

# The Body of Christ



A Study of Local Church Organization  
in Twenty-Six Lessons

by  
Chris Reeves

Privately Published  
2022

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Chris Reeves  
604 New Castle Road  
Clarksville, TN 37043 U.S.A.

chrisreevesmail@gmail.com  
www.thegoodteacher.com

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# LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION

## Lesson 1

### I. INTRODUCTION.

#### A. Why Study Local Church Organization?

1. Positively, we want to have the orderly arrangement that God wants for a local church and we want to follow the NT pattern of organization to achieve that goal.
2. Negatively, we want to avoid the many religious apostasies that have begun with unscriptural church organization.

#### B. Why Organization?

No group, small or large, secular or religious, can exist for the good of others without some sort of organization. A group of people without proper organization will be ineffective or will soon self-destruct. A good example of this is found in Acts 19.

### II. "CHURCH" IN THE NT.

#### A. What "Church Organization" Are We Discussing?

#### B. There Are Two Uses of the Word "Church" in the NT.

1. "Church" (Gr. *ekklesia*; to *call* out; called out [ones]) refers to an assembly of saved people who have been called out of darkness to be saints, by God, from heaven, through the gospel, into the body of Christ. The Greek word *ekklesia* is a collective noun used for an assembly of people. It refers to people, not a building (Mt. 18:17; Acts 8:3; etc.). It is used in the NT for the assembly of Israel (Ac.7:38; Heb. 2:12), the assembly of Ephesian citizens (Ac.19:32, 39), and the assembly of Christians. One Christian is not a "church".
2. In the NT, the word "church" is used in a universal sense — all the saved, everywhere, of all time. The influence of the universal "church" is exerted upon the world as each Christian carries out his or her individual responsibilities while following Christ. Examples of the universal sense of the word can be found in Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22; 3:10; 5:23; 1 Timothy 3:15; etc. There is no church organization on earth in the universal sense. Hence, there is no mission to meet, no duty to fulfill as a functional entity, and no single agency (headquarters) which tries to activate or organize the church universal. There is a "brotherhood" (1 Pet.2:17), but not a "church-hood". The universal church is not an organization of churches.
3. In the NT, the word "church" is used in a local sense — all the saved in one location. The location may be one's own house, a single city, or a region. Examples of the local sense of the word can be found in Acts 8:1; 9:31; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Cor. 8:1; Galatians 1:2, 22; Philemon 2; etc. A local "church" is an assembly of saints functioning *collectively* in divinely authorized work and worship. There is local church organization. This is the only functional, organizational unit of Christians. The

NT mentions no other. Anything *larger* than, *smaller* than, or *other* than this local church unit is unscriptural. The organization of the church begins and ends with the local church.

4. References to "church" (Gr. *ekklesia*) in the NT: Mt. 16:18; 18:17 (2x); Acts 2:47; 5:11; 7:38; 8:1, 3; 9:31; 11:2, 26; 12:1, 5; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:3, 4, 22, 41; 16:5; 18:22; 19:32, 39, 41; 20:17, 28; Rom. 16:1, 4, 5, 16, 23; 1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 7:17; 10:32; 11:16, 18, 22; 12:28; 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33, 34, 35; 15:9; 16:1, 19 (2x); 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:1, 18, 19, 23, 24; 11:8, 28; 12:13; Gal. 1:2, 13, 22; Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32; Phil. 3:6; 4:15; Col. 1:18, 24; 4:15, 16; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:1, 4; 1 Tim. 3:5, 15; 5:16; Philemon 2; Heb. 2:12; 12:23; Jas. 5:14; 3 Jn. 6, 9, 10; Rev. 1:4, 11, 20 (2x); 2:1, 7, 8, 11, 12, 17, 18, 23, 29; 3:1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 22; 22:16.

C. Saying "Church Organization" Confuses the Issue. It is Best to Speak of "Local Church Organization."

### III. LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION.

A. What Is Organization?

1. "Organization" simply means "proper working order", "an organized body", "organic structure", or "systematic arrangement". While the word "organization" is not found in the NT, the concept is implied various times. The words "ordain" or "appoint" (1 Cor. 7:17; 11:34; 16:1; Tit. 1:5), "order" (Tit. 1:5), and "fitly framed" (Eph. 2:21; 4:16) all imply "arrangement" and "order". These words speak to the concept of organization.
2. The question of "organization" (structure) is separate from issues about the work, methods, arrangements, or expediencies found within a local church. What is often called a "method" by religious people is actually a violation of NT "organization". We cannot change the organization (structure) of the local church and call it a "method" of work.
3. Proper organization is achieved when all the members of a local church are fulfilling the proper roles found in Ephesians 4:11-12 and Philippians 1:1. The only two roles in Ephesians 4:11 not found in the local church today are "apostles" and "prophets."

B. Organization Allows the Local Church To Be...

1. Orderly.

Each local church can and must be "set in order" (Tit. 1:5). God wants order, not confusion in the local assembly (1 Cor. 14:33,40). There is to be no disorganization in God's plan.

2. Autonomous.

Each local church is "autonomous" (lit. self-law). That is, each local church governs or rules itself using the NT as its law. Each local church is independent and not controlled from any outside human source, including other local churches.

Examples of the independent and autonomous nature of the local church can be found in Acts 14:23, 20:28, 1 Corinthians 16:3, 2 Corinthians 8:19, 23, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, Tit.1:5, and 1 Peter 5:2. A local church does not *legislate* [make] or *judge* [interpret] God's law. It simply *executes* [carries out] God's law. Local churches function and do their work independently of each other, not *through* each other. There is to be no inter-congregational or multi-congregational structure in God's plan.

3. Equal.

Each local church is equal. There are no distinctions such as "contributing churches", "sponsoring churches," "mission churches", "mother churches," etc. There is no hierarchy structure for local churches in God's plan.

4. All-sufficient.

- a) Each local church is wholly sufficient to do the work God has given it to do whether it be evangelizing the lost, benevolence toward needy saints, or edification of saints. A local church can do its work without any other organization being built. Local churches are not to build and maintain human institutions through which to do their work.
- b) A local church uses money from its own treasury to do its own work. A treasury is an authorized expediency to keep the Lord's money together (Acts 4:37; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
- c) The church at Antioch is a NT example of a local church which was all-sufficient to do its own work — Acts 11:26; 14:27-28; 15:30-35 (edification); 11:27-30 (benevolence); and 13:1-3 (evangelism).
- d) Other examples of local churches being all-sufficient in their work can be found here: Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-37; 6:1-6; Romans 15:25-26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Timothy 5:16 (benevolence); Acts 11:22-23; 1 Corinthians 9:14; 2 Corinthians 11:8-9; Philippians 1:5; 2:25; 4:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-8 (evangelism); and Acts 2:47; 20:28,32; 1 Corinthians 12:22-27; 14:12,26; Ephesians 4:16; 1 Peter 2:2 (edification). There is no weak or insufficient structure in God's plan for the local church. His plan for the local church is perfect and must be followed carefully.
- e) Note that local churches in the NT were all-sufficient to do the work of evangelism, benevolence (toward needy saints only, see passages above), and edification. They did not engage in any other works. There was no work or mission that involved social and recreational activities. Local churches did not spend the Lord's money from the treasury to engage in works involving youth camps, gymnasiums, fellowship halls for social meals, play grounds, ball teams, recreational trips, etc. And, evangelism (through the word of God), benevolence (sent directly to the need), and edification (through the word of God) were just that, without also attaching social and recreational activities to them.

- f) Local churches were also all-sufficient to engage in worship to God. They assembled together on the first day of the week to take the Lord's supper (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:17-34) and to give a free-will offering (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9). They assembled together as well to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; etc.), pray (Acts 12:5; 1 Thess. 5:17; etc.), and preach and teach the word of God (Acts 2:42; 5:42; 1 Cor. 14; etc.). They did not engage in any other acts of worship.
  - g) A special question: What relationship does the local church organization have with human organizations? A local church may buy services from human organizations (like buying electricity from an electric company) without operating human organizations. An individual Christian may also support or operate human organizations without the local church doing so.
- C. The Local Church is Not Organized for Worldly Honor, But for the Lord's Work (Service).  
Local Church Organization is a Means to a Divine End.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION.**

- A. Local Church Organization Shows God's Wisdom.
  - 1. Local church organization is simple, yet strong. It is small, yet sufficient. No other organizational arrangement is permitted by God's word, much less needed.
  - 2. Any effort to improve upon God's wisdom shows unbelief.
- B. Local Church Organization Should Be Achieved and Never Perverted.
  - 1. Let us strive to be what God's wants for a local church and not stop until we achieve that goal.
  - 2. Any satisfaction with more or less than the NT pattern, or a deviation from the NT pattern, means we have turned from God's ways to man's ways.

## Lesson One Discussion

1. Give two reasons for a study of local church organization.
2. Why is organization important to any group of people?
3. "Church" comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* which means \_\_\_\_\_.  
The word "church" is used in what two senses in the NT?
4. In what sense of the word "church" can we speak of "organization"?
5. What does "organization" mean?
6. How would you show that the local church has organization even though the word "organization" is not found in the NT?
7. Organization allows the local church to have what four characteristics?
8. Using the scriptures listed under III.B.2., list the words or phrases in those verses which demonstrate that a local church is autonomous (independent).
9. Using the example of the local church at Antioch, illustrate how the local church alone is all-sufficient to do the three-fold work that God gave it to do.
10. Why does God want a local church to be organized?
11. What are some things that happen when we do not achieve the organization of the local church, or we try to change the organization of the local church?



# THE NEW TESTAMENT ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN PERVERTED

## Lesson 2

### I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Pattern of NT Local Church Organization is Not Always Followed.
- B. Centralized Church Government Is A Perversion of the NT Pattern.
  - 1. All perversions of the NT pattern of local church organization have a common denominator — centralization. “Centralization” is the joining of two or more local churches together in some “organized” fashion to do the Lord’s work. It is the opposite of allowing each local church to do its own work (see Lesson 1).
  - 2. According to human wisdom, it is thought that to put the control of local church affairs into the hands of a few (centralization) is an improvement upon the NT pattern. According to this wisdom, centralization (1) facilitates the enforcement of unity and practice, (2) expedites the mobilization of the membership, (3) makes for more efficient finances, record-keeping, and management, (4) expedites the works of benevolence and evangelism, (5) affords a feeling of security, (6) relieves individuals from the responsibility of making all the decisions, and (7) gives all members a sense of accomplishment by association.
  - 3. Regardless of all the human wisdom and good reasons given for centralization, the fact still remains that it is not God's plan. Centralization is not in the NT pattern!

### II. CENTRALIZATION AND DENOMINATIONAL PERVERSIONS.

- A. Catholicism Is An Example of Centralization.
  - 1. Six steps toward the Papacy (centralization):
    - a. A "Presiding Bishop" was exalted over the elders in a local church (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. A.D.).
    - b. A "City Bishop" was given power outside the local church and a "Metropolitan Bishop" was given power that extended outside city (4<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D.).
    - c. A "Diocesan Bishop" was given power over a large area of churches.
    - d. Five "Metropolitan Bishops" had risen to the same power and prominence and were called "Patriarchs" (5<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D.).
    - e. "Universal Bishop" is claimed by John the Faster of Constantinople, but he is forced down by Gregory I of Rome (6<sup>th</sup> cent. AD.).
    - f. "Pope" is claimed by Boniface III (7<sup>th</sup> cent. AD.).
  - 2. Catholic Church organization was evolutionary and constantly changing. Much of it was modeled after the government organization of the Roman Empire. Today, the basic pyramid organization of the Catholic Church from bottom to top is this: priest, bishop, archbishop, cardinal, and pope. This is Catholic hierarchy and centralization.

## B. Protestantism Is An Example of Centralization.

1. The associations, conferences, synods, assemblies, conventions, etc., of Protestantism are all forms of centralization. Protestants in the 1500s and 1600s simply exchanged one form of centralization (Catholicism) for another (Protestantism).
2. Examples.
  - a) Assemblies of God churches have some level of independence. However, the General Council is made up of all ordained ministers and a delegate from each church, and this council sets the doctrinal standards for all the churches.
  - b) Baptists have independent congregational organization, yet they have "associations" in which Baptist churches work together through church "messengers" (representatives).
  - c) Episcopalians (Anglicans) have a government modeled after that of the Catholic Church. A "parish" is overseen by a "rector" (priest), a "diocese" is overseen by a "bishop", and the whole church is overseen by the head, the "Presiding Bishop", elected by the general convention.
  - d) Jehovah's Witnesses have a headquarters in Brooklyn known as the Watchtower Society where there is a Board of Directors. Each local church has a "company servant", who reports to "zone servants", who in turn report to "regional servants". Everyone is governed by the Watchtower Society.
  - e) Lutherans are governed in the local church by a "church council" consisting of a "pastor" and "lay officers." Several churches make up the "synod" which is governed by "pastors" and "lay representatives". The "general body" is the highest level and it meets several times a year at a national or international level.
  - f) Methodists are governed through a series of annual conferences. The General Conference meets every four years. Local "pastors" report to "bishops", who in turn report to "district superintendents."
  - g) Mormons have a President, two Counselors to the President, a Council of Twelve Apostles, a Council of Seventy, and two priesthoods ("elders" come from the Melchizedek priesthood and "bishops" come from the Aaronic priesthood). Territory is divided up into (from small to large): "blocks", "wards", and "stakes".
  - h) Nazarenes are governed by the General Assembly, District Assemblies, General Superintendents, and District Superintendents.
  - i) Presbyterians have a "presbytery" made up of representatives from local churches. Representatives from several "presbyteries" make up a "synod". The General Assembly is the highest court of the Presbyterian Church.
3. Protestant church organization was reactionary, reforming the abuses of the Catholic Church, but it was still centralized in form and structure.

C. Social Reasons for Such Perversions.

1. Desire to gain control (3 Jn. 9).
2. Desire to evade responsibility.

**III. CENTRALIZATION AND BROTHERHOOD PERVERSIONS.**

- A. Centralization - brotherhood centralized organization is simply an imitation of other religions (see above), but just with different terms to describe it. What are some of the terms?
- B. Institutionalism — organization other than the local church (Orphan Homes, Colleges, United Christian Missionary Society, etc.).
- C. Centralization — organization larger than the local church (the “sponsoring church” arrangement of the Herald of Truth, Gospel Press, One Nation Under God, etc.).
- D. Discipling Movement — organization larger than the local church (Boston Church Movement and the Focused Few, formerly the Crossroads cult).
- E. Misc. Perversions — organization smaller than the local church (elders as "puppets", trial rule, preacher rule, leadership rule, majority rule, committee rule, bible class treasuries, youth organizations, etc.).
- F. Individualism (Charles Holt) — no local church organization, treasury, or authority at all.
- G. Social Reasons for Such Perversions.
  - 1) Desire to do a "brotherhood work" (Rom. 16:16).
  - 2) Desire to be like the denominations (1 Sam. 8:5).

**IV. CENTRALIZATION PERVERSION PROOF-TEXTS.**

- A. Proof-Texts Used by Denominations:
  1. Matthew 16:18 is used to advocate for a "Papacy" (Peter as the first pope).
  2. Acts 15 is used to advocate for the "First Ecumenical Council".
  3. It is sometimes argued that James, Peter, and John (Gal. 2:9), Timothy (1:1-4), Titus (1:5), and John (Rev. 1:4; 2:1, 8, 12, etc.) were “head bishops” over the churches where they were members.
- B. Proof-Texts Used by Brethren:
  1. Acts 11:29-30 is used to argue for a "sponsoring church".
  2. 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 is used to argue for a "forwarding eldership".
  3. James 1:27, Galatians 6:10, and 2 Corinthians 9:13 are used to argue for the building and maintaining of human institutions and "societies" (with presidents, treasurers, boards of directors, etc.) apart from the elders in a local church.

**V. CONCLUSION.**

- A. Change in the NT Pattern of Organization Leads to Change in the Gospel.
- B. God Explains in the NT Who Should Do the Work (the Local Church) and How It Should Be Done (the Local Church). We Must Do the Lord's Work in the Lord's Way!

## Lesson Two Discussion

1. All perversions of the NT pattern of organization have what common factor?
2. What are some reasons why people think centralization is a good thing? Do these reasons justify centralization?
3. What common idea is present in each of the six steps toward the Papacy?
4. How is the centralized structure of Protestant denominations the same as, and different from, Catholicism?
5. What social reasons are behind the centralized structure of Catholicism and Protestant denominationalism?
6. Give one example of a centralized organizational structure among brethren that is larger than, smaller than, and other than the local church.
7. What social reasons are behind the centralization projects among brethren?
8. Show from the context how each NT proof-text has been twisted to justify centralization.
9. Has God given a pattern for local church organization? If so, is it just as important as other patterns in the NT (for example, the plan of salvation and the plan of worship in the local church)? What happens when this pattern is changed?

# LOCAL CHURCH COOPERATION

## Lesson 3

### I. INTRODUCTION.

#### A. Local Church Cooperation Is An Old Issue.

Alexander Campbell wrote articles about congregational cooperation in the *Millennial Harbinger* in 1835. Tolbert Fanning wrote articles about the same subject in the *Gospel Advocate* in 1855.

#### B. What Is and Is Not the Issue?

1. The issue is not: "May local churches cooperate?" Many local churches in the NT cooperated to get a particular work done. A local church can and must cooperate (if it has the ability) with other local churches.
2. The issue is: "How may local churches cooperate?" Is there a specific pattern for local church cooperation in the NT? Some brethren say "yes", others say "no". If there is no NT pattern for cooperation, then any type of cooperation would be acceptable.

#### C. "Cooperation".

1. "Cooperation" simply means to "operate (act or work) together" to achieve a common goal or purpose.
2. There are two kinds (types) of cooperation: joint cooperation (pooled resources and centralized control; that is, collective action) and concurrent cooperation (working together simultaneously, but independently of each other). Concurrent cooperation is found in the NT, but joint cooperation is not.
3. Failing to see the difference between these two kinds of cooperation has led some to say that concurrent cooperation is not "cooperation" at all, but merely "independent operation". Those brethren who advocate for concurrent cooperation have been labeled "anti-cooperation" by those brethren who advocate for joint cooperation.
4. Proper local church cooperation requires three things: 1) brotherly love; 2) operation (action, work); and 3) a NT pattern. Sometimes the first and second are emphasized to the neglect of the third.

### II. COOPERATION — THE NT PATTERN.

#### A. Local Church Cooperation in Benevolence.

1. Local churches contributed directly to the local churches in need (Ac. 11:27-30; Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9).
2. Note the following facts:
  - a) Both the funds and the messengers to carry the funds, were chosen by the local churches. These "messengers" were individuals (Paul and others), not local

churches and they served only in the capacity of delivering the contribution from the contributing church to the intended recipient (Acts 11:30; 1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:16ff; see also Acts 21:17-18; 24:17-18).

- b) Local churches with "ability" and "abundance" sent to local churches in "want" so there would be "equality" among all (2 Cor. 8:11-15). The local churches in "want" did not create their need and then ask other churches to help, nor did the churches in "want" send to the churches with "abundance".
- c) There was no church (a "sponsoring church") in between the contributing church(es) and the needy church(es).

#### B. Local Church Cooperation in Evangelism.

- 1. Local churches contributed financial support directly to the evangelist (Phil. 4:14-19; see also Ac.17:1-9; 18:5; 2 Cor.11:8-9).
- 2. Note the following facts:
  - a) No local church(es) sent funds to another local church to do evangelism. Funds were sent directly to an evangelist via a messenger (for example, Epaphroditus, Silas, Timothy, etc.).
  - b) There was no church (a "sponsoring church") in between the contributing church(es) and the evangelist.

#### C. Local Church Cooperation in Edification.

- 1. There is no NT example of a local church sending money to another local church for edification.
- 2. However, there are examples in the NT of a local church sending men to another local church to edify the brethren there (Acts 8:14; 11:22; 15:22 – 16:5).

#### D. Conclusion.

The NT pattern of local churches cooperating by sending funds directly to the recipient excludes local churches cooperating by sending funds indirectly to the recipient through a "sponsoring church".

### III. COOPERATION PERVERSIONS.

#### A. Examples of the "Sponsoring Church" Arrangement.

- 1. Some brethren attended "Cooperative Meetings" in the 1830's. Some churches of Christ wanted a "sponsoring church" in Indiana in 1839, but the idea was abandoned and the Indiana State Missionary Society was created instead. Local churches in Texas (around 1867) were holding State Meetings in which the elders of one local church would be chosen to act as a "receiving, managing, and disbursing evangelistic committee". The Texas State Meeting in 1886 was called the "Texas State Christian Missionary Society". In 1910, the elders of the church in Henderson, Tn., proposed that money be sent to them from surrounding churches in order to evangelize

Western Tennessee in the "West Tennessee Cooperative". David Lipscomb opposed the Texas and Tennessee cooperative practices in the pages of the *Gospel Advocate*.

2. Some brethren wanted inter-congregational cooperation without ecclesiastical organization, so the following projects were born: Herald of Truth (1951), elders overseeing foreign churches and schools (1950's), World Wide Bible Study (1962), the Gospel Hour and Campaigns for Christ (1960's), and One Nation Under God (1991).
- B. "Sponsoring Church" Arguments Based Upon Human Reason.
1. "A total situation is scriptural if all the component parts of that situation are scriptural." This was the famous argument made in 1955 by Roy Deaver and Thomas Warren. It was heralded as "absolutely unanswerable and irresistible". Answer: Component parts may be scriptural, but when put together are no longer scriptural. For example, a local church may assemble, a local church may assemble daily, a local church may assemble to partake of the Lord's supper, but can a local church assemble daily to take the Lord's supper?
  2. "A local church, unaided by others, does not have the means to do the work God gave it to do (as per Mk. 16:15)." Answer: No local church has been charged with a "brotherhood work". Ability, plus opportunity, equals responsibility (note "according to ... ability" in Mt. 25:15; Acts 11:29; 2 Cor. 8:11). Responsibility is not determined by what we "assume" as our work. If the Lord had given a work which could not be accomplished by a local church, he would have designed a larger organization to do that work. He did not design an organization larger than the local church.
  3. "One local church may assume the oversight of a work that it cannot perform alone and calling upon other local churches to help." Answer: A local church may "assume" this work, but it has not been assigned this work by the Lord.
  4. "The sponsoring church arrangement is simply an expedient, a method. It is a good work. It is 'the best way to do it'." Answer: Before something can be "expedient" or a "good work", it must first be authorized either generically or specifically. The "method" is not the issue, the organizational arrangement (structure) is the issue.
  5. "There is no exclusive pattern of church cooperation taught in the Bible." Answer: The pattern is stated above under II.A and II.B and it is a specific pattern, not generic. The type of cooperation (concurrent) is specified and is the same for benevolence, evangelism, and edification (see II. A., II.B., and II.C.). It is assumed by "sponsoring church" advocates that since there are many examples of cooperation (some for benevolence, some for evangelism, and some for edification) that there is no pattern at all. It is assumed that a "pattern" means "only one way of doing a thing." Is there a "pattern" for salvation? Yes, but there are different things done by the alien sinner vs. the erring Christian.
  6. "Why may local churches send to local churches for physical needs (benevolence), but not for spiritual needs (evangelism)? Are physical needs more important than



spiritual needs?" Answer: We follow one pattern for benevolence and one pattern for evangelism because that is the way it is set forth in the NT.

7. "Church A may invite churches B and C to cooperate with church A. If churches B and C voluntarily accept this invitation, no autonomy has been violated and no independence has been lost." Answer: Oversight of funds has been lost whether you volunteer to give it up or you are forced. This issue is not voluntary "transfer of funds", but oversight of funds. The arrangement is still unscriptural even if churches volunteer to take part in it. Consider the example of parents raising children. Is it ok for parents to let other people raise their children as long as the parents voluntarily consent to others raising their children? No.
8. "The 'sponsoring church' is nothing more than a local church at work." Answer: No, the money received is coming from brethren who are not members of that local church. Both the "sponsoring church(es)" and the "contributing church(es)" claim that it is their own work. How can that be? Whose work is it?
9. "We believe in cooperation, but some brethren are just anti-cooperation." Answer: We believe whole-heartedly in cooperation. However, we also believe that the right type of cooperation must be done according to the NT pattern. Are those opposed to adulterous marriages, anti-marriage? Are those opposed to instrumental music, anti-music? Are those opposed to "faith only" salvation, anti-faith? Etc.

#### C. Arguments Based Upon Perverted Passages.

1. "The church at Antioch sent funds to the elders at Jerusalem who in turn distributed the funds to the churches of Judea (Acts 11:29-30)." Answer: This is an assumption without proof. The funds were sent directly to those in need in Judea. The funds were sent where the need existed; sent directly to the elders; therefore, sent directly to the elders in need in Judea.
2. "The 'messengers of the churches' mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8:16ff functioned in the same way as a 'sponsoring church' does today." Answer: This is an assumption without proof. Look at the details of what these messengers did (transport funds) and what sponsoring church elders do (oversee funds) and you will see that there is no parallel at all. It must be noted that the same passage was used by J.W. Briney in 1908 to justify the Missionary Society. Now which is it, the "sponsoring church" or the Missionary Society? Many brethren who support sponsoring churches, oppose the Missionary Society. Why?
3. "Other churches (2 Cor. 11:8-9) sent funds to Philippi (Phil. 4:15-16) who in turn sent it to Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5)." Answer: This is an assumption without proof. It cannot be proved that Philippians 4:15-16 refers to a contribution to Paul after he left Thessalonica. It cannot be proved that Philippians 4:15-16 and 2 Corinthians 11:8-9 refer to the same event or the same contribution. It cannot be proved that "giving and receiving" (Phil. 4:15b) refers to Philippi "receiving" funds from churches and then "giving" them to Paul while he was at Corinth.

D. "Sponsoring Church" Problems.

1. It involves a perversion of the elders' office, function, and authority (see Lesson 1).
2. It violates the autonomy, equality, and the all-sufficiency of local churches (see Lesson 1).
3. It activates (in an unscriptural manner) local churches through a single, centralized agency (see Lesson 2) and it is not according to the NT pattern of local church cooperation.
4. It assumes a "responsibility" ("brotherhood project") that a local church does not have.
5. It makes the elders of a local church the same thing as a board of directors of a "Missionary Society" (one group of men making decisions concerning the money sent to them from various churches). As much as "sponsoring church" brethren don't like it, it is true that the sponsoring church and the missionary society are the same in principle.

**IV CONCLUSION.**

- A. Local Churches Today Can Cooperate Without Centralization (a "Sponsoring Church").
- B. Concurrent Local Church Cooperation According to the NT Pattern Is: 1) Scriptural, 2) Effective, 3) A Safe-Guard Against Apostasy Through Centralization, and, 4) Genuine Cooperation.
- C. Local Churches Must Not Ignore the "How" of Cooperation, Nor the Urgency of Cooperation. Some Brethren Today Remember the Urgency, But Ignore the "How". Let Us All Do God's Work, In God's Way!

### Lesson Three Discussion

1. What is, and is not, the issue over local church cooperation?
2. What two kinds (types) of cooperation are there, and which kind (type) is found in the NT?
3. The cooperation among local churches in the NT in the areas of benevolence, evangelism, and edification have what factor in common?
4. What is the "sponsoring church" arrangement and what kind (type) of cooperation is it?
5. What NT passages have been used to justify the "sponsoring church"-type of cooperation and how are these passages perverted?
6. What problems are caused by the "sponsoring church"-type of cooperation?
7. How can local churches do God's work in God's way?

