

Awareness of Church Government

BPA – 260TD



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Operation Test Drive Course...

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Colorado Theological Seminary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. The Source of Authority in the Local Church	3
II. The Church	4
III. Forms of Church Government	8
IV. What about Church Boards	12
V. Analogies for Church Government	14
VI. The Offices in the Local Church	15
VII. The Pastor	17
VIII. The Elder	19
IX. The Deacon	21
X. Qualifications for Office	22
XI. The Deacon	24
XII. The Aim of the Pastors Office	26
XIII. The Pastors Accountability	28

I. THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

When people want to start a church, they sometimes run around to see how this church is set up, or how that church is set up. We should go to the Word of God to find out how God wants His Church to be established.

People who have awakened to the authority of God's Word today realize that God's Word works for healing just like it works for Salvation. However, there is one thing we have to realize when we read the Word of God on any particular subject and that is that God gives us the guidelines and principles in His Word, but He leaves the responsibility of how to apply those guidelines and principles to us.

Let us look at the area of healing. The Word of God tells us that Jesus took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses, but it does not tell us exactly how to receive that healing. We have heard of people who learned that you have to "stand" on the Word to be healed. They believed exactly what they heard, threw their Bibles on the ground, stood on them and got healed. But that does not mean that you will get healed if you go home and put your Bible on the floor and stand on it.

We have heard of other people who have shouted at their disease or sickness and received healing. On the other hand, we heard of people who have prayed silently to the Lord and have also received their healing. The principle to receiving healing is to release your faith and to believe the truth of God's Word. The principle is not to do what somebody else has done. Not everyone has to dip in the Jordan seven times to be healed. In the ministry of Jesus, we see that not every case was handled the same. If they had been, we all might have to get mud or spit rubbed in our eyes to get healed.

What is it then that we want to look for in God's Word? Is it the example or the principle? It is the principle.

Let us use an illustration that shows the danger of following someone else's example. There is an Evangelist God spoke to very specifically in the Scriptures. The Evangelist read how Jesus spat on the ground to make mud for the man's eyes, and the Lord told him to spit on people and they would be healed. Well, if you run around spitting on people, today, you had better be sure you have heard from God.

We need to learn that Holy Spirit speaks to us individually about the Word. We have to seek the principles by which the Word works. That is what we are going to be looking at concerning the subject of local church government. What are the principles God has set forth for the purpose of establishing and running His Church?

First, we will begin with the most basic question: What is The Church?

II. The Church

There are many Scriptures that refer to The Church. We will begin with: I Corinthians 12:27-28. We are going to see this Scripture several times for different reasons, but we limit our interest right now to the word "church." Most people think of a building when they hear the word church. A building is nothing more than brick and mortar. In fact, you could walk out of the building after holding a church service, turn it into a barn, and you would not change the building. We often say, we are going over to the church. No, the accurate way to say it would be, "I am going over to the building that houses the church."

Then what is The Church? We are! The Universal Church is made up of every born-again Believer on the face of the earth. Every group of Believers who worship together is a segment of the Universal Church. These segments that meet together are our local churches.

You might ask, what does the word church really mean? In I Corinthians 12:28, church comes from the Greek word "*ekklesia*." "*Ekklesia*" comes from another Greek word "*ekkaleo*" which is a compound word. It is made from two words, '*ek*' and "*kaleo*". "*Ek*" means out, and *kaleo* means to call. Thus, the word church means the called out ones. Another way to say it is, Athe chosen ones@, and it was translated that way in Ephesians 1:4. In Ephesians 1:11, Paul tells us that we were chosen in Him, and the same word is used ("*ekkaleo*").

What we want to keep in our hearts is that we study the Word of God to learn of Him and to be made more like Him. We believe that God has shown us some important things about Himself, about the Lord Jesus Christ, and about our relationships with Him and each other. If you will really open your inner ears and listen to what the Holy Spirit wants to say, it will change your life. It all starts and ends with this one word, The Church, the called out ones, the chosen ones.

A. The Caller and the Called

The Church is called out, right? The called out ones mean two things. First, there is someone doing the calling. Second, there is someone receiving the call. Notice that to receive the call is to respond and not just hear. If the Church is the called out or chosen ones, there has to be someone calling or choosing.

Read I Corinthians 12:28. Who is doing the calling? God is! Look at another scripture that deals with the same subject.

Read Ephesians 4:11. To understand who He is, we have to go back a few verses. If we start in verse 8 we see a quote from Psalms 68:18. Read Ephesians 4:8. Who ascended up on high? Who gave gifts to men? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. Now read Ephesians 4:9,10.

Notice that verses 9 and 10 are in parenthesis; this means that 8 takes up again in verse 11. Jesus ascended, and then He gave gifts to men. Verse 11 tells us what the gifts are: Apostles, prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. Ephesians 4:11 the Lord Jesus Christ is the one who sets ministry gifts in the church. In I Corinthians 12:28, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are combined authority. They work together in authority, independently.

To verify this point, read Galatians 1:1. Paul declared that he was an Apostle, and he makes us understand who is responsible for making Apostles. Notice that he says: men (plural) were not responsible for his becoming an Apostle, neither was it by man (singular). So, no group of men or any individual man can choose and create an Apostle. Only the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father can choose and call a five- fold ministry person.

Again, read what the ministry gifts are in Ephesians 4:11. Jesus is the one who calls and appoints the ministry gifts. There is no mention of the words Bishop, Elder or Deacon in this list of ministry gifts. The Word of God does talk about Bishops, Elders, and Deacons, but they are not listed with the five-fold ministry gifts in Ephesians 4:11.

The most important point we should see from these scriptures is this: The one who does the calling has authority over the one he calls. Whoever chooses the ministry gift has authority over the one who is chosen. Who is the Head of The Church? Look at Ephesians 1:22-23.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of The Church. God the Father gave him that position. He has authority over all the ministry gifts chosen by Him. Who has authority over the other offices? This is the gray area of church government today and the subject of this course. First to be discussed is the Pastor's office, and then the offices of Elders, Bishops and Deacons will be discussed.

B. The Pastor-Shepherd

The Greek word for Pastor is "*poimen.*" It is the same word that is translated shepherd. Shepherd and Pastor are the same word in the Greek. So what is the implication? Do shepherds have more than one flock that they watch at the same time? No! A shepherd (Pastor) can watch only one flock at a time. A Pastor is the only ministry gift given strictly to the local congregation. He is "married" to the local church congregation. That is, the Pastor is the five-fold ministry gift that does not normally go out to minister in other places unless God is changing the calling upon that Pastor. Some men are Pastors and then God calls them on into apostolic works. The Pastor is called by God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ for a local congregation. The Pastor is responsible to the Lord Jesus Christ, because the one who calls has authority over the ones He calls.

C. The Ministry Gifts

What about the other ministry gifts? Where do they function? From Scriptural examples we know that Apostles can come from a local church like Antioch, but they travel to establish other churches and minister to the entire Body of Christ. Read Acts 13:1-3.

Prophets can also come from a local church but they are for the entire body, not just the local church. Read Acts 11:17.

The Evangelist also travels many places preaching the Gospel. Evangelists and Pastors traditionally have been well-known ministries, but today the Teacher is widely known in the body of Christ. The Teacher is also for the body as a whole. Thank God for the Teachers we have today. However, let us re-emphasize that none of these four gifts are for a local group of people in particular. The five-fold ministry gifts should rise up out of the local body, even though some of the gifts minister to more than the local church. Pastors also need a covering of Pastoral peers available. Every member of the Body of Christ needs to belong to a local church body and be submitted to a Pastor.

Let us make another point about the Pastor and the congregation. God calls a Pastor to the congregation He wants him to shepherd. Just as their owner puts sheep under a shepherd, so God chooses the Pastors for His flocks. When a congregation votes on a Pastor, they must realize that they are not choosing their Pastor; they are signifying that Holy Spirit bears witness to them that this is God's choice. They do not select; they acknowledge and accept God's selection.

D. Gifts to the Local Church

The ministry gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 are commonly referred to as the five-fold ministry gifts, and they are repeated in slightly different form in I Corinthians 12:28.

We want to point out again that Bishops, Elders and Deacons are not listed with those ministry gifts. The source for ministry gifts, according to the Word of God, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Where then do Bishops, Elders and Deacons originate in the church?

Let us examine several Scriptures to find the answer. First, let us consider Acts 14:23. Paul and Barnabas had ordained Elders praying, fasting, and then commending them unto the Lord. Paul and Barnabas were the ones who ordained the Elders. What office did they both stand in? According to Galatians 1:1 they stood in the office of Apostle.

Paul declared that there could be no controversy about Paul's direct call by the Lord Jesus Christ. Who had authority over Paul? Jesus, who called him, had authority over him. The principle should be clear. Those in ministry offices choose the Elders; therefore, they have authority over them. It is a simple delegation of authority. Let us see another example.

Titus was a young minister. He had come up under the ministry of Paul. He was Paul's trouble-shooter. If Paul had any trouble in a church, he was able to send Titus in and know that things would get straightened out. Paul had sent Timothy to Corinth to try to bring order into the church, but he failed. Then Titus was sent. In Corinthians 8:6, we see that Titus then took the problems and began to work them out. The church straightened out. You remember that the Jews did not like Titus because he was an uncircumcised Gentile, a Greek (Ga.2:1-4).

But the ministry gift of God was in him, and the signs and wonders worked through him. This was God's seal of approval. Religious people have a hard time coming against the supernatural.

We are not going to define the office of the Elder at this point. We want to show who chooses him and his relationship to that one. Where do they come from, and to whom are they responsible? Who has authority over them? Just as the Pastor is chosen and called by Jesus and is under His direct authority, the Elders are under the authority of the ones who choose them. Elders in this case were chosen by someone in a ministry office and were under his authority. It is a clear scriptural pattern. The pattern is a simple chain of command.

We see that Elders are appointed by men in ministry offices and are under their authority. However, what is the source for the office and function of the Bishop? There is only one Pastor (shepherd) for a congregation but there could be a number of Bishops. Furthermore they are separated from the offices of Paul and Timothy and mentioned with the congregation (saints) at Philippi and also the Deacons. Refer to I Timothy 3:1. The office of Bishop is something a man aspires to. It is said to be a good work, but is not the same as a five-fold ministry call.

What about Deacons? Where does their office originate? Who chooses them? Who exercises authority over them? Read Acts 6:5-6. And they chose. "They" refers to the whole multitude or congregation of Believers in Jerusalem. It is clear from these verses that the congregation chooses the Deacons in the local church. Then the ministers confirm their choice through the laying on of hands. Who then has authority over the Deacons? The congregation does. Notice that it does not say that the Apostles or the Pastor chose the Deacons. If that were true, the Deacons would serve the Pastor. The Deacons are set in the congregation to serve the people. They are servants of the people. Another point to notice is that the way the Deacons were chosen is not specified; therefore, each congregation may choose as they think best.

The important aspect of Deacon selection, which is equally true for the selection of Elders, is that they meet the qualifications established by God's Word. We will examine those qualifications in a succeeding chapter.

III. FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

There are four main types of Church Government in the Body of Christ today: Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Independent. The title tells us who is in authority.

A. Episcopalian Church Government

The Episcopalian form of Church Government is found in many types of churches: The Roman Catholic, Anglican, Episcopalian, Methodist, Lutheran and the Churches of God. The title points out who has authority, the Bishops.

The Greek word "*episkopos*" (translated episcopalian) means an overseer or a Bishop. When you see the word Bishop in scripture, it means the overseer. Another word to use might be Superintendent.

In the Episcopalian form of Church Government, the Bishop ("*episkopos*") has the authority, and the Pastor is under him. The Bishop makes decisions through prayer and Holy Spirit's direction to assign the Pastors to specific congregations.

There are Elders and Deacons in the Episcopalian form of government. Most often, the Elders are a part of the Pastoral Council, and work closely with the Pastor. The Deacons serve the people, but not exactly the same type of service as in other forms of church government. (In the Catholic Church, the Deacons are set in to serve in the celebration of daily Mass. They can do everything in this service except the consecrating of the elements, which is done by the priest).

