

Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post

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To Vote or not to Vote?

Some people, disillusioned with the political system and the low moral standards of some politicians, have decided to “protest” by not voting in the coming election. On the website “not apathetic”, ‘bloggers’ have aired their views and one of them wrote, “Voting for a candidate is not democracy; it is futility. I can only vote for a candidate; the party chooses the candidate - I am not involved in the selection process. If I vote on the basis of a manifesto, I have no way of enforcing it. It is not a contract.”

I have sympathy with that view. I have lived in three constituencies where one Party has had a huge majority, election after election. If you wanted to oust that Party, you had little or no chance of doing so, but in 1997, enough of us voted ‘tactically’ to bring about change. We may be regretting that result now, but we did it.

I vote because I remember the cost in life and liberty that won ‘ordinary people’, like me, a say in how our country is run. My grandmothers’ generation could not vote because they were women. My grandfathers did not own their homes so could not vote either. Not until 1928 did all citizens from the age of 21, have the right to vote. Voting is a privilege of citizenship, as is the right to criticise, peacefully oppose and protest against our governments.

St Paul was adept at using his Roman Citizen status to spread the Gospel. People of faith must to opt-in to politics or risk leaving the ground clear for those with extremist views. They will vote and we might not like the result.