# KEEPING THE PURITY OF LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION

## Lesson 4

### I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Every Christian and Every Local Assembly (Church) of Christians Must Guard the Purity of the Local Church Organization Found in the NT Pattern.
- B. How Can We Keep the Purity of Local Church Organization?

### II. EACH LOCAL CHURCH MUST...

- A. Follow the NT Pattern of Organization.
  - 1. There is a pattern for local church organization and this pattern must be followed. All NT patterns are important (2 Tim. 1:13; Heb. 8:5).
  - 2. The NT pattern of organization is this: each local church is orderly, autonomous, equal, and all-sufficient under the spiritual guidance of elders (review Lesson 1 III.B.).
  - 3. Many brethren have not studied and maintained the NT pattern of organization and thus have not kept the purity of local church organization.
- B. Understand Its Own Work.
  - 1. Understand that...
    - a) The "universal church" is a "brotherhood" (1 Pet. 2:17), not a "church-hood" made up of all local churches (review Lesson 1 II.B). It is not the work of one local church to bind all other local churches together.
    - b) There is no hierarchy of churches or hierarchy of men within churches (review Lesson 2 II. and III.). It is not the work of one local church to promote an inter-congregational (between, among) or intra-congregational (within, inside) structure with other local churches. It is also important to understand the social attitudes which led to these man-made structures (review Lesson 2 II.C. and III.G.).
    - c) The responsibility of a local church is not to do "a brotherhood work" (review Lesson 3 III. B. 1. b and c). It is not the work of the local church to assume a "brotherhood work" that it cannot perform alone.
    - d) When it is necessary for a local church to "cooperate", concurrent cooperation is cooperation, it is scriptural, and effective (review Lesson 3.1.C.). It is not work of the local church to engage in joint cooperation or collective action with other local churches; that is, pooling the resources of various local churches under the centralized control and oversight of one church (eldership) in order to cooperate together.
  - 2. Many religious people, and well-meaning brethren, have not understood the basic NT principles which keep local church organization pure.

C. Plan and Do Its Own Work.

1. Plan its own work.

- a) Each local church must exercise vision in planning its own work of evangelism, edification, and benevolence. It is best if this is done under the supervision of elders.
- b) Many local churches function simply to help execute the plans of other churches. In many cases, the work of many local churches is outlined and overseen by the elders of another church or a board of directors of an institution. There is no example of anything like this in the New Testament.

2. Do its own work.

- a) Each local church is all-sufficient to do its own work and it must do it. Local churches in NT times planned and executed their own work (review Lesson 1 III. B. 4.), and we can do it today. It is best if this is done under the supervision of elders.
- b) Many local churches would rather send funds to other churches or institutions and let them in turn do their work for them (review Lesson 3 III. B. 1.).

3. Many local churches have not planned or executed their own work and this has hindered them from keeping the purity of local church organization.

D. Make Its Own Decisions in Matters of Expediency.

1. Each local church has been given some generic authority in the work, worship, and organization of the local church. When local churches are faced with such generic authority, each local church, and the local church alone, must decide the expediencies.
2. Examples expediencies: assemble on the first day of the week (Heb. 10:25; Ac. 20:7) — time? place?; sing (Eph. 5:19) — how many songs? song books?; benevolence (1 Tim. 5:16) — place? personnel? provisions?; etc.
3. Many local churches violate the autonomy of other local churches by making decisions for them and thereby do not keep the purity of local church organization. Some churches of Christ in one country will actually oversee the detailed affairs of other churches in other countries. For example, local churches in the United States have been known to own church buildings and church supplies among brethren overseas and decide how it's all to be used.

E. Control Its Own Resources.

1. Each local church must make the decisions about the use of its money from the treasury (1 Cor. 16:1-2). How much will we spend? What will we spend it on? Who will get it? When will they get it? Why will they get it? Where will it go?
2. When local churches turn their funds over to another church, the control of those funds is lost (review Lesson 3). In the NT, we find a transfer of funds directly to the

recipient, but there was no loss of control because each local church controlled its own funds before it reached the recipient.

3. Many local churches have lost control of their own resources by turning those resources over to “sponsoring churches” who in turn make decisions about that money. They have not kept the purity of local church organization.
- F. Do the Work Assigned by God to a Local Church, Not the Work Assigned to the Individual Christian.
1. There is a distinction between Christians assembled together in a "local church" and individual Christians. Examples: Mt. 18:15-17; Ac. 4:36-5:4; and 1 Tim. 5:8, 16. Failing to understand or maintain the difference between the work of the local church and the work of the individual Christian, has led many local churches to engage in all kinds of social and recreational works (the “social gospel”). These local churches often spend more time doing the work of the individual than the work of the local church.
  2. Here are a few works assigned to the individual Christian, but not to the local church: eating together (Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 11:34); benevolence to all (Jas. 1:27; Gal. 6:10); work at a business (1 Thess. 4:11); marry and raise children (Eph. 5:22-6:4); and, support government (Rom. 13:1-7). The local church is "burdened" (1 Tim. 5:16) when it does the work assigned to the individual Christian.
  3. Many local churches assume that they should do what *every* Christian should do and thereby have perverted the work of the local church as well as the purity of the local church organization. Some churches of Christ build and maintain schools and colleges, fellowship halls, orphan homes, hospitals, youth camps, ball teams, recreational facilities, benevolent shelters, and publishing companies, all of which can be good works for the individual, but are not the assigned work of the local church.

### III. CONCLUSION.

- A. Every Generation of Christians Must Take Care to Keep the Purity of NT Organization.
- B. There Is a Danger of Inheriting a Perverted Organizational Pattern from Previous Generations and Accepting It As the NT Pattern.
- C. May Each Christian Find His Place in Each Local Church. Get in Your Place, Stay in It, and Work Hard There!

## Lesson Four Discussion

1. What is the best way to follow the NT pattern of local church organization?
2. List the four misunderstandings religious people have which have led them to pervert the NT pattern of local church organization.
3. Write the name of a NT city where a local church planned and executed its own work without working through another church or institution. Include the scripture reference. Use examples other than the example of Antioch. Give an example in the area of benevolence, evangelism, and edification.
4. What is "generic authority" and what is an "expediency"? May one local church make decisions for another local church?
5. In the NT, we have examples of local churches making a \_\_\_\_\_ of funds to other churches, but we do not find them turning over the \_\_\_\_\_ of funds to other churches.
6. T or F — A local church may do whatever a Christian may do. Prove your answer from the scriptures.
7. What is the most important thing a local church can do to keep the purity of local church organization found in the NT?

# A LEADERSHIP CRISIS

## Lesson 5

### I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. God Wants His People to Follow Leaders.
  - 1. Examples in the OT: Moses (Ex. 32:34) and Joshua (Num. 27:17).
  - 2. Examples in the NT: Jesus (Jn. 10:3) and Paul (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9; 2 Tim. 3:9).
- B. There Is a Leadership Crisis Among the Lord's People.
  - 1. It is popular today for "management systems" to replace individual leadership.
  - 2. "Take me to your leader." "Follow the leader." Where will we go? Do we have one?
  - 3. The growth and success of a local church is dependent upon its leadership, not the size of its treasury, membership, or building facilities.
  - 4. The leadership principles outlined in this lesson can apply to the general individual leadership qualities needed in both men and women to live their life as a Christian. However, when it comes to leadership in the local church, we understand from the NT, that particular leadership role is given to men (preachers, elders, deacons).
- C. What Can We Do About It?
  - 1. First, we can ask "Why be a leader?"
  - 2. Second, we can ask "Where do we get leaders?"
  - 3. Third, we can ask, "Why is there a decline in leadership?"
  - 4. Fourth, we can ask, "What happens when leaders are strong?"
- D. A large portion of the material in this lesson was adapted from information found in *Christian Leadership Handbook* by J.J. Turner (Howard Publishing Co., 1991).

### II. WHY BE A LEADER?

- A. Some Negative Reasons.
  - 1. There are some bad reasons why a man should want to lead. The following scriptures contain examples of leaders with bad motives: Rom. 2:17-24; 2 Cor. 10:12-18; 11:13-20; Gal. 6:12-13; Phil. 2:15-17; Col. 2:8, 16-23; 2 Thess. 2:3-10; 1 Tim. 1:3-7; 4:1-3; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 3:1-9; Tit. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 2; 3 Jn. 9-10; Jude 4, 8-13, 18-19; Rev. 2:20-23.
  - 2. A person should not want to lead because...
    - a) He wants to give orders.
    - b) He wants to be a dictator.
    - c) He was merely needed to fill a job or position.



- d) He wants personal gain.
- e) He wants to satisfy his ego.
- f) He feels he controls a major portion of the contribution.
- g) He feels pressured by others.
- h) He has selfish motives.
- i) He feels insecure about his own salvation.
- j) He wants to lead, but he is not prepared to lead.

B. Some Positive Reasons.

1. There are some good reasons why a person should want to lead. Jesus presents the good motives for leadership in Matthew 9:36-38, Luke 10:2, and John 4:35-38.
2. A person should want to lead because...
  - a) God wants and expects good leaders.
  - b) God's cause needs good leaders.
  - c) God's work cannot be left to chance.
  - d) God's time for good leaders is now.

**III. WHERE DO WE GET LEADERS?**

- A. Men Who Respond to a Need (Ex. 3:1ff; Isa. 6:1-6).
- B. Men Who Respond to Duty (Mt. 25:14-30).
- C. Men Who Respond to Training (2 Tim. 2:2).
  1. A good training program must reach all of the members.
  2. A good training program must reach each group in its own session, on its own level, and with its own needs and objectives.
  3. A good training program must not be left to chance.

**IV. WHY IS THERE A DECLINE IN LEADERSHIP (1 COR. 15:58; GAL. 6:9)?**

- A. The Path of Least Resistance.
- B. A "Hum-Drum" Routine.
- C. A Lack of Training to Finish the Job.
- D. Too Many Responsibilities.
- E. A Loss of Interest or Laziness Regarding Leadership Training.
- F. Personality Problems Among Leaders.
- G. Communication Gaps Between Leaders and Followers.
- H. Failure to Add New Leaders to the Existing Leadership.

- I. Lack of Appreciation for Leadership Training.
- J. Entrance of Sin into the Leadership.
- K. Discouragement.
- L. Thinking the Challenge Has Already Been Met.
- M. Thinking That an Individual Will Become a Leader Naturally Without Any Formal Training.

#### **V. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LEADERS ARE STRONG?**

- A. The Flock Will (Jn. 10:1-18, 27-29) ...
  - 1. Follow.
  - 2. Be united.
  - 3. Be fed, nourished, and spiritually-minded.
  - 4. Be busy working (Eph. 4:11-12).
  - 5. Be orderly, autonomous, and all-sufficient.
  - 6. Be prayerful and knowledgeable in God's word.
- B. The World Will (Mt. 5:16; Jn. 13:35; 17:21-23; 1 Pet. 2:12) ...
  - 1. Be impressed.
  - 2. Be evangelized.

#### **VI. CONCLUSION.**

- A. We Will Get More Leaders When...
  - 1. We understand why we need to be good leaders.
  - 2. We train more persons to be leaders.
  - 3. We understand why leaders have failed in the past and prevent it from happening again in the future.
  - 4. We desire the benefits of strong leaders.
- B. What Will You Do to Help Solve the Leadership Crisis?

## Lesson Five Discussion

1. God wants his people to follow \_\_\_\_\_. Give some Biblical examples in both testaments.
2. Why is good leadership important in the local church?
3. Take the passages listed under II.A.1. and summarize the bad motives for leadership found in each one.
4. What are some good motives for leadership found in the words of Jesus in Matthew 9:36-38, Luke 10:2, and John 4:35-38?
5. When men respond to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ there will be good leaders in the local church.
6. What common factor is found in 1 Corinthians 15:58 and Galatians 6:9 that will prevent a decline in leadership?
7. What benefits will the local church and the world have from strong leaders?
8. What will you do to help solve our leadership crisis? This is not merely a "thought" question. Write down a specific goal that you will set and reach to help achieve a strong leadership in the local church of which you are a member.

# LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS

## Lesson 6

### I. INTRODUCTION.

#### A. Leadership Is Not an Easy Task.

Demanding times demand strong leaders. The church of tomorrow depends upon great leaders today. Leadership training right now is essential.

#### B. What Does It Mean To Be a Leader?

We don't want a leader to be confused about who or what he is. We don't want a leader to be appointed to a work and then say, "I have a job, but I don't know what to do with it."

#### C. A large portion of the material in this lesson was adapted from information found in *Christian Leadership Handbook* by J.J. Turner (Howard Publishing Co., 1991).

### II. WHO IS A LEADER? SOMEONE WITH...

#### A. The Right Awareness.

- 1) A leader is a human being, not a superhuman.
- 2) A leader is made, not born.

#### B. The Right Attitude.

- 1) A desire to lead.
- 2) A faithful Christian with a true love for Christ, the local church, and its work.
- 3) A willingness to sacrifice. Leadership is demanding work, it requires going "the second mile", it requires learning and developing new skills, and it requires being teachable.
- 4) A courage and conviction which has no fear.
- 5) A self-control which shows a good example.
- 6) An integrity which leads to credibility and believability.
- 7) A set of doctrinal values true to God's word.

#### C. The Right Responsibilities.

- 1) Doing work yourself, delegating duties, and asking others to help.
- 2) Cooperating with everyone, listening to others, and building strong personal relationships.
- 3) Making decisions, setting goals, and reaching those goals. Good leaders don't necessarily "micro-manage" the work of others, but neither are they unaware of what is going on. Good leaders don't just make assignments. They follow-up and make sure those assignments are actually being completed in a timely fashion.

4) Working alone at times.

D. The Right Place.

1) Out in front. Good leaders are not merely reactionary, waiting for their followers to act first. They act before others do.

