

Public Prayer:

As you may have heard, earlier this month the Supreme Court of Canada ruled on the basis of freedom of religion that public meetings should not begin with a prayer. This ruling will apply to public meetings across Canada such as municipal councils or library boards or airport authorities and the like. Many of Canada's major cities, including Vancouver and Toronto, have already eliminated prayer at the beginning of meetings.

1. First of all, how interested are you yourself in this issue of whether or not prayer should be allowed at public meetings?

Read/saw stories about it and discussed it with friends and family

Saw a story or two, and had the odd conversation about it

Just scanned/saw the headlines

Not read/seen anything at all

2. What is your overall reaction to the Supreme Court's decision that prayer should not be allowed at public meetings? Are you:

Strongly in favour of the court's decision

In favour

Against

Strongly against the court's decision

3. Now, setting aside for now what the Supreme Court decided, let's look at this a little more specifically...

Thinking about your own city or municipal government's regular council meetings, please indicate how you personally feel about each of the following occurring at the beginning of those meetings?

[Keep this order]

A Christian prayer referring to Jesus Christ

A prayer to God without any reference to a specific religion

Prayers from different religions, rotating from meeting to meeting

A quick inspiring "pep talk" with no religious reference

A moment of silence to "help council focus to do our best"

Nothing – just start the meeting

Definitely unacceptable to start a public meeting that way

Usually unacceptable

Usually acceptable

Definitely acceptable to start a public meeting that way

4. Canada's national anthem – Oh Canada – includes a reference to God in the last verse: "God keep our land, glorious and free..."? Suppose some people complain about that and it becomes a subject of debate. What would be your own view? Would you say...?

We should change the anthem to remove that reference to God
Maybe not ideal, but that's how it was written so just keep it
It is fine that Oh Canada includes a reference to God

Q4 [French] – The French anthem does not contain references to “God” – but there are religious references, the French version of this question was about those religious references not a specific mention of “God”.

L'hymne national du Canada – Ô Canada – possède des références religieuses : « ...porter la croix », « ... ta valeur de foi trempée ». Imaginons que certaines personnes portent plainte et que ces paroles deviennent le sujet d'un débat. Quelle serait votre opinion sur le sujet? Diriez-vous que... ?

Nous devrions changer les paroles de l'hymne pour enlever toute référence religieuse
Ce n'est pas idéal, mais c'est comme ça que l'hymne a été écrit, alors gardons-le intact
C'est correct que l'hymne Ô Canada ait des références religieuses

5. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with these statements.

[Randomize statements:]

This issue is a case of political correctness gone too far -- leave things like the anthem alone
Religion is important to me in my day to day life
Reducing the presence of religion in our public life is a sign of progress in our society

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree