

Romans 13:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Analysis

For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing—Dia touto gar kai phorous teleite· leitourgoi gar theou eisin eis auto touto proskarterountes (διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους τελεῖτε· λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσιν εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο προσκατεροῦντες). Phorous (taxes/tribute) were resented under Roman occupation; Jewish zealots refused payment as capitulation. Paul commands payment: teleite (present tense—keep paying).

The reason: government officials are leitourgoi theou (λειτουργοὶ θεοῦ, ministers/servants of God). Leitourgos is cultic language—used for priests performing sacred service (Hebrews 8:2). Tax collectors are God's liturgists! Proskarterountes (προσκατερέω, devoting themselves) indicates devoted service. Paying taxes funds God-ordained government, enabling justice, order, and infrastructure. Refusing taxes is refusing to support God's appointed servants.

Historical Context

Tax resistance was volatile in first-century Judea. Judas the Galilean led a revolt in AD 6 protesting Roman taxation (Acts 5:37). Jesus Himself addressed this: 'Render unto Caesar' (Matthew 22:21). Paul echoes Jesus, establishing that Christians pay taxes as religious duty, not political coercion. This teaching countered both zealot rebellion and Gentile tax evasion, calling the church to model civic responsibility.

Later Christians debated whether taxes funding pagan temples or unjust wars could be paid in good conscience.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does calling tax collectors '*leitourgoi theou*' (ministers of God) reframe your attitude toward taxation and government funding?
2. When government uses tax revenue for immoral purposes (funding abortion, unjust wars, idolatry), can Christians pay in good conscience?
3. What is the difference between prudent tax planning/deductions and tax evasion or resistance motivated by political protest?

Interlinear Text

διὰ	τοῦτο	γὰρ	καὶ	φόρους	τελεῖτε·	leitourgoi	γὰρ
cause	this	For	also	tribute	pay ye	ministers	For
G1223	G5124	G1063	G2532	G5411	G5055	G3011	G1063

θεοῦ	εἰσιν	εἰς	αὐτὸ	τοῦτο	προσκαρτεροῦντες
God's	they are	upon	very thing	this	attending continually
G2316	G1526	G1519	G846	G5124	G4342

Additional Cross-References

Luke 23:2 (Parallel theme): And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

1 Chronicles 18:14 (Parallel theme): So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people.