2) On the move.

3) On the move in the right direction. They have the right biblical purpose, mission, and vision for the local church. All good leaders are first good followers of God's word (Ex. 13:21-22; Josh. 3:3; Jn. 21:15-19, 22; Phil. 3:13-14).

E. The Right Position.

1) A sitting position — learning from God (Lk. 10:39).

2) A kneeling position — praying to God (Dan. 6:10; Lk. 22:41; Acts 20:36).

3) A standing position — fighting for God (Eph. 6:13).

F. The Right Qualities.

There are many right qualities of a good leader. We will discuss "leadership qualities" in our next lesson.

### III. WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF LEADERSHIP?

A. Service.

Leaders function to provide service to others (Mt. 20:25-28).

B. Example.

Leaders function to provide the proper example for others (Heb. 13:7) — "follow me" (Mt. 8:22; 9:9; 16:24; 19:21; etc.), or be "imitators of me" (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:7,9; etc.).

C. Nurture.

Leaders function to provide spiritual parenting — feeding, caring, sharing, ministering, encouraging, comforting, urging, and mentoring (1 Thess. 2:7,11), for those who are "babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1; Eph. 4:14; 1 Pet. 2:2).

D. Equip.

Leaders function to provide training to equip God's people for the work of service (Eph. 4:11-16).

### IV. WHAT ARE THE AREAS OF LEADERSHIP?

A. There Is Much Work To Do.

What can I do? In a local church, there are many needs to be met, many places to serve, and many talents to be used (Rom. 12:3-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-31; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 4:7-11). Every Christian has a service to perform. In a sense, we all have a "leadership" role to

fulfill. We all are "leaders". A basic definition of "leadership" is to "show the way" by serving or doing. We all influence (show the way to) someone!

**B. Areas of Leadership.**

1. Promotion — evangelizing the community (special efforts to share the gospel, advertising the special events, etc.).
2. Education — the teaching program within the local church (sermon planning, preacher selection, teacher selection, curriculum planning, teaching supplies, etc.).
3. Exhortation — encouraging members to remain faithful (visitation programs, home Bible studies, new convert classes, defending the truth against error, etc.).
4. Administration — planning and organizing the details of the local church work and worship (work schedules, worship planning, finances, building and grounds maintenance, benevolence care, etc.).

**V. HOW CAN LEADERS HOLD BACK THE LOCAL CHURCH?**

- A. Failure to Act or to Work — "I'm still thinking about leading others" (Jas. 2:26).
- B. Fear — "I just don't think I can be a leader" (2 Tim. 1:7).
- C. Negative Attitudes — "Leadership won't work and I don't get along with others very well" (Num. 13:30-33).
- D. Ignorance — "I don't know how to lead" (Hos. 4:6).
- E. Lack of Goals — "I don't have any plans to lead right now" (1 K. 18:21).
- F. Content with the Status Quo — "Things are fine the way they are without leaders" (2 Pet. 3:4).
- G. Failure to Communicate — "I don't plan to say anything about leading" (2 K. 7:9).
- H. Procrastination — "Let's wait until later to lead" (Ac. 24:25).
- I. No Spirit of a Servant — "I want to be over everyone else, not lead them" (Mt. 20:26-28).
- J. Little Commitment to God or Fellow-Man — "I'm too busy with my own life right now to be a leader" (Lk. 10:25-37).
- K. No Desire for Improvement — "I'm fine where I'm at without being a leader" (Lk. 13:6-7).

**VI. WHY ARE SOME LEADERS NOT FOLLOWED?**

**A. Two Leadership Tests.**

1. Does the leader actually get things done?
2. Do the people actually follow the leader in a willing way?

**B. Poor Leadership Styles.**

1. The do-nothing leader — followers desire to get something accomplished, but they don't get any help from the leader.

2. The research leader — followers get tired of hearing about the problem and the leader does nothing to solve it.
3. The popular-opinion leader — followers like him, but don't respect him.
4. The ostrich-buried-head leader — followers have to search to find their leader.
5. The autocratic leader — followers don't like a selfish, self-centered person.
6. The manipulator leader — followers don't like getting used and abused.
7. The fighting leader — followers don't trust him because he doesn't trust anyone.
8. The instinct leader — followers are unsure about following mere feelings and emotions all the time, they want sound reason and biblical principles as well.
9. The closed-minded leader — followers dislike being forced to do something (judgments, expedients) only one way and all the time.
10. The follower leader — followers want to be led straight ahead, not in circles.
11. The reactionary leader — followers want a leader to act and take the lead, not simply react to what others are already doing.

## **VII. CONCLUSION.**

- A. Before You Can Lead...
  1. You must know who and what you are as a leader.
  2. You must know what your job of leading is and when to do it.
  3. You must know who you are leading and how to best do it.
  4. You must know where you are leading others and why.
- B. Local Churches Need Leaders Who Lead People Closer to God, Not Leaders Who Hinder the Local Church, or Leaders Who Are Not Followed At All.

## Lesson Six Discussion

1. List some situations that we have today in our nation and in our local churches which demand strong leaders
2. Summarize what it means to be a leader.
3. All good leaders are first good followers. Examine these passages and write down the leader and who they followed: Ex. 13:21-22; Josh. 3:3; Jn. 21:15-19, 22; and Phil. 3:13-14.
4. What are the four functions of leadership in the local church? Give specific examples of each one.
5. Is there work in the local church for everyone to do, or is that work to be placed into the hands of the leaders only?
6. What are the four areas of leadership in the local church? Give specific examples of each one.
7. List some ways in which a leader can hold back the local church.
8. What are two good tests of leadership?
9. List some reasons why some leaders are not followed.
10. What must you know before you can be a good leader?



# LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

## Lesson 7

### I. INTRODUCTION.

#### A. God Does Not Want Just Any Leaders, But Leaders with Certain Qualifications.

What qualifications were given to Israel's judges (Ex. 18:21-22)? What qualifications were given to Joshua (Josh. 1:6-9)? What qualifications were given to Israel's kings (Deut. 17:14-20; 1 Chron. 28-29)? What qualifications were given to the Jerusalem church servants (Ac. 6:3)?

#### B. Qualifications - From Man or From God?

We are not interested in man's qualifications - attractive outward appearance, eloquent speaker, influential, wealthy, well-educated. etc. God's qualifications are what counts - the qualifications found in the Bible.

#### C. A large portion of material in this lesson was adapted from information found in two good books, *Be A Leader People Will Follow* by David Hocking (Regal Books, 1979) and *Christian Leadership Handbook* by J.J. Turner (Howard Publishing, 1991).

### II. LEADERSHIP QUALITIES.

#### A. Ability.

1. Key question: Am I capable of leading other people?
2. Principles: Leaders lead by God-given ability. We do not all have the same "talent" (Mt. 25:14ff) and we do not all have the same "gifts" (Rom. 12:4-8; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). We must identify our ability ("talent" or "gift"), improve it, and use it. Are you elder, deacon, evangelist, teacher, or minister (servant) "material"?

#### B. Strength.

1. Key question: Do I have the inner, spiritual strength it takes to lead others?
2. Principles: Leaders lead by the power of the inner man – the positive, spiritual attitude of faith, prayer, Bible study, self-discipline, and fearlessness (Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16).

#### C. Motivation.

1. Key question: Why do I want to lead people and what is my motivation for doing so?
2. Principles: All leaders have motives.
  - a) *Wrong motives* - pride (Mk. 10:35-45); money (1 Tim. 6:5b-10); fame (Prov. 27:2); personal needs such as self-pity or physical affection (Phil. 2:4-8); "have-to-do-it" obligation; competition (2 Cor. 10:12-18); etc.

b) *Right motives* - desire to win the lost to Christ (1 Cor. 9:19-22); desire to build up others (Col. 1:28-29; review Lesson 7 III.); desire to gain a heavenly reward (Mt. 6: 19-21); desire for the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14); desire to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31); etc. You must be able to motivate yourself first, before you can motivate (lead) others.

#### D. Authority.

1. Key question: Will people respond to my leadership?
2. Principles: Leaders act by authority. Yet, it is natural to resist authority. There are a number of factors in society that cause resistance to authority (lack of discipline, lack of teaching moral absolutes or teaching principles of authority, failure of those in authority to be good examples, etc.). In addition, there are organizational factors that cause resistance to authority (no job descriptions, no response from leadership, no explanations, showing partiality, demanding extra work without asking, no appreciation, etc.). Where does our authority come from? It does not come from self, education, the majority, or an office and title. It comes from Christ through his word (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18-19; 1 Tim. 4:11; 5:7; Tit. 2:15; Heb. 13:7, 17).

#### E. Strategy.

1. Key question: Do I know where I am leading people?
2. Principles: Leaders must know where they are going and how to get there. Good leaders always have a good strategy in mind. A good strategy is composed of five things (from specific to general) - *goals, priorities, planning, objectives, and guidelines*. Leaders need a strategy because without one, members don't know what to do, why to do it, or how to do it. Without a strategy members lose interest, they don't know how to evaluate themselves, they lack commitment, they do the wrong things, or they will easily give up in a crisis. Every local church should be a purpose-driven church and every member of the local church should have a strategy to fulfill the five-fold purpose that God desires: *worship and service* (found in the Great Commandment, Mt. 22:34-40); and, *evangelism, fellowship, and edification* (found in the Great Commission, Mt. 28:16-20).

#### F. Love.

1. Key Question: Do I truly care for the people around me that I am leading?
2. Principles: Leaders must love the people they are trying to lead (this is *agape* love; sacrificial and serving love; see Jn. 3:16; 13:34; 15:13,17; 1 Jn. 2:10; 3:1, 10-24; 4:7 - 5:3). Many leaders cannot love their followers because they are too busy, have too many demands, they are too impatient, they are too insecure about their position, they are too sensitive about what others say, or they are too afraid of close relationships. Leadership without love is empty and worthless (1 Cor. 13:1-7). When the love of God (Rom. 5:5) and the love of Christ (Eph. 3:19) abides in our hearts, then and only then, can we go out and love others and lead them properly.

#### G. Example.

1. Key Question: Can people look to me for leadership?
2. Principles: Leaders are out front leading by example (Mt. 3:14; Heb. 13:7). Therefore, a leader's example must be without reproach. Look at the qualifications for elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-10; Tit.1: 6-9). These men must meet certain qualifications because they will be setting examples in the area of marriage, family, dealing with others, and personal habits. Most of these qualifications are to be found in the lives of all Christians, not just the elders and deacons!

#### H. Communication.

1. Key question: Do the people I am leading clearly understand what I am saying and do I listen to the people I am leading?
2. Principles: Leaders lead with good communication – both speaking (Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 2:1, 15) and listening (Mt. 13:9; Mk. 4:24; Lk. 8:18; Jas. 1:19; Prov. 1:5; 18:13). Good communication skills involve both speaking and listening. For those interested in improving their public speaking skills and listening skills there are a number of good resources available to help you. The art of persuasion and "salesmanship" also involves communication. There are also good resources to help with these qualities.

#### I. Personal Relations.

1. Key question: Can I handle various situations, good and bad, involving the people I am leading?
2. Principles: Leaders must have good personal relations with others. Jesus was a "people person". He dealt with all kinds of people in various situations. All good leaders will eventually have to face three basic trying situations - *problems, criticism, and negativism*. Can you solve typical local church problems with common-sense, practical solutions or Biblical solutions (2 Tim. 3:16-17)? Can you handle both constructive and destructive criticism with a Christ-like attitude (1 Pet. 2:23; Mt. 5:44; Jas. 4:11; 5:9)? Can you stand firm when you are surrounded by negativism (Num. 13:25 - 14:10)? If so, then you would make a good leader. If not, then you should not lead.

### III. CONCLUSION.

- A. Leadership Is Serious Business, So God Requires His Leaders to Have Leadership Qualities.
- B. Which Leadership Qualities Do You Now Have and Which Do You Need to Improve Upon?

## Lesson Seven Discussion

1. What kind of situation will you have if a leader is not qualified to lead?
2. Using the scripture references in the lesson, list the leadership qualities that God required of the following persons: Israel's judges, Joshua, Israel's kings, and the Jerusalem church servants.
3. What are the qualities necessary to be a good leader?
4. What does Matthew 25:14ff teach us about ability, opportunity, and responsibility?
5. What kind of "inner man" must a leader have?
6. What two persons must be motivated before there can be leadership success?
7. Where does a leader get his authority?
8. What is the five-fold purpose of the local church and what leadership quality is necessary to achieve it?
9. Explain what love is, and is not, using 1 Corinthians 13:1-7.
10. Why is the "example" quality of leadership so important?
11. Communicating involves \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
All good leaders will eventually have to face \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_.
12. List one leadership quality that you plan to improve upon. What specific steps will you take to improve it?

# A LOCAL CHURCH WITHOUT ELDERS

## Lesson 8

### I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Sheep Without Shepherds In A Local Church Is Not A Good Arrangement (Mt. 9:36).
- B. There Is An Urgent Need for Elders in the Local Church. We Have an Elder Shortage and A Leadership Crisis in the Lord's Church Today.

