

CIVIC VIRTUES

What are civic virtues?

Civic virtues are behaviors or traits that help people get along with one another.



Aristotle's civic virtues

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle came up with a list of civic virtues that he thought people needed to practice for society to work as it should.

- ♦ Temperance, meaning the ability to control yourself and restrain your passions
- ♦ Prudence, meaning the ability to make thoughtful decisions
- ♦ Fortitude, meaning the strength of character to stand up for your beliefs and do what you think is right, even if others disagree
- ♦ Justice, meaning applying the rules and laws to everyone equally

How civic virtues are promoted in the N.H. Constitution?

The N.H. Constitution twice lists the civic virtues necessary for good government.

Part 1. Article 38. Social Virtues

A frequent recurrence to the fundamental principles of the Constitution, and a constant adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, industry, frugality, and all the social virtues, are indispensably necessary to preserve the blessings of liberty and good government; the people ought, therefore, to have a particular regard to all those principles in the choice of their officers and Representatives, And they have a right to require of their lawgivers and magistrates, an exact and constant observance of them, in the formation and execution of the laws necessary for the good administration of government.

Part 2. Article 83. Encouragement of Literature, etc.

. . . It shall be the duty of the legislators and magistrates, in all future periods of this government, . . . to countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and general benevolence, public and private charity, industry and economy, honesty and punctuality, sincerity, sobriety, and all social affections, and generous sentiments, among the people. . . .

Notice & Wonder

1. Why are civic virtues important to keep communities strong and government functioning properly?
2. What can you do to encourage people to practice civic virtues?



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