

Candidates and Character

January 24, 2008

How important is it to elect people with character to public office? The founders of this country thought it was very important.

Over the years, I have collected various quotes from the founders about the importance of character but recently ran across a quote from Samuel Adams. He is considered by many to be the father of the American Revolution. Certainly he understood why patriots fought and died for their freedom. He was also convinced we should elect people of character to public office.

He said: "If men of wisdom and knowledge, of moderation and temperance, of patience, fortitude and perseverance, of sobriety and true republican simplicity of manners, of zeal for the honor of the Supreme Being and the welfare of the commonwealth; if men possessed of these other excellent qualities are chosen to fill the seats of government, we may expect that our affairs will rest on a solid and permanent foundation."

These are wise words to consider during this political season. So often my conversations with listeners revolve around whether they can vote for someone who doesn't match their positions on key issues. I suggest they merely vote for the person who most reflects their values unless they cannot in good conscience vote for any of the candidates for that office. We are always going to have some disagreement with a candidate on some issues.

This year I am on the ballot as precinct chairman. So when I vote for myself, I will be voting for someone that I agree with 100 percent of the time. But I will probably have some disagreement with the candidates for other offices. But I will still vote for the person who most reflects my values, and you should do the same.

Samuel Adams reminds us that being right on the issues is important, but so is character. Consider the character of the candidates when you cast your vote.

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