### II. NO ELDERS IN A LOCAL CHURCH -- SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

- A. Is This Local Church Organized?
  - 1. Different organizational relationships may exist in a local church.
    - a) Unscripturally organized — a local church which is organized contrary the NT pattern of local church organization (see Lessons 1, 2, and 3), or a local church which appoints unqualified men to serve as elders.
    - b) Unscripturally unorganized — a local church which has qualified men to serve as elders whom they refuse or neglect to appoint as elders.
    - c) Scripturally organized — a local church with qualified men appointed and serving as elders (Phil. 1:1).
    - d) Scripturally unorganized — a local church which desires to have elders, but cannot appoint them because they have no qualified men to fill this role at the present time (Acts 14:21-23; Tit. 1:5).
  - 2. How long may a local church remain scripturally unorganized? The NT does not give an exact time, but it does give examples involving a few months or a few years (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:21f; 20:17; compare Phil. 1:1 with Acts 16).
  - 3. Be careful with the time frame and the appointment of elders. Pressure to ordain elders too quickly can turn a scripturally unorganized local church into an unscripturally organized local church! On the other hand, delaying to appoint qualified men can turn a scripturally unorganized local church into an unscripturally unorganized local church!
- B. Is This Local Church Lacking?
  - 1. A local church without elders should not be content with its present condition.
  - 2. First, a local church without elders needs to be "set in order" (Tit. 1:5). The Greek word *epidiorthoo* translated "order" means "to set straight again". Second, a local church without elders is "lacking" or "wanting" (Tit. 1:5). The Greek word *leipo* used here means "to be left behind; to lack; destitute" (see Lk. 18:22; Jas. 1:4-5; 2:15; Tit. 1:5; 3:13 for its uses).

### C. Why Does A Local Church Not Have Elders?

1. There are men who are not elders, but they are qualified and they want to be appointed as elders as soon as possible. Many men are also working now to be elders one day. This is the ideal situation!
2. There are men who are not interested in becoming qualified to be elders. Many men are not interested in the hard work, planning, self-discipline, and time it takes to become qualified to be an elder. With the exception of a few elder qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, every mature Christian should meet these qualifications!
3. There are men who are not interested in sacrificing or serving as an elder. Many men meet the qualifications, but do not want to sacrifice their time and energy to serve a local church in the role of an elder. They do not "seek" and "desire" this role (1 Tim. 3:1). They do not want to be "God's steward" (Tit. 1:7).
4. There are men who made mistakes early in life which now disqualifies them from being an elder. Many men are converted too late in life to have the right family, the right marriage, or the right personal characteristics necessary to be an elder.
5. There are men who do not want elders. Many men do not want to give up what control they have in a business meeting (or elsewhere) and so they block the appointment of elders. They do not want to lose their control over the local church. Actually, these men want to be in the role of an "unofficial" elder without appointing elders.
6. There are men who cannot come to an agreement on the qualifications of elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Many church members have nit-picked the qualifications to death so much so that no one (in their mind) can be qualified to be an elder.
7. There are men who believe that democratic rule is better than an eldership. Many men do not accept the wisdom of God pertaining to local church organization.

### D. How May A Local Church Make Decisions?

1. An unauthorized solution - congregational meetings (all members including women).
  - a) This method of decision-making was advanced by Vance E. Trefethen in his book, *Confusion or Consensus* (New Horizon Books, 1993).
  - b) Vance E. Trefethen's position has been answered in written debate by Tom Roberts in *Guardian of Truth* (Aug. 18 and Nov. 17, 1994).
2. An expedient solution - men's business meetings.
  - a) The men's business meeting is an "expedient". This "expedient" is authorized generically by all the NT passages that (1) speak of the work of the local church; and, (2) speak of male members in the position of authority. Women, of course, can and should give their input to the men who in turn can take it to the men's business meeting for consideration.

- b) The men's business meeting should operate under the following general guidelines:
    - (1) When there is a difference of business, it is the Lord's "business" that is important, not man's "business".
    - (2) When there is a difference of opinion, there should be consensus, not "majority vote".
    - (3) When there is a difference of experience or knowledge, there should be deference given to older wisdom, not youthful inexperience.
  - c) The business meeting is an expedient and should be considered temporary. It is not to be a permanent substitute for elders.
3. An authorized solution - elders making decisions as they take input from the members (the preacher, the deacons, the teachers, all the members, both men and women, etc.). Elders delegating work to various members.

### **III. CONCLUSION.**

- A. Not All Local Churches Without Elders are Sinful And Not All Local Churches Without Elders Are Sinless. Each Local Church Must Honestly Evaluate Themselves.
- B. The Longer A Local Church Remains Without Elders The Greater the Danger For Disorganization. Local Churches Without Elders Should Not Be the Ideal or Norm.
- C. What Can Be Done About A Lack of Elders and Leadership in a Local Church? Teach, Train, and Talk About the Eldership Constantly and Earnestly.

## Lesson Eight Discussion

1. What is the current condition of local churches with regard to elders? Do we have many churches with elderships or few?
2. What four organizational conditions may exist in a local church and which one best describes your congregation?
3. According to Titus 1:5, what is the condition of a local church without elders?
4. What are some reasons why local churches do not have elders? Are any of them good reasons?
5. How may a local church make congregational decisions in an authorized way in the absence of elders?
6. What can a local church do to appoint elders?



**THE ELDERSHIP**  
**(Restoring A Biblical Eldership in the Local Church)**  
**Lesson 9**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

A. Why Study the Eldership? We Study...

1. To accurately explain what the eldership is. What Biblical terms describe the eldership? What was the original purpose, function, and duties of the eldership in the NT?
2. To restore the Biblical eldership to its rightful place in the Lord's church. Can the NT eldership be restored today? Many changes in the eldership have been made over the centuries. Some want to abandon the eldership all together. What is the Biblical structure and style of the eldership?
3. To challenge false traditions. Church tradition has often obscured the true meaning and function of the eldership. What does the Bible say about the function of the eldership? What words are used to describe the eldership?
4. To revitalize present elders and to raise up new elders. Present elders need to be challenged to have greater vision and commitment in their work. Men who are not elders need to see their responsibility to lead and serve for the future protection and growth of the local church.
5. To teach the local church their obligations to their elders. What important responsibilities do we have toward our spiritual leaders? What relationship do the local church members have with the eldership?

B. A large portion of material in this lesson was adapted from information found in *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch (Lewis & Roth Publishers, 1986).

**II. THE ELDERSHIP — GOD'S GIFT TO THE LOCAL CHURCH.**

A. The Importance of the Eldership.

1. First, the eldership in the organization of the local church is important because not just any organizational structure will do.
2. Second, the eldership is important because God has provided explicit instructions concerning the Eldership. The following NT passages address the role of the eldership: Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4; 20:17,28; 21:18; Eph. 4:11-12; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:2; 4:14; 5:17,19; Tit. 1:5,7; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; Jas. 5:14; and 1 Pet. 5:1-2.
3. Third, the eldership is important because the spiritual maturity of Christian men is at stake. Men who do not view the eldership as important will not mature as they ought, they will not take on this yoke of responsibility, and they will not enter into this spiritual battle.

B. Ten Distinctive Features of the Biblical Eldership:

1. Humble service.
2. Male leadership.
3. Terms (elder, bishop, pastor) used interchangeably.
4. Shared oversight.
5. Function (work), not just a figurehead.
6. Non-clergy-laity structure.
7. Elders with authority.
8. Scriptural qualifications.
9. Congregational submission, support, and cooperation.
10. Two or more men selected and appointed.

C. A Defense of the Eldership.

1. Many in the religious community, including some brethren, have abandoned the place of the eldership in local church organization. For example, Charles Holt in his papers *The Sentinel of Truth* (1960's) and *The Examiner* (1980's) tried to eliminate the Biblical concept of the eldership among our brethren. The following arguments made to support the no-elder theory all fall short of the truth: "Elders are just older men"; "There is no such 'office' as elders"; "There is no authority of elders over the local church"; "There is no need for elders today"; "No one can qualify for the eldership today"; "We do not know how to appoint elders today"; "We do not have anyone today to appoint elders"; "There is some work that elders cannot do today"; "The H.S. does not make elders today"; and, "Some NT churches did not have elders, so we do not need them today".
2. It is clear from apostolic practice and teaching in the NT that there is a place for the eldership in the local church. The eldership is a select group of older men appointed to oversee and shepherd the local church (see the NT passages listed above, II.A.2). The eldership is the most *appropriate* structure for governing the local church because the local church is a "family" of brothers and sisters in Christ. The eldership is the most *effective* form of oversight in the local church because God's wisdom is displayed in the eldership and we cannot improve on God's wisdom. The eldership is God's gift to the local church.

### III. THE ELDERSHIP — HUMBLE SERVANTS.

A. Elders Are Humble Servants.

1. Worldly concepts of power, rule, authority, and hierarchy will corrupt and destroy the eldership and the rest of God's people.
2. Elders are to be humble servants. Study these passages about humility carefully: Prov. 6:16-17; Mt. 5:3; 11:29; 18:4; 20:25-28; 23:1-12; Mk. 9:33-35; 10:42-44;

Lk. 22:24-27; Jn. 13:3-17; Phil. 2:3-8; and Jas. 4:6. Note especially Acts 20:19, 35, 1 Timothy 3:6, and 1 Peter 5:5 in the context of instructions to elders.

#### B. Authority and Humble Service.

1. Humble service does not imply that elders have no authority at all. Jesus is *regulating* authority in Matthew 20:25-28, not *removing* it. He is denouncing an authoritarian hierarchy, not authority per se. A certain kind of authority is excluded in this passage, not all authority.
2. Elders have authority, but they are not authoritarian (authoritarian = submission that cannot be justified by truth or morality; using power in an unprincipled way to maintain a position; controlling personal liberties; demanding agreement with self, not with the truth; unreasonable control; etc.). The authority of elders will be studied more in detail in a subsequent lesson.
3. Jesus (Mt. 7:28-29; 11:29-30) and Paul (2 Cor. 1:23-2:4; 10:8; 11:29; 12:1ff, 21; 13:8-10) are good examples of authority tempered with humble service.

### IV. THE ELDERSHIP — LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S ELDERS.

#### A. Israel's Elders.

1. Older men appointed to be the spiritual counselors and leaders of Israel were called "the elders" (Heb. *zachen*). They are found about 110 times in OT scripture, from the exodus (Ex. 3:16), to the restoration after Babylonian captivity (Ezra 10:14).
2. Some specific duties of Israel's elders are mentioned in the following verses: Ex. 18:21-22; 19:7; 24:10; Lev. 4:13-15; Num. 11:15-17; Deut. 1:13-18; 19:12; 21:2-4,6,19-20; 22:13ff; 25:79; 29:10; 31:9-13; Josh. 20:4; 23:1ff; 24:1ff, and 2 Sam. 5:3.

#### B. What Can We Learn from Israel's Elders for a Study of New Testament Elders? Israel's Elders Were:

1. Filling an important role in spiritual leadership.
2. A distinct governing body of men with certain religious functions, not merely older men.
3. A collective body, not one individual.
4. A part of an appropriate and effective form of organization for Israel.
5. A self-governing body of men able to perpetuate itself under all conditions.
6. Honored and respected by the people for their wisdom, authority, and leadership.
7. A group of men, not women.
8. Given specific roles or duties to perform as Israel's protectors, governors, administrators, and leaders. They were not mere figureheads.
9. Judged for their failure to lead God's people properly (Ezek. 34).

**V. CONCLUSION.**

We Cannot Depart from the Biblical Eldership and Produce Anything Better. Let Us Do All That We Can to Promote the Biblical Eldership in the Local Church. It is God's Gift to the Local Church!

## Lesson Nine Discussion

1. Why study the eldership?
2. What are some reasons why the eldership is so important to the local church?
3. What are some distinctive features of the biblical eldership that are often not found in many churches today?
4. How would you defend the biblical eldership against those who say we don't have or need elders in the local church today?
5. What can destroy a good eldership in a short amount of time?
6. What two-fold attitude must an elder have while he is a member of the eldership?
7. What is Jesus teaching about in Matthew 20:25-28?
8. Can you list two duties that "the elders" of Israel had that are basically the same as the duties of NT elders?
9. What principles found in "the elders" of Israel provide a good background for a study of the NT eldership?
10. What are some ways that the local church can promote or prevent the restoration of the biblical eldership?

**THE ELDERSHIP**  
**(Biblical Terms and the Function of the Eldership)**  
**Lesson 10**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

- A. A Clear Understanding of the Eldership Begins with the Greek Words Used to Describe These Men.
- B. Bible Terms Tell Us Something About Elder's Work, Role, or Function.

**II. BIBLICAL TERMS.**

*Note: The Greek and English word studies here are based on the King James Version. Other versions should be consulted which have slightly different words in the scriptures listed. The scriptures cited are limited to those which refer to local church leaders (the eldership).*

A. Elder.

- 1. Greek word: *presbuteros* = "an older person".
- 2. English translations.
  - a) Elders (*presbuteros*) = "an older man" (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Tim. 5:17,19; Tit. 1:5; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1).
  - b) Presbytery (*presbuterion*) = "eldership" (1 Tim. 4:14).
- 3. The Greek noun *presbuterion* is similar to the noun *presbuteros* and it means "eldership" (1 Tim. 4:14). The idea of oversight is not inherent in the word "elder". A person may be an "elder" (older) person, but not an "elder" of the local church. The exact age of an "elder" in the local church is not stated in Scripture. The primary meaning of "elder" is "an older person", but clearly there is a special sense in which it is used in the NT to mean a local church leader. The "elders" of the local church are a special group of men who meet certain qualifications. An "elder" is not just someone with experience. He must also be appointed to do the work of an elder (Acts 14:23) after he has been found to be qualified to do that work (1 Tim. 3:1ff; Tit. 1:5ff). The elder, as an elder, displays wisdom and experience as he watches over the local church.

B. Bishop.

- 1. Greek word: *episcopos* = literally, over (*epi*) and to look or watch (*scopos*); "oversee".
- 2. English translations.
  - a) Overseers (*episcopos*) = "overseers" (Acts 20:28).
  - b) Bishop(s) (*episcopos*) = "overseers" (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7).
- 3. "Overseer" and "bishop" are taken from the same Greek word and mean the same thing. The English word "bishop" is an Anglo-Saxon word (*biscop, bisceop*) and is a

corruption of the Greek word *episcopos*. The Greek verb *episcopeo* is similar to the noun *episcopos* and it means "taking the oversight" (1 Pet. 5:2; not in some mss). Elders take the "oversight" of the local church (1 Pet. 5:2). The Greek noun *episkopee* is also similar to the noun *episcopos* and it means "overseership" (1 Tim. 3:1). Elders have the function of "overseership". There is no Greek word representing "office" in 1 Timothy 3:1. "Overseership" is "a good work," not just an "office". The elder, as an overseer, looks over, watches over, and superintends the affairs of the local church.

