

V 3 Sample letters – Castle Rock

Letter to person's own minister in town

Dear Rev. (Pastor, Father, etc.) _____

I am disturbed by the Castle Rock Town Council's inviting our Town's ministers to give invitational prayers to open council meetings.

[If he/she is one participating]= I hope that you will reconsider your own participation. I do not think it is proper or ethical to inject religious prayer into what should be the secular business of the Town. That occasion is not church. The council must treat all residents and their business and concerns equally, and prayer can give the impression that there are some preferred over others – those who share the council's religious beliefs. I do believe that we should discuss this issue in the congregation (or the _____ Committee) to gain a sense of our members' thinking on this issue.

[If he/she not participating in the prayers]= I am glad you are not taking part in these prayers. The council meetings must be secular and all townspeople must stand as equals, not some to feel downgraded because they don't share the majority's religious beliefs. I applaud your position and hope that you can influence other members of the Ministerial Alliance that this activity is neither an ethical or proper mix of government and religion.

There are reasonable alternatives to these public prayers. The meeting can begin with a moment of silence in which some who wish may pray and others can use the time to focus on the business at hand. Or, the council, if it feels a vocal prayer is important, can meet privately in a separate room before the public session.

I know that invitational prayers have been traditional in the U.S. since our founding. They were started when nearly all were Protestant Christians. But we are extremely diverse today in our beliefs and our customs. It is wisest to keep our government and religious functions separate, for the benefit of the civil and religious freedoms we all enjoy.

Respectfully,

