty.

Others choose according to boundaries of race or ethnic identity. Some vote to further their perceived own interest.

Others react to scare tactics and vote as a form of resistance to majority policies.

A better strategy is to look at the big picture and ask which candidate and which group will pursue justice, guarantee opportunities for all, tackle unemployment, inequality and poverty and balance all interests in a fair way.

It is not only my own or my group's benefit I seek, but a just dispensation where all can prosper in such a way that quality of life will flourish for all.

Do not be swayed by promises. Keep past performance in mind. Past behaviour predicts future action.

How then should Christians vote?

Our vote concerns the particular candidate, as well as the political affiliation of the candidate.

Firstly, we need to consider the merit of the candidates in our wards.

There are three primary considerations. Ask yourself these three questions:

One: Is the candidate a person of integrity?

Two: Has the candidate appropriate skills, training, and experience?

Three: Has the candidate a proven track record of availability to the interests and needs of others? Is the candidate responsive, does the candidate act and deliver when necessary?

Back to question one. What does integrity look like? According to the Bible, a person with integrity is honest, truthful, faithful, trustworthy, responsible, free of greed, and with a servant spirit. They value the interest of others above own interest or the interest of a small group.

We can only vote for those we trust to take their oath of office seriously: to serve the people rather than the party of a small group.

Secondly, we also look for professionalism, knowledge, skills, and qualifications.

Is the person equipped for the role? Are they prepared and did they take the trouble to hone their skills and knowledge?

Do they have a teachable spirit?

A history of malfeasance or lack of knowledge and skill will not translate into effective service delivery.

If the candidate is a well-equipped person of integrity, we thirdly ask about the candidates track record of being open, caring and available to the community.

Is this candidate mindful about others and approachable?

Will this person indeed listen to legitimate needs or interests?

Will the candidate do the hard work of listening, inquiring, considering what is at stake by investing the required time? It is hard work.

We therefore ask about the candidate's track records of action. Is this a person of concrete action?

Does service delivery come naturally? Or is this a smooth-talker, always full of excuses, blaming others for ineffectiveness and lack of action. Beware.

If integrity of character, openness to others and the ability to deliver exists, you may proceed to consider political affiliation.

The terrible reality is that looting of state resources has become endemic in some political affiliations.

If a particular candidate is aligned to questionable camps in an existing political formation, we have to stay away.

Rather vote for the honest person, perhaps not so charismatic and smooth talking, but honest and upstanding.

In the forthcoming election we are privileged to see many independent candidates or new political formations. They are certainly worthy of consideration.

If political parties do not present candidates with integrity, proper training and experience and a track record of delivery, why not consider an independent candidate or a candidate from a new formation?

Some of these candidates have proven track records.

It is not a time to be apathetic.

The list of candidates has been published at [elections.org.za](http://elections.org.za).

The list for Nelson Mandela Bay (which starts on page 174 of the document for the Eastern Cape) makes for really interesting reading and some serious thought.

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