#### C. Pastor.

1. Greek word: *poimeen* = "a shepherd, one who feeds, tends and herds a flock".
2. English translations.
  - a) Pastors (*poimeen*) = "shepherds" (Eph. 4:11).
  - b) Feed (*poimaino*) = "shepherd" (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
3. "Pastor" comes from the Latin (*pastoralls*), meaning "shepherd". The Greek verb *poimaino* is similar to the noun *poimeen* and it means "to feed, tend, or herd sheep". Elders "pastor" or "shepherd" the flock (church) of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). Jesus told Peter to "feed my sheep" (Jn. 21:16) and Peter did that when he became an "elder" (1 Pet. 5:1). The Greek word for "flock" (*poimion*; Acts 20:28-29; 1 Pet. 5:2-3) is also similar to the noun *poimeen*. The shepherd (*poimeen*) shepherds (*poimaino*) the sheep (*poimion*). The elder, as a pastor, spiritually feeds and nourishes the members of the local church.

#### D. Three Other Greek/English Words.

1. *Oikonomos* = lit. house (*oikos*) and allot (*nemō*); a "steward" (Tit. 1:7; see "charge" in 1 Pet.5:3). Elders are stewards of the local church.
2. *Didaskalos* = "teachers" (Eph. 4:11; see 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Tit. 1:9; Heb.13:7). The Greek construction in Ephesians 4:11 places "pastors" together with "teacher"; that is, "pastors who are teachers" (the word "some" is in front of "pastors", but not "teachers"). Elders are teachers in the local church.
3. *Typoi* = examples (1 Pet. 5:3). Elders are examples for the local church.

### III. OBSERVATIONS ON THE BIBLICAL TERMS ELDER, BISHOP, AND PASTOR.

#### A. A Summary.

1. If you study the following NT passages you will have a complete picture of the general role of the eldership: Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4; 20:17, 28; 21:18; Eph. 4:11-12; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; 4:14; 5:17, 19; Tit. 1:5, 7; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; Jas. 5:14; and 1 Pet. 5:1-2.
2. There are more words that must be studied in order to have a complete understanding of the function of the eldership. These words will be examined in our next lesson.

**B. Used Interchangeably, Not Exclusively.**

1. Paul called for the "elders" (*presbuteros*) of the church. These same men the Holy Spirit had made "overseers" or "bishops" (*episcopos*) and they were "to feed" (*poimaino*) the church (Acts 20:17, 28). Peter exhorted the "elders" (*presbuteros*) to "tend" (*poimaino*) the flock of God by exercising the "oversight" (*episcopeo*) (1 Pet. 5:1-2). Paul wanted Titus to appoint men as "elders" (*prebuteros*) which he later called "bishops" (*episcopos*) (Tit. 1:5, 7).
2. "Elder," "bishop" and "pastor" all refer to the same person. A preacher should not be called "pastor" and a religious leader who is over a group of churches should not be called "bishop" as is commonly done in religious denominations.

**C. Used in Plurality.**

Each time these Greek words are used for local church leaders they are found in the plural, never in the singular. There is to be a plurality of "elders", "bishops", or "pastors" over a local church, not one elder, one bishop, or one pastor.

**D. Key Principles and Implied Functions.**

1. Key Principle.
  - a) Elder — mature spiritual wisdom which comes by advanced age and experience.
  - b) Bishop — a watchful position over the local church, managing the local church.
  - c) Pastor — feeding (teaching), protecting, and guiding the local church.
2. Implied Function.
  - a) Elder — a decision-making function.
  - b) Bishop — an administrating / superintending function.
  - c) Pastor — a counseling / teaching Function.
  - d) The three-fold functions of the eldership will be studied in more detail in the next lesson.

**IV. CONCLUSION.**

- A. The Eldership is Not Just an Office, Title, or Position.
- B. The Eldership Has a Threefold Function (Work): Decision-Making, Superintending, and Teaching.
- C. The Eldership is an Awesome Responsibility Not to Be Taken Lightly.



## Lesson Ten Discussion

1. What is the basic definition of each of Greek word and what English words are used to translate them:

*Presbuteros* –

*Episcopos* –

*Poimeen* –

2. In addition to being called "elders", "bishops", and "pastors", the men of the eldership are also called \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. T or F — "Elder", "bishop", and "pastor" refer to different functions.
4. T or F — "Elder", "bishop", and "pastor" refer to different persons.
5. T or F — The NT speaks of one "elder", "bishop", or "pastor" over the local church.
6. T or F — A member can be "elder" (older) without being an "elder" over the local church.
7. T or F — "Overseer" and "bishop" mean two different things.
8. T or F — Peter was an apostle, but not an elder.
9. Write out the key principle that is behind each word:
 

"elder" -

"bishop" -

"pastor" -
10. In Acts 11:30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4; and 21:18 we read of elders in the church at \_\_\_\_\_, and in Acts 20:17, elders in the church at \_\_\_\_\_.

11. How, using Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5, would you demonstrate that an "elder" (older) man is not automatically an "elder" over the local church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What one English word in Ephesians 4:11 would indicate that "pastors and teachers" refer to the same person? What three passages show that elders are to be teachers?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. Did Philippi have elders (Phil. 1:1)? How about Galatia (1 Pet. 1:1; 5:1)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. Is the "presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14) different from the eldership?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. A list of qualifications for elders is found in what two NT passages?

**THE ELDERSHIP**  
**(The Duties of Elders)**  
**Lesson 11**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

- A. Often the Qualifications of the Eldership Are Studied, But Eldership Duties Are Neglected.
- B. What Are the Duties of the Eldership?
  1. An elder is often appointed to fill a "position", but he does not know what work he is to do. What is the "good work" that he seeks (1 Tim. 3:1)? What are "their work's sake" for which he is esteemed (1 Thess. 5:13)?
  2. The duties (works, functions) of the eldership are found in the NT, not in the minds of men.
  3. No man who does not understand and accept the work of elders should be placed into the eldership.

**II. GENERAL DUTIES OF THE ELDERSHIP.**

- A. Elder — a Decision-Making Duty.
- B. Bishop — an Administrating / Superintending Duty.
- C. Pastor — a Counseling / Teaching Duty.

**III. SPECIFIC DUTIES OF THE ELDERSHIP.**

*Note: The scripture quotations listed below are taken from the King James Version. Other versions should be compared for different wording.*

- A. Duties Toward God.
  1. *"as the steward of God"* (Tit.1:7; see also "church of God", 1 Tim. 3:5; and "flock of God" and "God's heritage", 1 Pet. 5:2-3).
  2. *"they that must give account"*, (Heb. 13:17).
  3. Summary: Elders have been entrusted by God with the care of God's house and one day they will have to give an account to God for how they have managed God's house (1 Cor. 4:2).
- B. Duties Toward Self.
  1. *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves... "*, (Acts 20:28).
  2. *"I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up..."*, (Acts 20:32).
  3. *"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught..."*, (Tit. 1:9).

4. *"not by constraint, but willingly..."*, (1 Pet. 5:2).
5. *"not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind..."*, (1 Pet. 5:2).
6. *"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock..."*, (1 Pet. 5:3).
7. Summary: The elders' first duty is to pay attention to what God wants and then to pay attention to themselves. With humility, they should examine themselves to see if they are faithful (2 Cor. 13:5). They cannot help others get their lives right until they first straighten out their own lives (Mt. 7:1-5; Gal. 6:1-2). The elders have a personal duty to strengthen and build themselves up by a regular study of God's word. They cannot build others up if they themselves are not strong. Elders must always hold on to God's word and never let it go. Elders also have the personal duty to watch their own attitude and actions while they serve. They must never serve by compulsion, personal gain, or tyranny. They should serve voluntarily, eagerly, and by example. They must always set the right example for the flock in word and deed because the local church will be following their example (Heb. 13:7, 17).

#### C. Duties Toward the Local Church.

1. *"and sent it to the elders..."*, (Acts 11:30); *"And the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter"*, (Acts 15:6); *"that were ordained of the apostles and elders..."* (Acts 16:4); *"and all the elders were present"*, (Acts 21:18).
2. *"Take heed therefore ... to all the flock..."*, (Acts 20:28).
3. *"over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers..."*, (Acts 20:28; see also *"taking the oversight"*, 1 Pet. 5:2; and *"bishops"*, Phil. 1:1).
4. *"to feed the church of God..."*, (Acts 20:28; see also *"feed the flock of God"*, 1 Pet. 1:2).
5. *"Therefore watch, and remember..."*, (Acts 20:31).
6. *"how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak..."*, (Acts 20:35).
7. *"Pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints..."*, (Eph. 4:11-12).
8. *"them which labor among you..."*, (1 Thess. 5:12; see also *"they who labor in the word and doctrine"*, 1 Tim. 5:17).
9. *"over you in the Lord..."*, (1 Thess. 5:12; see also *"elders that rule well"*, 1 Tim. 5:17).
10. *"admonish you"*, (1 Thess. 5:12).
11. *"take care of the church of God"*, (1 Tim. 3:5).
12. *"the laying on of the hands of the presbytery"*, (1 Tim. 4:14).
13. *"to exhort and to convince the gainsayers"*, (Tit. 1:9).
14. *"Whose mouths must be stopped..."*, (Tit. 1:11).
15. *"Rebuke them sharply..."*, (Tit. 1:13).

16. *"them which have the rule over you..."*, (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24).

17. *"they watch for your souls..."*, (Heb. 13:17).

18. *"let them pray over him..."*, (Jas. 5:14).

19. Summary.

- a) Elders as elders - elders, who are older men with wisdom and experience, have the duty of making decisions in the area of expediencies (the details of the work and worship of the local church), or solving problems among members.
- b) Elders as bishops - elders have the duty to oversee, superintend, or administer the affairs of a local church to see that its work gets done properly. Elders have a duty to work hard within the local church, be it spiritual or physical work. Elders have a duty to "rule over" the local church through leadership. The question of the elders' authority will be discussed in the next lesson.
- c) Elders as pastors - elders have a duty to watch over the flock and tend to their needs. Elders have the duty of feeding the local church (public and private teaching, 1 Tim. 3:2). By feeding, elders will equip (train) the saints to do the work of service. Elders should seek all members that they can, train all that they seek, and use all that they train. Elders have a duty to individual members who need support (1 Thess. 5:14-15), admonition (encouragement or warning), care, initiation (that is, "laying on of hands"), prayers, or discipline (2 Thess. 3:6). Elders also have the duty of guarding the local church against sin and error. They must be vigilant and alert to any danger that would hurt the flock and they must stop all false teaching entering into or inside the local church. Elders should look to the shepherding examples in the Bible to learn what is (Psa. 23; Jn. 10) and is not (Jer. 23; Ezek. 34) the right way to shepherd.

#### IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. The Eldership is Not Just an Office, Title, or Position. The Elders Have Serious Duties Toward God, Toward Themselves, and Toward the Local Church.
- B. The Eldership is an Awesome Responsibility Not to Be Taken Lightly. The Eldership Will Be Greatly Rewarded for Its Great Work (1 Pet. 5:4).

## Lesson Eleven Discussion

1. Which is more important, understanding the qualifications for elders, or understanding the duties of elders?
2. What duty does the eldership have toward God?
3. What duty does the eldership have toward themselves, toward the word of God, and toward their attitudes?
4. The example of the Jerusalem church elders (Acts 11, 15, 21) is an example of elders performing what duty?
5. List the five duties of elders found in Acts 20:28-35.
6. Pastors are \_\_\_\_\_, according to Ephesians 4:11.
7. List the three duties of elders found in 1 Thessalonians 5:12.
8. What are some ways in which an eldership can "*take care of the church of God*" (1 Tim. 3:5)?
9. Using Genesis 48:13-14, Deuteronomy 34:9, Numbers 8:10, Leviticus 16:21, and Acts 13:3 as background references, what does this phrase mean: "*the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*" (1 Tim. 4:14)?
10. According to Titus 1:9-16, what duty does the eldership have toward false teachers?
11. Elders who have the \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_ watch for your \_\_\_\_\_ (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24).
12. If a member of the local church is sick, he or she should call for the \_\_\_\_\_ so that they can \_\_\_\_\_.

THE ELDERSHIP  
(Some Questions About the Eldership)  
Lesson 12

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

- A. Many Questions Have Been Asked by Brethren Concerning the Eldership. Our Attitudes About the Eldership (Reflected in These Questions) Affect Our Interpretation of the Scriptures Relating to the Eldership.
- B. We Must Always Seek Biblical Answers to Our Questions.

**II. QUESTIONS.**

- A. "Is it right to speak of 'the authority of elders' over the local church?"
  - 1. Argument: The two Greek words used for the "rule" of elders (*proistemi* — 1 Thess. 5:12 and 1 Tim. 5:17; and *hegeomai* — Heb. 13:7, 17, 24) do not mean "rule by authority", but "lead by example". The argument is that elders can lead by example and influence only. They do not have the right to enforce any decision of theirs. The Greek words for "authority" (*exousia, exousiazo, dunastes, epitage, huperochē, authenteo*) are never used of the elders' work. Elders who exercise authority are "lording it over" the flock (1 Pet. 5:3).
  - 2. Answers.
    - a) Yes, elders lead by example and influence, but so do all the members of the local church. Can all older members who meet the qualifications of elders function as elders?
    - b) Yes, some elders do abuse their authority and become power-hungry, dictatorial, obstinate, high-handed, over-bearing, or tyrannical elders. But, we should not rob elders of their authority because some elders abuse their function. 1 Peter 5:2-3 does not cancel out the authority of elders as some have thought.
    - c) Elders do have authority. Their authority is by virtue of:
      - (1) *Their function*. How can they make wise decisions (elder), oversee (bishop), or shepherd (pastor) the flock without some kind of authority? (Review Lesson 12 for the specific duties of elders.)
      - (2) *Their responsibility (stewardship)*. How can they manage God's house without some kind of authority?
    - d) Elders do not have unlimited authority. Their authority is limited by:
      - (1) *The right source of authority*. Their authority comes from Christ (Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:21), not from themselves, the congregation, or the preacher. Elders do not represent "the highest authority in the church" as some have said.