The first denomination that we can point out is the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church employs the Episcopalian form. The line of authority begins with the highest-ranking Bishop, the Pope. Under him is the Cardinal (Cardinal Bishop). Under the Cardinal Bishop is the Archbishop. Under the Archbishop is the Bishop. Under the local Bishop is the Priest or Pastor. The Pastor (priest), is under the authority of the Bishops. Bishops and all offices above him are placed in responsibility in a diocese because of years of service, qualifications, and commitment. The Archbishop is over a number of dioceses, the Cardinal Bishop over a number of Archbishops, and so forth. Each of the officers is promoted in their vocation by the various leaderships over them. All of the churches that use this form of government do not call their positions of leadership by the same names.

B. Presbyterian Church Government

The Greek word from which we derive the word presbyterian is "*presbuteros*"; this is where we get the word Elder. When we find the word Elder in the Bible, it comes from the Greek "*presbuteros*". This word is used in I Timothy 4:14. In this form of church government, the authority for the local church rests in a group of Elders. This type of government is found in the Presbyterian Church, the Pentecostal Holiness, the Friends, and many non-denominational churches. The church is governed by a group of Elders. Traditionally they number seven, ten, or twelve.

In this form of government, the Elders are over the Pastor, or the Pastor and the Elders have equal authority. This form of government spreads responsibility for decision making over a greater number of people.

In the Presbyterian Church, there is a ruling board of twelve Elders, elected by the people of that body. The people also elect the Pastor. In the meetings for business, the Pastor rules the meeting. If the Elders wish, they may agree to overrule the Pastor, appealing to a higher court, known as the Presbytery. The Presbytery has jurisdiction over the churches/Pastors of a given geographic area. These officials in the Presbytery would deal with the question of a Pastor who is out of order.

Above the Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church is a Synod. The Synod is a General Assembly, which meets once a year. Every person who is a member of the Presbyterian Church can attend, although only the members elected to the Synod can vote on the agenda. The Presbytery elects the representatives that make up the Synod. The Synod is the decision making body which considers questions of doctrine and order in the Presbyterian Church.

The local body of Presbyterians can choose to have a unicameral system of government. In this system, one of the twelve Elders is placed on a committee that it appears they are gifted in. They head that committee and others in the body are also on that committee to accomplish the tasks before it. The committees are Evangelism, Worship, Christian Education, and Stewardship.

The local Presbyterian Church can choose to have Deacons, or not to have.

C. Congregational Church Government

By this title, we can see that the congregation has the authority. Voting is the means in which most decisions are made. The major denomination, which has Congregational Church Government, includes the Baptists, the Assemblies of God, the Churches of Christ, and the Congregationalists.

A most interesting fact about Congregational forms of Church Government is that they arose about the time the United States became a nation, two hundred years

ago. The authority in a Congregational form of Government rests with the congregation.

Congregational Church Government has Elders, though they may not be called Elders. These are the several men/women who work closely with the Pastor. They serve in various areas of the church. Some or all of these Elders help to prepare an agenda of items to be brought before the congregation for decisions. Deacons in the Congregational form of Government, though they may not be called Deacons, are those who serve in areas of life necessities, such as food pantries, clothing, etc. They may also work in other areas of the church.

Bishops are not referred to in the Congregational form of Government.

Many independent Christian Churches have a Congregational form of Government. In these churches, there are Elders and Deacons. The board is a seven-man board of either Elders or Deacons. This board does the Pastor search, bringing the candidate to the church for a tryout. The congregation votes whether or not to accept the candidate as Pastor. The congregation elects this board from candidates who are scripturally qualified.

In these churches, the decisions of any major proportion are limited to the congregational vote. For instance, one board is limited to \$250.00 spending without the congregation's agreement. In the meetings of the board, the Pastor does not have a vote, although he can make suggestions. In these churches, there is an Annual Congregational Meeting, which is open to the entire membership. This is a mandated meeting for the updating information to all members as well as making decisions that may be brought before the congregation.

Communion is served in the Christian churches not only by the Elders, but also by any person assigned to perform this service. This could also be a Deacon in the church who serves.

Congregational voting has advantages and disadvantages (and is not limited to this list).

PRO'S

- a) Gets the people involved
- b) Makes the people feel a part of the body
- c) Gives a feeling of democracy
- d) Allows for a time of fellowship

CON'S

- a) People that are not present casting a vote
- b) Uncommitted people voting
- c) Uninformed people voting
- d) Immature Believers voting
- e) Domineering people swaying the decisions of others
- f) Potential swaying of Pastor to cater to certain people

We can look in God's Word and see how He established the nation of Israel. He established one head over all. Then He divided the nation into smaller groups (tribes) with overseers under the authority of the head (Moses, or king). For example, Moses, as the head, led the nation of Israel directly under God's authority. Then there were men responsible for tens, hundreds, and thousands under him, but they still came under Moses and submitted to his authority (Read Exodus chapter 18).

The reason some of these forms of church government came into being was out of an abuse of authority by the Pastor. The Presbyterian form of Church Government arose because a Pastor was not fulfilling his office properly. A group of men (Elders) arose and exercised authority over him to protect the congregation. When the Elders began to abuse authority, the congregation as a whole decided to take the authority away from them. But even the congregational type of government is also subject to being swayed by one man's opinions or influence. No matter how we look at these attempts by men to prevent abuses, they still occur.

D. Independent Church Government

In this form of church government, the church is governed much like a corporate business. The Pastor acts as president and the Elders as vice-presidents. There is only one head to the organization, the Pastor (president) of the church.

Now, does the Word of God teach a multiplicity of Elders? Yes it does. Notice what James 5:14 says. Elders are plural, and church is singular in this passage. In the local church, there can be a number of Elders (Ac.14:23).

Who chooses the Elders? The Pastor does. Read Titus 1:5. Who has authority over them? The Pastor does. We are not talking about authority in a natural sense of understanding. We are talking about divine authority, which comes from the throne of God to the people through a ministry gift chosen and equipped by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Independent Church Government does not have positions of Bishop. Each student should research these four (4) forms to come to their own conclusions as to a form of government they might use should they be involved in authority in a church.

