

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
(Making Local Church Organization Work)
Lesson 26

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Local Church Organization and Success.

1. Success comes by planning ahead and working hard. Success rarely comes by accident.
2. It is not enough to *study* local church organization. We are not successful until we have *implemented* God's plan for local church organization.

B. Our Options Right Now: Stand Still, Move Backward, or Move Forward.

1. We want to move forward in a way that glorifies God.
2. We want to move forward in a way that promotes personal growth in each member without creating division in the local body.

II. PLANNING FOR FUTURE SUCCESS.

A. Study God's Word Diligently.

1. The example of the Bereans must be followed (Acts 17:11). Unless we are convinced by the word of God, there is very little need to change. All reform and restoration must be rooted in God's word and according to the NT pattern.
2. Review these lessons on local church organization often with an open Bible at hand.

B. Pray for God's Will Earnestly.

1. Prayer before making important decisions and changes is crucial (Lk. 6:12ff; 22:41ff; Acts 1:24; 4:31; 6:6; 12:12; 13:3; 16:25; 20:36; 21:5).
2. Pray earnestly and often that God will allow the local church to be organized in the way that pleases him and according to his NT pattern. Pray like Jesus, "Not my will be done, but thy will be done".

C. Remove Man-Made Things Promptly.

1. God's work in God's way cannot have its place in the local church until all man-made wisdom, attitudes, plans, and arrangements are removed (Eph. 4:22-24, 31-32; Col. 3:9-10; Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:1-2).
2. Remove any man-made arrangements (hierarchies, inter-congregational organizations, centralization, human institutions, clerical titles, etc.) and any man-made concepts (no need for elders, not willing to give up control, spiritual laziness, lack of sacrifice and service, do not like change or breaking traditions, fear, etc.).

D. Train Each Member Vigorously.

1. God knows that we are not born leaders. He expects all members to be "equipped" or "trained" for service and maturity (Eph. 4:11-13).
2. Just like the 12 Apostles were first trained before going out (Mk. 3:14-15), the men and women in a local church must be trained in three areas: a) training in the word of God; b) training in personal character or qualifications; and, c) training in a specific area of service – elder, deacon, evangelist, teacher, or regular member service.

E. Involve the Congregation Completely.

1. It is wise to keep open communication with the whole congregation when discussing changes that affect them all (Acts 1:15ff, 6:1ff, 13:1ff, 15:1ff).
2. This can be an exciting time spiritually for all the members and an excellent time for congregational prayer, Bible study, and cooperation. Let's all have the attitude of growth and cooperation to be the organized local church that God wants us to be.

III. CONCLUSION. God Wants The Local Church to Move Forward and Be a Success. Do You Want the Same?

Lesson Twenty-Six Discussion

1. How does success come to any situation in life, including the success of the local church?
2. What are our present options in the local church? Which one do you want?
3. What role does Bible study play in the success of the local church? Do you have any questions about the material studied in this series of lessons on local church organization? Is any of this material unscriptural? Now is the time to study it!
4. What can be said publicly and privately in prayer that will help the local church grow?
5. List some things that must be removed before a local church can grow. Do you know of any specific thing in this congregation that must be removed? Now is the time to discuss it!
6. In what three areas must each of our members be trained? Male members, what specifically can you do to train yourself to be elders, deacons, or preachers one day?
7. Why is it important to include the entire congregation when discussing local church organization?
8. List some things that you will do specifically in the near future to help promote growth, unity, and organization in the local church.