- (2) *The right kind of authority.* They cannot *make* laws (Jas.4:12). They cannot bind (prohibit) where Christ has not bound and they cannot loose (allow) where Christ has not loosed (Mt. 16:19). Elders do not *make* authority; they exercise and enforce the authority of Christ. They do this by "holding fast the faithful word" (Tit. 1:9).
- (3) *The right attitude toward authority.* They cannot "lord it over" the church in matters of opinion (1 Pet. 5:3). Some elders do "lord it over" the church because of ignorance, fear, immaturity, or loving to have the pre-eminence.
- (4) *The right scope of authority.* They cannot rule over the other elders within the eldership, nor can they rule over any Christian outside the local church of which they are a member (Ac. 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). They can, however, rule over Christian members in and out of the assembly, and over spiritual and physical matters. In addition to these limitations, God put two safeguards in place to keep an elder from becoming domineering. First, a plurality of elders. Second, two negative qualifications: "not self-willed" (Tit. 1:7) and "not contentious" (1 Tim. 3:3). The details of a local church "obeying" and "submitting" (Heb. 13:17) to its elders will be discussed in another lesson.

B. "Is the eldership an 'office'?" "Are elders church 'officers'?"

1. Argument: Elders do not have authority because they do not hold an "office".
2. Answers: a) There is no Greek word for "office" in 1 Timothy 3:1 or Acts 1:20. One Greek word (*episcopoe*) is found there and it means "overseership". b) Our English word "office" can mean three things: (1) a service, function, or duty performed; (2) a position or rank; or (3) a room or building. "Office" can rightly be used of the eldership with the first meaning only.

C. "What is the length of an elder's tenure?"

1. Argument — Two Extremes: Once an elder, always an elder. Or, elders for a specific number of years and then "re-election" or "reorganization".
2. Answers: a) An elder can be an elder for as long as he is qualified and for as long as he properly performs his duties. A disqualified elder, or elder who does not perform his duties, should voluntarily resign before being asked or told to do so. b) An elder is not above sin or rebuke (1 Tim. 5:19-22; 1 Tim.3:6). An elder who refuses to repent must be disciplined as any unruly member must be disciplined. Elders are not immune to disciplinary action.

D. "Can one man serve as an elder?"

1. Argument: If two elders are serving and one dies or moves away, that does not disqualify the other one from serving.
2. Answers: a) The death or moving away of one elder does not "disqualify" the other elder in the sense of being qualified according to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The remaining elder is still "qualified", but he is not authorized to serve alone. b) God



says that there must be a plurality of elders in a local church (there is a command, Tit. 1:5; an approved example, Acts 14:23; and a necessary inference, 1 Pet. 5:1-3).

E. "Can a preacher serve as an elder?"

1. Argument: A preacher may not serve as an elder.
2. Answers: a) This means that a man cannot serve as an elder *because* he is a preacher. The Scriptures do not teach such an idea. b) Peter was a preacher and an elder (1 Pet. 5:1).

F. "Can a local church with elders also have a paid preacher?"

1. Argument: If the local church has a paid preacher, he would be doing some of the same work that the elders were appointed to do.
2. Answers: a) How long did Paul remain with each local church after he ordained elders (Ac. 14:23)? And how long did Titus stay in Crete after he appointed elders there (Tit. 1:5)? b) Both Paul (Ac. 20:17ff, esp. v.31) and Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3) labored with the local church at Ephesus while they had elders.

G. "What about the qualifications of an elder?"

1. Arguments: "No man can qualify today"; or, "No man is perfect" (arguments that are usually made by people who don't want elders). "Appoint the best we have"; "The qualifications are flexible"; "Grow into the qualifications"; "Only one qualification — blameless"; "Elders combined together meet all the qualifications;" or, "If he does the work of an elder, he is an elder" (arguments that are usually made by people who want elders at any cost).
2. Answers: a) First, the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul wasted a lot of time and ink if no one today can qualify to be an elder. Second, let us not require more of a man (sinless perfection) than God does. b) Each man "must" (1 Tim. 3:2) meet all the qualifications laid down in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, no more, no less. And, all these qualifications must be found in a man "first" (1 Tim. 3:10), before he is appointed as an elder.

**III. CONCLUSION:** All Questions About the Eldership Must Be Answered by God's Word, Not Man's Wisdom.

## Lesson Twelve Discussion

1. T or F — Our questions and attitudes about the eldership may affect our interpretation of the Scriptures relating to the eldership.
2. Do elders have any authority at all? If not, why? If so, what kind?
3. What are some limits that God has placed on the rule of elders?
4. Give some examples of how an eldership might "lord it over" the flock (1 Pet. 5:3).
5. Is there any sense in which the word "office" can be used to describe the eldership?
6. The length of an elder's tenure is determined by what two factors?
7. Can one qualified man serve alone as an elder? Why? Can a preacher serve as an elder? Why?
8. The church at \_\_\_\_\_ had a paid preacher and elders together at the same time.
9. Underline the correct choice: (Each of, Some of) of the men seeking to be elders (do not have to, must) meet (all, some) of the qualifications laid down in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. These qualifications are to be found in (each of, some of) the men (after, before) they have been appointed to serve.

**THE ELDERSHIP**  
**(God's Wisdom in the Eldership)**  
**Lesson 13**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

A. The Passages Below Show a Complete Picture of God's Wisdom Displayed in the Eldership.

1. Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4; 20:17-38; 21:17-26; Eph. 4:11-16; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:14; 5:17-25; Tit. 1:5-16; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; Jas. 5:13-15; 1 Pet. 5:1-4.
2. Not all of these passages will be discussed in this lesson. The following passages will be discussed in other lessons: the elders' qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:6-9); the elders' relationships within the local church (1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17-25; Heb.13:7, 17, 24; Jas. 5:13-15; 1 Pet. 5:1-4); and, the elder's selection and ordination (Ac. 14:23; Tit. 1:5).

B. What Can We Learn from God's Wisdom Displayed in the Eldership?

**II. GOD'S WISDOM IN THE ELDERSHIP.**

A. God Wants Wise Decisions (Acts 11:30: 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23: 16:4: 21:17-26).

1. We first read about the Jerusalem elders (along with other elders in Judea) in Acts 11:30 where they are receiving the money for the needy saints among them. We see God's wisdom here displayed in two ways: first, the elders would have the wisdom necessary to make the important decisions concerning the money (who gets what, when, how, etc.); and, second, the elders were involved in the practical, physical care of the brethren. They would have the compassionate hearts necessary to fulfill this task.
2. The next time we read about the Jerusalem elders is in Acts 15. Here, they are hearing about the unlawful work of the Judaizing teachers (v. 2, 4, 6) and then passing judgment on doctrinal issues (v. 22-23; 16:4). Again, we see God's wisdom here displayed in two ways: first, the elders would be able to stop the problem where it got started (v. 24); and, second, the elders, because they were men of the Word (Tit. 1:9), could hear and judge doctrinal matters and stop the spread of false teaching through their wise decisions (v. 28; 21:25; "ordained" in 16:4 comes from the Greek *krino*, meaning "decide" or "judge").
3. The last time we read about the Jerusalem elders is in Acts 21. God's wisdom in their decision-making ability is seen again (v. 23a). These elders are "caught in the middle" between Paul's practices on one side and the Jewish Christians' beliefs on the other side. However, they are able, through a wise decision, to encourage Paul and others to practice an OT law that would not conflict with the law of Christ and help mend any division that may exist in the local church.

B. God Wants the Flock Protected (Acts 20:17-38).

1. The Ephesian elders were to guard themselves. God's wisdom in this instruction is seen in that elders are also vulnerable to dangerous attacks.
2. God knows that sheep sometimes stray and are weak, immature, unstable, and defenseless, so he instructed the elders to protect all of the flock. This flock is of great value because it is "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Elders must never forget the great value of the flock they are shepherding. God knows that "grievous wolves" (false teachers) will come. They are everywhere (within and without the local church) and their power is great. In their subtlety, they bring perversion, confusion, destruction, and spiritual death.
3. God also knows how easy it is for a person to become less alert, weary, unconcerned, and selfish, so he charges the elders to be alert and wide awake for these wolves. They must put forth the necessary time, thought, energy, and work necessary to be alert, coupled with prayer and Bible study.
4. Elders, being human, also need building up as they experience troubles and problems. God knows this so he wants elders to look to him and to his word for help in everything. Paul was leaving these elders, but God and his word would remain with them. Dependence upon God and His word is vitally important for elders. Only strong elders can properly defend the flock from wolves. A weak eldership will lead to a weak local church.
5. Elders face a special temptation to be greedy, especially if they are supported financially by the local church (1 Tim. 3:3; 5:17-18). God demands that elders work hard to supply the physical needs of themselves and the weak (Eph. 4:28) and do more giving than receiving. This would be a good antidote against covetousness.

C. God Wants the Saints Taught and Trained (Eph. 4:11-16).

1. Those Christians with less knowledge, experience, and training can be equipped by elders to serve better with help from those who are more knowledgeable, experienced, and trained. God's wisdom provided for a plan to train saints in a local church. He sent Christ to give "gifts" (men who could train others) to the local. Elders (along with the evangelist) would do this training.
2. Why do members need training? God knows that the membership in a local church can be destroyed through false teaching and laziness. Elders are the men who train the members to be sound in the truth (vv. 13-15) and to be busy working together (v. 16).

D. God Wants Shared Leadership (Phil. 1:1).

1. God's wisdom calls for a plurality of elders in each local church. The practice of placing one man over a church or group of churches, which evolved from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century to the 7<sup>th</sup> century, is contrary to God's wisdom. (Review Lesson 2.) God's plan for a plurality of elders would keep men from stepping out of place in their

relationship with other Christians - a kind of "checks and balances" plan. For example, one elder would not be able to exalt himself to a place of "preeminence" over others (a place reserved for Jesus; Col. 1:18). Elders would not be tempted to fall into the sins of pride, self-elevation, superiority, covetousness, selfish ambition, or dictatorial action. Elders would be able to continue the practice of mutuality, interdependence, brotherly love, humility, and servanthood.

2. We also learn another truth from God's wisdom here. God wants the eldership to be a "team effort". The eldership can share the burden of leading all the flock (Eccl. 4:9-12), they can balance out their strengths and weaknesses (Prov. 11:14; greater temperament, moderation, correction and accountability), and they can provide more opportunities for more capable, dedicated, and spiritually minded men to serve.

E. God Wants Hard-Working Leaders (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

1. God's wisdom calls for hard-working men in the local church. The word "labor" (Gr. *kopiaō*) in verse 12 means "toil resulting in weariness" and "laborious toil". The elders in Thessalonica were engaged in strenuous work. This was not labor for personal employment, but labor "among you" - "church work". A part of their labor included "leading" and "admonishing" (instructing) church members. Elders are not "church board members" who simply get together for a few minutes once a month and talk about church matters. The eldership is supposed to be a hard-working pastoral body.
2. Many men, however, are spiritually lazy, and churches with spiritually lazy men do not grow, nor do these churches ever appoint godly elders. "But how can you expect a man to have a job, raise a family, and then find time to do hard church work?", you say. Many men with jobs and families seem to find time to do many things (remodel homes, yard work, sports, etc.), why not hard church work? God's wisdom calls for elders to have self-sacrifice, self-discipline, perseverance, and hard work for the local church.

F. God Wants Recognition for Special Tasks (1 Tim. 4:14).

1. "Ordination" in the denominational world of churches is very popular. It is an official ceremonial rite conferred on men and women giving them special privileges (priestly function, exclusive ministerial rites, etc.). The Bible nowhere speaks of an "ordination" ceremony.
2. However, God does want men to be set apart and recognized for their special tasks. This was done in OT and NT times by "the laying on of the hands" (Num. 8:10, 14; 27:15-23; Deut. 34:9; Acts 6:6; 13:1-3; 1 Tim. 5:22). Whatever the special task is, "the laying on of the hands" creates a deeper sense of solemn responsibility, accountability, fellowship, and blessing between the parties involved. For this reason, it was not to be done hastily or thoughtlessly (1 Tim. 5:22). God's wants his

people to make a special moment for his special tasks. God's work in the local church is nothing ordinary!

**III. CONCLUSION.** The Eldership is a Display of God's Wisdom. We Should Not Study It Just to Learn Some Facts. We Should Study It to Learn How God's Wisdom Can Be A Blessing to the Local Church.

### Lesson Thirteen Discussion

1. How is a local church helped by elders who are able to make wise decisions?
2. What must members do with the elders' wise decisions?
3. What bad things can happen to the flock and what is God's remedy?
4. What bad things can happen to shepherds and what is God's remedy?
5. What must elders do with a part of their personal finances according to Acts 20:33-35?
6. Who or what did God give the local church to train them for service?
7. Why is membership training important according to Ephesians 4:12-16?
8. Shared leadership can prevent what among the eldership and shared leadership can promote what among the eldership?
9. How can elders be hard working men engaged in church work and at the same time be employed in other work and have time for their family?
10. Does the Bible speak of an "ordination" ceremony in the denominational sense of the word? What does God want done with men entering into special tasks?
11. How should we study the eldership?