IV. WHAT ABOUT CHURCH BOARDS?

We strongly believe in the authority of the Pastor, but not unlimited authority. There must be a system of checks and balances in a church just like a business, marriage, or other institutions.

Husbands are the final authority in the marriage, but not to the extent of committing adultery with no recourse for the wife..."because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away (divorce)..." Matthew 19:8.

Because Pastors also can become hardhearted and leave the lifestyle and doctrinal principles of the Word, protection must be built in for the people. Church Boards are not all bad as some would have us to believe.

Because boards have dominated some churches, choked the creativity out of Pastors, and stopped the move of the Spirit does not mean we should not use a church board. A Pastor, with unlimited authority, and a church dominated by a board are both playgrounds for Satan. There must be a balance.

First there must be a process for acquiring a Pastor, either a board of mature men or a congregational vote or both. Voting is simply man's way of agreeing with God. Should the Pastor abuse his office, the same process, which put him in, should remove him. Once in office, the Pastor should be free to lead the church as he sees fit. The vote delegated authority to him.

When there was no Pastor, the board was the authority. When a Pastor is in his scriptural office, the board should go to a limited position. As long as the Pastor's life and teaching remain in line with God's word, the board's primary function is to give advice. They become a buffer between the Pastor and the congregation. They can advise him as to people's attitudes and feelings on particular subjects. A board should be listening to the people to know their feelings. They also can give him business information that he or his staff does not know. The board is advisory only. The Pastor still makes the final decision.

A few reasons the boards can cause problems in a church are that some board members will draw people to themselves so that their position is supported. They could also be domineering, creating problems for the Pastor. If a board member is financially well off, they could intimidate the Pastor to their position on a matter by the threat of cutting off financial support. It is also bad for a husband and wife to be on a board, as they will tend to support only one position due to their concern of offending their mate.

One area the advisory board should have power over is the Pastor's salary. A Pastor should not designate his own salary. He should set pay scales of all staff below him but not his own. He should feel free to voice his opinion on his salary; however he should leave the final decision about his salary to the Board.

The advisory board should be stable and mature Christians. They do not stand in the office of an Elder, but they should be mature in the Word, in love, care for the congregation and respect the Pastor's office.

They are chosen by the Pastor (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5). Therefore, when a new Pastor comes to office he may want to change them after he has become familiar with the church operations. He may also want to change any or all of the staff, or those who stand in the office of Elder. He is the authority and this is his prerogative.

If the Pastor abuses his authority from the standards of God's word, the advisory board should take authority to protect the congregation. The abuses should be apparent and blatant. They should fall under two categories; Morals and/or Doctrine. If the Pastor should be unfaithful to his wife, steal money from the church funds, be caught in a crime, etc., the board should step in.

Should the Pastor blatantly teach doctrines contrary to the faith, the board should take authority here also. Some examples of teaching doctrines contrary to the faith would be to teach against the Virgin Birth, against Divine Healing, or against Salvation by Faith. Small areas of disagreement will always arise, but should never constitute grounds for dismissal.

If grounds for dismissal should arise, the advisory board should give ample opportunity for repentance on the Pastor's part. Treat him as the Lord treats you, Matthew 18. Should the Pastor be caught in flagrant opposition to the Word and not repent, the matter should be taken to the people for a vote. The ones who voted him in should vote him out. This is all the voting that should ever be done.

Then the process would begin again. The advisory board (perhaps with the staff's help) would find a candidate (possibly an associate on staff) for the congregation to vote on. Once God's man is found and put into office, the board goes back to advisory only. So many boards, at this point, want to maintain a hold over the new Pastor. They fear that he may make some mistakes and they want to protect the church. The basis for any healthy relationship is trust, not fear. Give him the full reins. Do not make him pay for the

mistakes of the previous Pastor. He may become discouraged and eventually leave, thus justifying the board's fears and causing even more pressure on the next Pastor.

Boards, which have control or equal authority with the Pastor, tend to slow down the progress of the church. Most boards in churches are made up of businessmen in the congregation. They meet once or twice a month to make decisions concerning the business and direction of the church. They do not live with the church problems each day, so therefore they are usually not fully informed. The first thirty minutes of a meeting are used to catch up on happenings from the Pastor who feels frustrated having to report to this group. They then spend time discussing trivial details that the staff Pastor could have remedied in ten minutes. The reason decisions take so long is because few men want to accept responsibility for a wrong decision. No one will make a firm decision. The buck is passed instead of stopped. Decisions are shelved until the next meeting and the Pastor goes back to his office with little accomplished. Such items as carpet colors; drapery fabrics and choir robes are caught in a maze of confusion. The reason no one will accept responsibility is that they fear offending the congregation. Their public acceptance is uppermost in their minds.

One or two strong-willed people dominate many boards. We are back to one-man rule when this happens.

The Pastor and his staff should make all day-to-day decisions. They live with the problems and are called and equipped by God to handle them. Problems are handled on the spot and Satan is stopped each time his foot gets in the door.

V. ANALOGIES FOR CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Whenever God is establishing principles in His Word, He always does so in more than one way. We have seen Scriptures that give instructions about lines of authority, but now we will look at two verses that give us analogies for The Church. Whatever applies to the Universal Church can also apply to the local church. Why? Because the Pastor holds the same position in the local church that the Lord Jesus Christ does in the Universal Church. Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is called the Chief Shepherd (the same word as Pastor). Because the Lord Jesus is the Chief Pastor, the local Pastor is under His authority. The local church is a visible pattern for the Universal Church. Let us examine Eph. 5:22-23:

The key words in these verses are emphasized, and you might underline them in your Bible: Husband/wife, Christ/Church, and head/body. The church spoken of here is obviously the Universal Church, all Believers around the world. The important point is that they all come under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the head of the church. The head of any entity represents authority. Jesus is the one who has called us out. He is the one who has authority over us. The first analogy is of Christ as Head over the Church Universal. That relationship of authority can be transferred to the local church.

The second analogy in these verses is of a marriage, the husband and wife. Not only are two separate people joined together as one, but the husband is clearly established by the Word of God as the head of the marriage. He has the duty of exercising authority in that union. Notice that in all three of these analogies, the word head is used. There is only one head to a marriage in God's plan. What does this mean if the husband and wife are in contention over a point? Who should submit? The woman should submit whether she thinks she is right or wrong. If the husband makes a mistake, let him make it. Sometimes that is the only way for him to learn. This does not mean that if the husband decides to go off into sin that the wife has to follow him. The submission in marriage is a wife submitting to a Godly husband.

The third analogy for the local church in these verses is the human body. The head is the control center for the human body. The body does not function without the head. But we should be very aware of an obvious principle. Although the body is under the rule of the head, does that mean that the head never listens to the body? The five senses are in the body to counsel the head. They send signals to the head all the time. We can reach out with our fingers and get information. The message races up to our head, and our head makes the decisions that it passes back down to the hand. Even though our hand knows whether something is hot or cold, the decision to move comes from the head. If the head makes the wrong decision, the hand gets burned, but the head will also suffer when the hand suffers. Love binds the parts of the body together. The head never disregards any part of the body or is careless about its welfare.

The same principle is at work in the local church. We can see in all three of these analogies that God has one source of authority. The marriage has one head. The body has one head. The Universal Church has one head. God's plan is for the local church also to have one head, the Pastor. Many think that when a church becomes large that it needs more than one Pastor. That is like saying that if a family has a lot of children, it needs another husband. If your body gets fat, it needs another head? If the Universal Church gets many more converts, Jesus needs another authority? No! If a family becomes large, the father delegates authority to the older children to watch over the younger. This is the role of the Pastor and the Elders.

VI. THE OFFICES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

In the preceding chapters, we saw the source for authority in the local church is Christ. This brings up a very important issue that is implied in each of the three analogies we used to examine God's plan for establishing and flowing through a local church. The central point at a stake is that we, as the Body of Christ, are under His authority at all times. But someone might say, "Well there are three members of the Godhead. How is it that you say we are under the authority of Jesus only?" The question itself serves to illustrate that in the Godhead there is a principle of authority and submission that we are to follow. God, the Father, gave Jesus authority over the Church.

Read Ephesians 1:22-23. There is a beautiful flowing of submission and authority within the Godhead. Holy Spirit is in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is in submission to God the Father, and yet they are all in submission to each other and flow in unity. You see, there can be submission and unity at the same time. Submission only works among equals.

In the home it is the same way. The father is the head of the home. If the children do not agree with him, they still submit to his authority. If he exercises that authority in line with God's Word, then he will be operating in Godly wisdom and will deserve the respect of his children and wife. But if he is a tyrant, he will have to command obedience, as it will not be readily given. Obedience without submission is slavery. In the end, he will defeat and destroy his own position. If the husband is making every effort to fulfill his role as head of the home, the wife needs to let him make his mistakes when he gets bullheaded. Do not try to usurp his authority. Counsel and love him, but let him learn the hard way a time or two. He will come to value your wisdom and sensitivity.

Let us look at the human body in this light too. If a hand did not respond to the orders of the head, it would soon become apparent that the hand was sick or in trouble. The body would do everything it could to find out how to locate the problem and solve it. Things just would not be right in the human body when there is rebellion against the head?

In the principle of authority and submission, authority works only when someone submits. Authority does not even exist when there is no one to receive it. When there is rebellion where authority has not been established, frustration and anxiety are the result.

What happens in rebellion? Why is God so opposed to rebellion? It is as the sin of witchcraft. Rebellion causes one of two things to happen. The person in the position of authority either loses his authority, or he tries to exert his authority with force. When the latter happens, the person in submission comes under authority against his will, or will rebel even more.

Do you see that rebellion at the bottom causes more pressure from the top? It becomes a vicious circle until something gives. We must see that anarchy is the result. That is why God's system of authority is never based on force but on love and submission, all members being in submission to each other, no one acting except out of love or regard for another member. Christ loves The Church and gave His life for it. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved The Church and as they love their own bodies. Have you ever seen a man cutting up his body for pleasure? Not if he is sane. Have you ever seen a man disregard little scratch in his body? The head exercises the same concern for each member of the body.

A. Defining the Offices

We have already seen that God chooses the office of the Pastor. God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ choose men as Pastors, I Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:8-11. Now, let us see what each office's responsibility and what its duties it entails. Let us first look at the Greek words for each of the offices we are going to study and see what they mean. The word for Pastor is "*poimen*" and it means a shepherd. The Pastor is the one who appoints Elders, and the word for Elders is "*presbuteros*" meaning, someone who is mature. The office of an Elder requires more than just being mature in the word. We will discuss his qualifications later. The word for Bishop is "*episkopos*" which is a compound word in the Greek. It comes from "epi" meaning over, and "skopos" meaning to view or to see. It is self-explanatory, meaning an overseer. The last office in the local church is that of the Deacon, which comes from the word "*diakonos*", meaning to minister. Now, let us examine the office or function of each of these ministries.

VII. The Pastor

God did not use the title Pastor or shepherd without a purpose. The first quality about a Pastor is that he is the leader. He heads his flock and makes decisions concerning them. He teaches them the Word of God. He may not be smart in every area of church operations, but he is gifted with a teaching ability. He needs to spend much time in the Word and prayer to develop his gift and mature in his office.

Every Pastor should be aware that many in his congregation are more intelligent in some areas than he is. Many of them have great expertise in natural fields and can benefit him through counsel. He must remain teachable. Some of them may even be more mature in the Word than he is. But if he leans on the anointing that accompanies his office, he can always successfully fill his place as Pastor and leader of the flock. The abilities of Holy Spirit accompany every ministry gift. Read Romans 11:29.

Now let us look at some Scriptures that deal with the office of the Pastor. Read I Peter 5:1-4:

Did you notice that the word Pastor is not mentioned here? So you may ask, how do we know we are discussing a Pastor? By context, Peter begins by exhorting the Elders. Notice, that it is plural. Peter also points out that he is an Elder *presbuteros*. In verse two, however, he says to feed the flock of God. Immediately we know he is talking about Pastors, because the Greek word here for feed is "*poimen*" (Pastor or shepherd). We see that verse two should read, "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you". Who is the shepherd? It is the Pastor. In this passage then, we have Peter calling the Pastor an Elder. That makes sense. The Pastor should be mature in the Word of God, in spiritual matters. You would not want someone without maturity in the Pastorate of your church.

