

# influence

Read Jeremiah 29:4-7 and Matthew 5:13-16

1. Can you name other Bible characters who were salt and light in their society? Try and come up with some modern job titles for them.

2. Salt was primarily used as a preservative – in what sense are the people of God called to be a preservative in society?

3. Salt cannot go off, but it can become impure and contaminated. What are the dangers of contamination for God's people in the world today?

4. Discuss the following statements on the relationship between engagement and purity: (a) Christians should pray for decision-makers but not enter the political realm themselves (b) Christians should be involved in campaigning for justice, even if that involves standing against those in authority (c) Christians should be involved at all levels in public life, seeking the common good.

5. In light of the biblical characters we considered earlier, what should our priorities be when faced with opportunities to influence national and local life? What should be the balance between promoting justice for all, evangelism and promoting Christian values?

*“When we work with larger communities... people see that the church is not a self-righteous holy club keeping itself to itself, but living out the message of a generous, loving God.”*

*“Jesus came into a profoundly political context... when Jesus preaches the kingdom of God he is actually turning the kingdoms of this world upside down.”*

*“Salt means that we are supposed to penetrate society with God's truth; by living a truth-based life, we keep society from being as bad as it could be.”*

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Write a list of the ways your church is already involved in the public life of your neighbourhood.

What could we be doing as a church to help support each other to make the most of the influence that we have for Christ?

Identify gaps so you can pray for God to call people into these areas.

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*“You can't keep pulling bodies out of the river, without going upstream to see who's pushing them in.”*

Prayer / reflection: