

is possible that violence can erupt in even the nicest neighborhood. How often do we see news accounts where neighbors are surprised to find that a murderer was living in their midst?

What I do know about the community where I live is that last Christmas, a would-be terrorist attempted to kill a large number of innocent people, including children, at a Christmas tree lighting ceremony. A few years ago in our area, a young person was found murdered and disposed of in a dumpster. A man living in apartments just a short distance from our Church was recently shot and killed when his home was broken into. Our Church has been broken into and vandalized numerous times.

Added to these realities, repeated warnings by national, state and local authorities regarding very real threats, and broadcast emergency preparedness messages should all motivate any responsible citizen to at least consider owning a weapon for personal and home defense. With a lawfully-obtained concealed carry license, and with good training and practice with a weapon, it is possible to be prepared for most eventualities.

While they are places of worship and fellowship, churches do not have an invisible barrier preventing crime from entering their doors.

http://www.carlchinn.com/Church_Security_Concepts.html

Here is a website with a very thorough discussion of church safety, prepared by a law enforcement officer:

<http://theresurgence.com/files/pdfs/SafetyinChurch.pdf>

It is my hope and prayer that each person will make a wise, responsible, informed decision regarding concealed carry.

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Source: <http://charlesdailey.net/PrintOwn.html#C>

Concealed Carry In Church — The Case For Defending Innocent Loved Ones From Violence

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A Christian man or woman who chooses to exercise his or her Second Amendment freedom to own and carry a lawfully concealed weapon should have a clear understanding of the valid reasons for this decision, as well as the heavy responsibility involved. Terrorism, crime (including increasing “hate crimes” against churches), prison overcrowding and “early release” of violent criminals, and the random appearance of mentally unstable persons and sex criminals among us are all valid reasons to prepare wisely for self defense. The Christian should also be able to reason from Scripture regarding the justification for possessing and carrying a weapon.

It might seem shocking or “contradictory” to those who have not yet given deep thought to the issue, when they contemplate the idea of Christians carrying concealed weapons inside a church building. Isn’t it true that Christianity is a religion of love and peace? Isn’t it true that by His example and teachings, Jesus Christ shows the high value of human life and peaceful living? Shouldn’t the righteous person live by faith, not by weapons, and place his or her trust in the Lord? Isn’t it “dangerous” to have people walking around with guns?

These are all valid questions, but so is this one: Is there a logical or Scriptural reason why a criminal or deranged person should be allowed to first kill and commit widespread mayhem upon innocent victims, before he is finally incapacitated or subdued by citizens who must risk death or injury to themselves? Christians should look to the Word of God when facing such important matters.

The following is not a comprehensive list or a doctrinal argument, but it does supply what I believe to be legitimate Scriptural considerations regarding Christian ownership of weapons and the

practice of concealed carry.

In the Old Testament book of Genesis we see Abraham confronted with the necessity of rescuing his relatives after their violent capture. He carefully picked **“Trained men, born in the House,”** pursued those who had taken his nephew Lot and his household, and rescued the innocent from the wicked (Genesis 14:12-20). It is interesting to note that after this use of weapons to protect loved ones, Abraham partook of wine and bread presented by the priest-king of **“God Most High”** from Salem (Jerusalem). Abraham also “tithed” or gave ten percent at that time. This rescue of the innocent was considered a good thing and was honored by God.

In I Samuel 30:8 God shows His approval of taking up arms to deliver the innocent.

In Nehemiah 4:11-23 we see not soldiers or policemen, but everyday citizens commanded to be armed and ready while they went about the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Each person wore his sword girded at his side while he worked, kept guard, and even when he went to water.

In Ezekiel 33 the duty of the watchman and the duty of the people to defend themselves is made clear. The watchman who fails to stay alert, and the person who ignores a watchman’s timely warning to protect innocent life are both held strictly to account by God.

In Psalms 18:33-34 and Psalms 144:1 we see a positive value placed on arms, hands and fingers that are trained to properly handle weapons, and that it is the Lord Himself who gives help and makes this possible.