What you have to understand in the Word of God is that the term Elder is quite freely used for the office of Pastor. The context indicates that. When the Pastor is called an Elder, he is clearly different from the other Elders. He stands as the chief Elder.

The next indication that Peter is addressing Pastors is found in the phrase, "taking the oversight". The word oversight is "*episkopos*"; Bishopric. There is only one person who can take the oversight of God's flock. He is the Pastor, the one chosen by God.

The significant thing about Peter's instruction, however, is that he is telling the Pastor that he has to take the initiative. We should see that God is putting the responsibility for leadership on the Pastor's shoulders. The Pastor does not say, "Lord, let the congregation know this or that". God speaks to the Pastor and tells him what the congregation should hear. But notice that the instruction is a command. Take the oversight. He is telling the Pastor to have some gumption, to take the leadership of the church.

There are some qualifications given to taking this charge of leadership. First, the Pastor is to take the office willingly rather than by constraint. Constraint here means, of necessity. A Pastor should never take his position because he feels he has to. When God calls a Pastor, he gives him a Pastor's heart, the desire to help people spiritually. So the next qualification has to do with the man's motives. He is not to take the Pastor's office for filthy lucre. This means money is not to be his reason for accepting the job. Some people might think a Pastor should not make much money. The Word of God tells us that he ought to be paid well for dedicating himself to his calling.

The next instruction is very important. The Pastor is not to be a dictator: "...neither as being lords over God's heritage. Look at that carefully. Whose heritage? The heritage is God's. The Pastor is to be over the flock by example. A Pastor leads, and he does not tell his congregation to do anything he would not do himself, both by word and deed. One of the beautiful things this passage shows is the chain of command in the local church. Notice that verse four says that when the Chief Shepherd, who is Jesus, appears He will reward the Pastor.

The word for shepherd is *poimen*. So Jesus identifies Himself with the Pastor. But in the same way, notice that the Pastor is called an Elder and, by implication in verse two, a Bishop also. Jesus is called the Chief Elder and the Chief Bishop in the local church. Jesus is a Pastor, but not all Elders (or Bishops) are the Pastor. A Pastor must maintain the qualities of all the offices we see listed in the Word of God.

Let us look at the Pastor's heart again. Scripture tells us, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage". Whose heritage? It is God's heritage. Go back to verse two: "...feed the flock of God...". It should be clear that the Pastor does not own the flock in any sense; He merely has responsibility over it. Moses watched Jethro's sheep. He was the shepherd, but the sheep belonged to Jethro. For the Pastor who understands that, it is a great freedom. The sheep belong to God. The Pastor always has recourse to the owner. He

can always talk to the owner. The owner will take care of the things the shepherd cannot handle.

In the local congregation it also is clear that the people do not ultimately answer to the Pastor; they answer to God. He owns the sheep. The Pastor's responsibility is to admonish and to feed from the Word of God. Once the people walk out the door, whether or not they live the Word is their responsibility. That does not mean the Pastor does not have concern for them. He simply cannot watch over their lives. Have you ever seen people suddenly stop talking when a Pastor walks into the room? If you talk about things you would not want the Pastor to hear, then you ought to remember that the "Chief-Pastor", the Lord Jesus Christ hears every word you say. He never leaves you nor forsakes you.

To further validate what we saw in I Peter, let us look to Paul for another Scripture where the Pastor is called an Elder. In Acts 20:17-28, Paul meets with the Elders of Ephesus. In verse 17 we read this: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the Elders of the church."

The reason that Elders is plural and church is singular is that there were many churches in Ephesus. The churches are not like they are today. They were not large congregations. Most of them met in homes. We know these Elders are Pastors from what Paul says to them in verse 28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed The Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

Now several things ought to be leaping out at you for their similarity to what Peter said. First, who makes these Elders to be overseers? Holy Spirit did. Therefore, Paul has to be addressing Pastors, because the office of a Bishop is something a man aspires to (I Timothy 3:1). It is not a ministry gift given by the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11). We see here that the Pastor is called the overseer in his congregation. Accordingly, he has authority over all the offices in the church and is the one who chooses them. The final evidence in this verse is that Paul said to feed the flock of God. The word feed is the word "*poimen*" to Pastor. Again, the flock belongs to God. The purchase price is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever purchases, owns.

VIII. The Elder

The first point to establish is that there is a multiplicity of Elders in the local church. In James 5:14 we saw that the Elders (plural) in the church (singular) are to be called to minister to the sick. Recall in Acts 14:23, that Paul and Barnabas has also ordained Elders in every church. Titus was also told to ordain Elders in every city. An interesting point arises here. As far as we can see in God's Word, Pastors were not ordained. We are not saying they should not be. It simply appears that they were ordained when they were in the office of Elder. When they have proven themselves in that ministry, then God moves them up in their vocation.

Perhaps the most well known Scriptures that show the relationship of Elders to the ministry offices are found in Acts 15 read verses 1 and 2. Here we see again that there were Elders (plural) at Jerusalem. They were a group distinct from the Apostles. Again the ministers and Elders are seen working together in verses 22 and 23:

These Apostles were in Jerusalem and worked together with the Elders. During the dispute about whether to keep The Law or not, Peter became the spokesman for the Apostles (verse 7). Then in verse 13, James arose as the spokesman for the Elders. Apparently, James was the chief Elder, the Pastor. The Pastor of any congregation is the chief Elder. From other historical facts surrounding the Book of Acts, it was reported that James was the Pastor at Jerusalem. Acts 21:18 also seems to prove this.

It is very interesting that for this important meeting James had Elders present. All the rest of the men are called Elders, but James is distinguished from among them all by reason of his office. James is the chief Elder or Pastor and he had the Elders who assisted him with the spiritual oversight of the church with him at this meeting.

Let us look more closely at the function or responsibility of Elders in the church. Read Hebrews 13:7:

In this verse, the key words are rule, spoken, and Word of God. These words indicate the function of the Elder's office in the local church. Anyone who is mature in the Lord is an Elder. But the office of an Elder is different. The main function of the Elder's office is that he rules and teaches. He shares the Pastor's responsibility. He rules and teaches in the local church. These are his functions. Compare I Thessalonians 5:12 for these same responsibilities. In this verse, the words, "over you" represent the ruling and the words "admonish you" signifies the teaching responsibility.

Another Scripture that shows these responsibilities is I Timothy 3:1-5. Do not let the word Bishop in verse one confuse you. A Bishop is first of all an Elder who gains responsibility. He must stand in the office of an Elder to become a Bishop. Notice his responsibilities in I Timothy 3:2-5.

Here we are again talking about ruling and teaching, and this verse is specifically talking about the Pastor as the chief Elder. But the qualifications for a Pastor also fit the qualifications for an Elder. Do you remember when we spoke of a Pastor being well paid? That is what double honor refers to. Some people would have you think that it means double reward in heaven some day, or double respect. Study is work. How do we derive that? Let us read 1Timothy 5:18.

The word "labor" in 1Timothy 5:17 speaks not only of diligent effort, but also of an occupation. The Pastor is the only one in the church whose full occupation is the labor of the Word. Being worthy of one's reward, verse 18, refers to salary. The analogy of the ox relates to the Pastor's work. He treads out the grain for the benefit of the people. The corn represents what they bring into the storehouse; their tithes and offerings. As he labors in

the store house ruling and teaching, he has a right to draw his salary from the giving of the people, to be worthy of double honor means that a Pastor who feeds his people and tends them well should be paid well. He should receive double honor over other Elders, associates, etc.

A Pastor who works just for the money is not going to fulfill what God has called him to do.

The double honor should not influence his decision to Pastor or not (I Peter 5:2).

Let us look at another Scripture we want to consider in light of the Elder's function. Read Titus 2:1-3.

As we have already seen, speaking the things of sound doctrine has reference to teaching. But something else comes up in these verses that we have not seen before. The word for aged men, in the Greek, is "*presbuteros*", or Elder. But surprisingly, in verse three aged women is the same word only it is in the feminine gender. So it is apparent that a church is not out of Scriptural order to have Elderesses who rule and teach in the church. A church would be Scriptural with all men Elders, but it would be just as Scriptural to have men and women serving as Elders. Women can serve communion, teach children's classes, women's classes, and minister from the pulpit.

Immediately we can hear some of you saying, "But Paul says a woman is not allowed to teach in the church." Let us read I Timothy 2:12. The word "over" is the key word here. The woman is not allowed to over-rule the man in teaching. Neither is she to usurp his authority. There are several possible meanings here, but let us consider the verse this way. Let us look at the man as a reference to the Pastor. The Pastor can allow a woman to teach, but she is not to usurp his authority.

IX. The Deacon

The office of the Deacon was established in Acts 6. We are not going to deal with the office of Deacon at length here. Let us look at Acts 6:1-4 to establish the qualifications and function of Deacons:

In verse one, we see that as soon as The Church was formed problems arose because there was spiritual immaturity in The Church. Here, Holy Spirit set the priorities for problem solving in the local congregation. Notice in verse one that the word ministrations comes from the Greek word "*diskonos*" or deaconing. The word Deacon means to minister, or serve. We will come to a study of the Deacon's qualifications. You should notice that there are spiritual qualifications for those who serve in The Church. It is not just a matter of waiting tables or serving in other capacities. To serve in The Church is a spiritual service, and this is pointed out by this passage.

Look at the way the word Deacon is used in the passage. The Apostles said it did not make sense for them to leave the Word of God to deacon tables. On the contrary, they would give themselves continually to prayer and to the Deaconing of the Word.

We want you to see something here. Anything that is of service to the people is Deaconing. The Pastor is the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he ministers or Deacons to the people. What does the servant minister or deacon? It is the Word of God. The obligation of the Pastor is to continually give himself to prayer and the Deaconing of the Word. What we want you to see about the Pastor is that he is a combination of all the offices in the church. The Pastor has been called an Elder. He has been called a Bishop, and is now seen as a Deacon.

You also should realize that Jesus Christ is at the top of the ladder of authority. The Lord Jesus Christ is the summation of all the offices below Him. The Pastor's office contains all the functions of the other church offices. This is a pattern of delegated authority. To be a good leader, you must know how to be a good follower.

A. The Bishop

In Titus 1:5-6 we saw that Paul instructed Titus to ordain Elders in every city. In verses 7-9 though, he began to give the qualifications for a Bishop or overseer. Why is that? A Bishop oversees other Elders. He is an Elder with added responsibility. You will see in I Timothy 3:1-7 that the Bishop's qualifications are the same as the Elder in Titus 1:5-9. Both are required to have the same qualities of maturity and knowledge of God's word. They both rule and teach.

Notice that the qualifications for the Bishop include proven reliability and character. Titus 1:7 begins, "For a Bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God," and I Timothy 3:2 starts the same way: "A Bishop, then must be blameless". Bishops advance in certain forms of church government to be overseers of Pastors and local congregations. The Office of Bishop is a local church or local denomination ecclesiastical appointment.

We have defined the offices within the local church. Now let us look more closely at the qualifications for the offices.

X. QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICE

Whenever a congregation grows, the same needs arise for the Pastor as arose for the Apostles in Jerusalem. They are called to be continually before the Lord. Therefore, certain responsibilities have to be taken up by mature Believers in the congregation. The Pastor is to Deacon, or minister the Word of God to the Believers. Pastors want to present the very best to their people. To do this, they have to be free from the responsibilities that Deacons and Elders should carry. Church offices should give full allegiance to the Pastor as long as he maintains his integrity and does not blatantly violate Scriptural principles.

How Elders and Deacons follow the vision and direction of the Pastor is how they ultimately follow the Lord. Let us see what the Word of God says are the qualifications for the men chosen to serve the people and assist the Pastor.

A. Elders and Bishops

We are going to talk about these offices together because a Bishop must first be an Elder. After proving himself in that office he can be given more responsibility as a Bishop. We have seen that the word *presbuteros* (Elder) indicates someone who is mature in God's Word. The qualifications for these offices are found in I Timothy 3:1-7:

We are going to present a list of those qualifications as taken from the New International Version of the Bible, because it makes some things clearer. Then we will come back and comment on certain points. All men and women chosen for the office of Elder should be:

1. Above reproach
2. The husband (wife) of but one wife (husband)
3. Temperate
4. Self-controlled
5. Respectable
6. Given to hospitality
7. Able to teach
8. Not given to much wine
9. Not violent
10. Not a lover of money
11. Patient
12. Not quarrelsome
13. Not covetous
14. Able to manage his own family well

15. Not a recent convert (novice)
16. Having a good reputation in the community
17. A good steward
18. Not self-willed, but submissive
19. A lover of what is good
20. Upright
21. Holy
22. Disciplined

These qualifications of godliness and ability are required of Elders in The Church. There is one of these qualifications that should be amplified because there has been confusion and debate about it in many church circles. Number two says a man must be the husband of but one wife, or one wife at a time. It does not say he is never to have been married before. It is perfectly clear in God's Word that divorce is sanctioned in certain cases. Read Deuteronomy 24:1-2.

If a person does divorce, he or she is free to remarry without sin according to I Corinthians 7:15, 28. The restriction on this office refers to polygamy, which was practiced in many societies at that time.

Timothy is an example of the ordination of Elders. Timothy was ordained through the laying on of hands. God put the ministry gift in him and the Elders laid hands on him as witness. They recognized his calling. Ministry gifts are not given by the laying on of hands. The anointing that comes with the laying on of hands may help to stir up the gift from God that is in you, but it does not put it there. Neither can prophecy put the gift in you. Prophecy merely confirms what God has already done in your spirit. Examine I Timothy 1:18 and 4:14 in this light:

The ministry gift that is being pointed out here was one that was given by God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Again we emphasize, we do not lay hands on someone and make him or her an Apostle. We do not lay hands on someone and make him or her a Pastor. The laying on of hands becomes a point of contact and of dedication. The Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands ministers the anointing. The anointing will energize the ministry gift that is already there. The laying on of hands always represents the ministry of the supernatural, not of the calling itself. Look at II Timothy 1:6.

We like what the New International Version says here. It says, "I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands." Elders and Pastors should do what the Holy Spirit instructed Timothy to do. They should stir up that gift. It is up to you to do the stirring and the fanning of that gift.

We have to remember that the Word of God says that many are called but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14). Why is that? Many people have the calling down inside them, but few of them do anything with it. It is up to you to continue to study God's Word and to continue praying so that God can use that ministry gift. Just keep feeding on the Word and praying in the Spirit and God can open a door. God will be able to use you.

Now let us see what qualifies a Deacon for service to the congregation.

Homework I, Chapter I-II

Name _____

1. What is the source of authority in the local Church?

- A. Word of man B. Word of the Bishop
C. Word of God D. Word of tradition

2. People have never been healed by:

- A. Praying in faith
B. Not speaking their faith
C. Standing on the Word
D. None of the above

3. To receive our healing, we must:

- A. Shout at the disease
B. Pray silently
C. Lay hands on
D. Release our faith
E. None of the above

4. Holy Spirit speaks to each of us only collectively about the Word.

True or False

5. In order for us to know how to function as God wants, we must:

- A. Listen to Holy Spirit
B. Learn to follow principles of God's Word
C. Follow our own thinking
D. Do what Grandpa did
E. Both A and B
F. Both C and D

6. What is the true "Church"?

- A. Buildings made of brick
B. Every born-again Believer
C. Body of Christ
D. Both A and B
E. Both B and C

7. The Greek word for *Church* is:

- A. *Ekklesia* B. *Pernikos*
C. *Agape* D. *Qoph*

8. The Universal Church is:

- A. All humans
B. All Baptists
C. All born-again Believers
D. All of the above

9. In I Corinthians 12:28 it says "___ hath set some in The Church." Who is doing this calling?

- A. Moses B. Abraham
C. God D. All of these

10. In Galatians 1:1, Paul says he is called to be a/an:

- A. Preacher B. Prophet
C. Teacher D. Apostle
E. Evangelist

11. In Galatians 1:1, Paul tells who called him to his office. Who was it?

- A. High Priest
B. Pharisees
C. A Prophet
D. Jesus Christ and God the Father

12. The one who calls has no authority over those he calls.

True or False

13. Jesus calls men to ministry gifts as well as Bishops, Elders, and Deacons.

True or False

14. The one who calls us to a ministry gift does not have authority over us.

True or False

15. A Shepherd can watch ____ flocks at a time.

- A. 7 B. 4
C. 2 D. 1

16. Prophets come from a local Body but they can function to the Body of Christ at large.

True or False

17. There are six ministry gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11.

True or False

18. In Acts 14, Paul and Barnabus functioned in the office of:

- A. Preacher B. Teacher
C. Prophet D. Apostle

19. Jeremiah 3:15 says that God will give us Pastors after his own heart.

True or False

20. Titus, Paul's "trouble shooter" was a:

- A. Greek, an uncircumcised Gentile
- B. Communist
- C. Jewish Rabbi
- D. Roman Soldier

21. Elders are appointed by men who have been chosen by Jesus Christ and placed in the office of Pastor.

True or False

22. There is to be only one pastor of a Church but _____ Bishops.

- A. Many
- B. Seven
- C. Three
- D. As many as needed

23. The Pastor has authority over the Elders.

True or False

24. All Churches (according to Acts 12) are required to have 7 Bishops.

True or False

25. The office of Bishop comes from:

- A. A divine call of God
- B. A man who aspires to it
- C. Mama who calls the man to it
- D. The Pastor who calls the man to it

26. Who chooses the Deacons?

- A. Holy Ghost
- B. Chief Bishop
- C. Pastor
- D. Congregation
- E. Pastor's Board

27. The Deacon is called by the Pastor but is under the authority of the Congregation.

True or False

28. It is okay for a man to be a Deacon and not meet the qualifications in Timothy.

True or False