In Ecclesiastes 3 it is declared that there is a proper time for every event under Heaven, even a time to kill and a time for war (Ecclesiastes 3:3,8).

In the New Testament Gospel of Luke, Jesus confronts leaders in a synagogue in order to prove what are the real, high priorities of life and obedience to God. While Luke 6:9 deals specifically with His Sabbath day healing of a crippled hand, Jesus pointedly

Are we to be so concerned about “sensitivities” regarding weapons that we leave ourselves disarmed and unable to defend our loved ones?

Regarding 911 and police response.

There have been widespread news reports in recent years involving 911 tape recordings in which we hear victims pleading for help while they are being robbed, beaten or murdered. The fact that we are able to dial 911 does not ensure that our lives will be protected during a violent attack. It is not fair or realistic to expect that our dedicated law enforcement officers will be able to respond quickly enough to save lives when an incident occurs (The saying is unfortunate but true: “When seconds count, the police are minutes away”). The truth is that we must either be prepared, trained and willing to protect ourselves and our loved ones, or prepared to give a report to the policeman, describing how our loved ones were killed. To me this is just not acceptable.

Regarding insurance concerns.

Some might point out that the presence of armed members of a congregation could lead to liability problems. It is possible that some person or persons could bring a lawsuit against a church if a self-defense/deadly force incident occurred. There is, however, an equal possibility that a church could be just as liable for failing to provide for the security of those on its grounds. In one case, the church might be liable if innocent lives were saved during a violent incident. In the other case, a church might be liable if innocent lives were lost during such an incident. We all pray that no such incident will ever happen, but which would be the worst case, lawsuit or no lawsuit? Innocent lives saved, or innocent lives unnecessarily lost?

Regarding your community.

Not all communities have the same level of crime. Demographics such as income level, education level, employment levels and other factors usually influence how much crime exists in a given area.

Unfortunately, crime by its nature is not uniformly quantifiable, controllable or reliably predictable regarding specific incidents. It

attack on the congregation because such an attack might be God's will, and that He always causes even bad things to work together for good. If that is the case, we have no need to purchase homeowner's insurance since if someone enters our property, is injured and successfully sues us for our lifetime's earnings, then that is God's will and He will cause it all to work together for good, even if we are unable to give an inheritance that helps provide for our offspring's future. We should not purchase health insurance for our children since if our child contracts a disease and is sickened or dies, that was God's will and He will cause everything to work together for good. In my opinion, the "God's will" argument is often a lame excuse for not taking proper precautions and it is a heartless, irresponsible way to treat others under our care. Of course we trust that God is in control, we submit our lives to Him, and we pray that no incident ever occurs in our church. But we still have an obligation to be prepared to protect the innocent.

Regarding "living by fear" as opposed to responsible behavior, safety and concealed weapons.

It is much more a matter of responsibility and practicality than it is fear, when wise, lawful, preventative measures are taken by church members. It is also a provable fact that those who have taken such measures in their congregations have most often taken their responsibility very seriously and have undergone careful licensing, instruction and training in how to assess situations and respond appropriately, safely, and with proper discernment. National and state statistics show that concealed carry license holders are among the most law-abiding, safety-conscious citizens in our society.

Regarding other weapons.

Law enforcement officers who present concealed carry training classes are quick to point out the very real dangers posed by edged weapons and stabbing weapons such as knives, swords, screwdrivers or even scissors. They can be as deadly and dangerous as firearms at close range and should be viewed as such when an incident involves deadly force. A fair question for those adamantly opposed to firearms in church is: Shall we also be forbidden from bringing our pocket-knives and multi-tools such as Leathermans into church? Just how logical are such objections?

demands: "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?" The unavoidable answer is that God's law and man's laws both provide for the saving of innocent human life.

In Luke 22 we find that some of Jesus' disciples owned and carried weapons. At least two disciples were carrying sheathed swords at the first "Lord's Supper." Immediately after that important Passover meal and just prior to His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, Jesus specifically commanded His disciples to purchase swords (Luke 22:35-38). Because His whole life had the purpose of offering Himself on the Cross for our sins, Jesus told Peter to put up his sword during His arrest on the Mount, having decided that His own Crucifixion would go forward. Jesus never, however, told His followers that they should not or could not possess weapons. Jesus warned His disciples against living a life that depended on violence and force (living "by the sword"), rather than relying on God, but He gave similar warnings regarding dependence on money. Shall we no longer own or use money?

In the Gospel of John we read that Jesus performed an aggressive act of violence, using a weapon within the walls of a place of worship (John 2:15). When Jesus lashed the moneychangers with a whip and drove them from the Temple, His act was justifiable even though it was violent.

Also in the Gospel of John, Jesus describes Himself as the "Good Shepherd" because He gives up His life for the flock (John 10:11-12). The duties and responsibilities of a good shepherd were universally understood in the culture of the day. It was naturally expected that a good shepherd would be watchful and on guard, ready to defend the flock from thieves and killers. If necessary, a violent response to a threat might be required. Jesus takes this understanding to the extent that the highest example of a good shepherd would be one who gives up his life in defense of the flock.

In I Corinthians 6:19-20 we are told that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit and are of great value. Sermons are preached on treating our bodies properly, on being healthy and how even

taking cigarette smoke into our bodies is improper, possibly even sinful. How can there be a requirement, then, that believers stand idly by while some crazed attacker puts a knife or bullets into the bodies of our loved ones? It stands to reason that the responsible defense of those living bodies is justified.

I Timothy 5:8 tells us that a responsible churchman is to provide for the needs of the Church, especially his own family. This is emphasized by the declaration that if a man refuses to fulfill this responsibility, he is worse than an unbeliever. Is the Word of God telling us that we should carefully feed, clothe and shelter our loved ones, then allow criminals to attack or kill them? Should we allow such “logic” to compel us to leave our loved ones undefended?

In I Timothy 5:20-22 we learn of the responsibility of church leaders to keep sin out of the church. **“Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourselves free from sin.”** If there is Scriptural justification for “laying hands on” sinners within the church, how much more so for stopping outsiders who have come in your doors bent on committing sinful, murderous acts?

Hebrews 11 tells us some of the key features of faith, and gives us some purposely selected examples of lives that were lived based on faith. **“And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight”** (Hebrews 11:32-34). The justified use of weapons is assumed, not avoided, in this New Testament description of people of faith.

Jesus Christ allowed the possession of weapons among His disciples, He used a weapon Himself on two different occasions,

and He will use a weapon, a “sword,” when He returns at the end of this age.

In Scripture, Jesus is not horrified by weapons, just as He is not necessarily enthusiastic about them. As with other tools, possessions and money, He expects them to be used appropriately and responsibly. Not all Christians should be expected to be comfortable with the ownership or concealed carry of firearms or other weapons, but neither should their fear or distaste be valid reasons for disarming other Christians and leaving the innocent congregation defenseless.

A word about “faith.”

If “having faith” were to be our sole appeal for defense from terrorists, thieves, murderers and random acts by the mentally deranged, then it is equally reasonable that a homeowner should merely have faith that his mortgage will be paid. A mother should just have faith that her children will be fed and clothed. An employee only needs to have faith that his job will somehow get done. A student has no more responsibility than to have faith that his homework will be completed. This is ridiculous of course. It is obvious that the man or woman of faith must also take proactive measures and make responsible efforts to accomplish what is necessary in life. “Having faith” is good, but it will not protect a congregation if a madman bursts into the sanctuary bent on murder and mayhem.

A word about “martyrdom.”

Martyrs are Christians who, at the extreme test of their faith in Jesus Christ, choose to lay down their lives for His sake. Helpless people, stabbed, bludgeoned or gunned down in the pews of their place of worship are not martyrs. They are as much victims of unlawful acts of murder as a family killed in their living room by intruders. Labeling violence perpetrated on innocent people as “martyrdom” is simply a non sequitur, false logic and a weak appeal to a form of “spirituality” that allows evil to have its way while responsible people do nothing.

Regarding “God’s will”

I have heard the argument that Christians should not possess concealed carry guns in church or plan for the possibility of an