**THE ELDERSHIP**  
**(Qualifications Given to Timothy)**  
**Lesson 14**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

- A. The Qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 Can Be Grouped Together: 1) by Positives (must be) and Negatives (must not be); and 2) by Areas of Life (character, reputation, habits, domestic relations, experience, and intellect).
- B. Three "Preliminary" Qualifications:
1. A man (1 Tim. 3:1) — despite the practice of many religions today, a woman may not serve as an elder.
  2. Seek and desire (1 Tim. 3:1) — a man who does not first seek and desire this work will not do a good job at it. "Seek" comes from the Greek *orego*, "to reach after or stretch out after", and "desire" comes from the Greek *epithumeo*, "to set one's heart upon", "to desire earnestly".
  3. First be proved (1 Tim. 3:10) — a man must first be proved. "Proved" comes from the Greek *dokimazo*, "to be tried or tested; to be approved after testing". A man must first be tried and tested to be an elder. He must be seen living the qualifications of an elder and doing the work that elders would be doing. He must be "proved" to see if he is fitting to be an elder.

**II. QUALIFICATIONS GIVEN TO TIMOTHY.**

- A. Blameless.
1. Gr. *anepileptos*, "not to be taken hold of"; hence, "not open to censure", "without or above reproach", "irreproachable", "unimpeachable", see 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:7; 6:14.
  2. An elder, though not sinless, must live above reproach. He must live so that no charge of guilt can be proved against him.
- B. The Husband of One Wife.
1. Gr. *mias gunaikos andra*, "one-woman man," "one wife's husband"; hence, "the husband of one wife", see 1 Tim. 3:12; 5:9 [inverted]; Tit.1:6. "Married only once", found in the NRSV, is an interpretation, not a translation.
  2. An elder must be a faithful husband and married to one woman.
- C. Vigilant.
1. Gr. *neephalios*, "free from the influence of intoxicants", "sober", "temperate", "watchful", "circumspect", see 1 Tim. 3:2,11; Tit. 2:2.
  2. An elder must be clearheaded, attentive, and spiritually alert to himself and others.



## D. Sober.

1. Gr. *sophron*, "of sound mind"; hence, "self-controlled", "sober-minded", "prudent", "sensible", "thoughtful", see 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8; Tit. 2:2, 5.
2. An elder must act with a sound-mind and with self-control, never from uncontrolled or unstable emotions.

## E. Of Good Behavior.

1. Gr. *kosmios*, "orderly", "well-arranged", "modest", "decorum", "dignified", "decent", "respectable", "honorable", see 1 Tim. 2:9; 3:2.
2. An elder must live a well-behaved and well-ordered life, well-arranged by God's word.

## F. Given to Hospitality.

1. Gr. *philoxenos*, "love of, or friend of strangers", "generous to guests", "hospitable", see 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:9.
2. An elder must love to be hospitable to all people in a generous way.

## G. Apt to Teach.

1. Gr. *didaktikos*, "skilled or skillful in teaching" "able to teach", see 1 Tim.3:2; 2 Tim.2:24.
2. An elder must be an able, capable, and qualified teacher.

## H. Not Given to Wine.

1. Gr. *paroinos*, "by or beside wine", "not tarrying at wine", "not sitting long at wine," "addicted to wine", "drunken", see 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7.
2. An elder must not spend time near or beside wine.

## I. No Striker.

1. Gr. *pleektees*, "striker", "ready with blows", "pugnacious", "violent", see 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit.1:7.
2. An elder must not be a violent person who is always ready to start a fight.

## J. Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre.

1. Gr. *aischrokerdees*, "greedy of base (shameful) gain", "fond of dishonest gain", "eager for base gain", see 1 Tim. 3:3 [not in some manuscripts], 8; Tit.1:7.
2. An elder must not make or keep his personal wealth by dishonest means.

## K. Patient.

1. Gr. *epieikees*, "seemly", "fitting"; hence, "equitable", "fair", "moderate", "forbearing", "mild", "yielding", "gentle", "kind", see Phil. 4:5; 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 3:2; Jas. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:18.

2. An elder must always be gentle, not harsh or unpleasant. An elder must be firm in his stand for the truth, but his delivery of the truth must always be with gentleness and kindness.

L. Not a Brawler.

1. Gr. *amachos*, "not fighting", "not combating", "not quarrelling", "not contentious", see 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 3:2.
2. An elder must be peaceable, never fighting physically or verbally.

M. Not Covetous.

1. Gr. *philarguros*, "no lover of money", "not greedy", "not avaricious", see 1 Tim. 3:3; Heb. 13:5.
2. An elder must be generous, never coveting money in a stingy or miserly way.

N. One That Ruleth Well His Own House, Having His Children in Subjection with All Gravity.

1. Gr. *proistemi*, "be at the head (of)", "to stand before", "to be over"; hence, "to lead", see Rom. 12:8; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; 5:17; Tit. 3:8, 14. Gr. *hupotasso*, "to arrange under", "subject", "subordinate"; see a Bible concordance for its many passages. Gr. *semnotees*, "reverence", "dignity", "seriousness", "respectfulness", see 1 Tim. 2:2; 3:4; Tit.2:7.
2. An elder must lead his own children in the right way and his children must be under his control and be respectful to him. Take note of why an elder must rule well his children. Caring for a "family" of God's people (local church) is like caring for your own family.

O. Not a Novice.

1. Gr. *neophutos*, "newly-planted"; hence, "a new or recent convert", see 1 Tim. 3:6.
2. An elder must be a well experienced Christian, not a new convert. Take note of why an elder must not be a new convert. Inexperience can lead to pride and then to sin.

P. A Good Report of Them Which Are Without.

1. Gr. *marturia*, "testimony", "testifying", "witness(ing)", "record"; hence, "report", see a Bible concordance for its many passages. Gr. *exothern*, "those outside"; hence, "unbelievers".
2. An elder must be able to have good things said about him from non-Christians ("them which are without", 1 Cor. 5:12-13; Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12; etc.). Take note of why an elder must have a good report from non-Christians. A bad reputation can lead to more sin.

**III. CONCLUSION.** God Has Set the Standard. The Individual Man Must Fit the Qualifications, Not the Other Way Around. Men Should Begin Now to Qualify Themselves to Serve as Elders in the Lord's Church.

## Lesson Fourteen Discussion

1. Why is a woman not allowed to be an elder?
2. What attitude and action must a man have while he is studying the "qualifications" of an elder?
3. Does "blameless" mean sinless?
4. Do the words "husband of one wife" exclude any men from the eldership?
5. What is the difference in meaning between "vigilance" and "sober"?
6. What does Paul say about an elder's behavior and his hospitality?
7. What basic requirements are necessary for a man to be "apt to teach"?
8. What does "not given to wine" mean?
9. What is the difference in meaning between "no striker" and "no brawler"?
10. What must accompany an elder's firm stand for the truth?

11. What is the difference in meaning between "not greedy of filthy lucre" and "not covetous"?

12. What qualification is given regarding an elder's children and why?

13. What qualification is given regarding an elder's experience (conversion) and why?

14. What qualification is given regarding an elder's reputation from non-Christians and why?

**THE ELDERSHIP**  
**(Qualifications Given to Titus)**  
**Lesson 15**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

- A. Paul Does Not Say Why His Qualifications to Titus Are Different from Those Given to Timothy. The Important Point to Remember is That Both Lists Must Be Studied and Followed
- B. Review Lesson 15 Introductory Remarks. The Same Points Apply Here.

**II. QUALIFICATIONS GIVEN TO TITUS.**

- A. Blameless.
  - 1. Gr. *anenkleetos*, "that which cannot be called into account", "without indictment", see 1 Cor.1:8; Col. 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:10; Tit. 1:6-7.
  - 2. An elder must live in such a way as to have his character and conduct free from accusation.
- B. The Husband of One Wife (see Lesson 15).
- C. Having Faithful Children Not Accused of Riot or Unruly.
  - 1. Gr. *tekna echon pista*, "believing children", see a Bible concordance for its many passages. Gr. *asotia*, "not saved"; hence, "profligacy", "incorrigibility", "abandoned", "dissolute", "ruined", see Eph. 5:18; Tit. 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:4. Gr. *anupotaktos*, "not made subject", "not subject to rule", "insubordinate", "independent"; hence, "undisciplined", "disobedient", "rebellious", see 1 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:6, 10; Heb. 2:8.
  - 2. An elder must have children who are Christians and who are not wild, reckless, unrestrained, or disobedient to their parents.
- D. Not Self-willed.
  - 1. Gr. *authadees*, "self-pleasing", "selfish"; hence, "stubborn", "headstrong", "obstinate in one's own opinion", see Tit. 1:7; 2 Pet. 2:10.
  - 2. An elder must stand firm on the truth of God's word, but he must not be someone who is dominated by self-interest alone and inconsiderate of others. He must not arrogantly assert his own will in matters of judgment or opinion.
- E. Not Soon Angry.
  - 1. Gr. *orgilos*, "angry", "prone to anger", "quick-tempered", see Tit. 1:7.
  - 2. An elder must be calm. He must not be hot-headed, irritable, easily provoked, or aroused to anger.
- F. Not Given to Wine (see Lesson 15).

- G. No Striker (see Lesson 15).
- H. Not Given to Filthy Lucre (see Lesson 15).
- I. A Lover of Hospitality (see Lesson 15).
- J. A Lover of Good Men.
  - 1. Gr. *philagathos*, "loving that which is good", "lover of good", see Tit. 1:8.
  - 2. An elder must love, seek, and appreciate all good things and good people.
- K. Sober (see Lesson 15).
- L. Just.
  - 1. Gr. *dilkaios*, "being right"; hence, "right conduct", "upright", "fair", "equal", see a Bible concordance for its many passages.
  - 2. An elder must live his life in conformity to both divine laws and human laws. In his dealing with others, an elder must treat each person fairly and equally without partiality.
- M. Holy.
  - 1. Gr. *hosios*, "religiously right", "devout", "pious", see Acts 2:27; 13:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:8; Tit. 1:8; Heb. 7:26; Rev. 15:4; 16:5.
  - 2. An elder must be a holy man whose religious attitudes, obligations, and practices are pure and free from unrighteousness or moral pollution.
- N. Temperate.
  - 1. Gr. *enkratees*, "inner strength"; hence, "self-control", "self-mastery", see Tit. 1:8.
  - 2. An elder must always control the various powers (desires and emotions) given to him by God which control his body and keep them from abuse or over indulgence.
- O. Holding Fast the Faithful Word ... That He May Be Able ... To Exhort and To Convince the Gainsayers.
  - 1. Gr. *antecho*, "hold firmly to", "cleave to"; hence, "devoted to", see Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13; 1 Thess. 5:14; Tit. 1:9. Gr. *pistos*, "trustworthy", "reliable." Gr. *dunatos*, "powerful"; hence, "capable" or "able". Gr. *parakaleo*, "to call to a person", "to appeal to"; hence, "to encourage", "to admonish", "to exhort", "to urge". Gr. *elencho*, "bring to light", "expose"; hence, "convict", "confute", "refute". Gr. *antilego*, "to speak against", "contradict someone or something", "to oppose." These Greek words are found many times in the NT. See a Bible concordance for the many passages.
  - 2. An elder must not tolerate any false doctrine, but hold firmly to the word of God and be able to use it in such a way as to exhort and refute anyone who would contradict the word of God with their false teaching. Take note of why elders must exhort and

refute false teachers (vv. 10-16). False teachers will lead astray members of the local church, so elders must be able and ready to stop them from doing that.

### III. GOD'S WISDOM IN THE ELDERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS.

#### A. The Kind of Men That God Wants.

1. God knows that the local church will tend to follow the example of its leaders, so he required that all elders have a high standard of maturity and spiritual character. This standard is found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Since God's kingdom is spiritual, he wants his people to lead in spiritual things. God does not require elders to have worldly education, wealth, social status, or success.
2. The "good work" of an elder (1 Tim. 3:1) demands a man of the highest Christian character. A noble work demands a noble person. God also knows that a man will lead others like he leads himself, his wife, and his family. Note especially the two domestic qualifications of an elder. If a man proves himself true in his marriage and in the training his children, he will be successful in caring for the local church.

#### B. "Qualifications" Discussed in Other Passages.

1. Nowhere does the Bible say that 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are the only passages to consider when selecting elders. All passages relating to elders should be studied (see the Introduction to Lesson 14). There are many practical qualifications implied in these passages.
2. A man seeking and desiring the work of an elder, should first ask himself, "Do I have the time and the ability to do all that is involved in making decisions for this local church (as an elder), overseeing the affairs of this local church (as a bishop), and teaching the members of this local church (as a pastor)?" Review the three functions and the many duties of the eldership discussed in Lessons 10 and 11.

#### C. Training Before Appointment and Improvement After Appointment.

1. Men do not become qualified for the eldership overnight. What can the following persons do to prepare men to become elders one day: parents, preachers, elders, class teachers, wives, and every member (women included)?
2. Do elders need to improve their character and skills after their appointment? If so, how can they do this?

**IV. CONCLUSION.** Not Just Any Man Can Be an Elder. Only Mature and Spiritually Qualified Men Can Be Elders. Not Just Any Standard of Qualifications Will Do. Let Us Demand Nothing More, Nothing Less, or Nothing Other Than God's Standard for Elders.

## Lesson Fifteen Discussion

1. Why do you think the list of qualifications given to Titus is different from the one given to Timothy?
2. Is "blameless" in Titus 1:7 different from "blameless" in 1 Timothy 3:2?
3. What six qualifications are found in both Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3?
4. Is there a difference between Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 in the qualification relating to children?
5. What does "not self-willed" and "not soon angry" mean?
6. The qualification, "a lover of good," would cause an elder to act what way toward the local church?
7. How do the words "just", "holy", and "temperate", relate to an elder's relationship with others, with God, and with self?
8. List the things that an elder must be able to do with the faithful word and sound doctrine.
9. How is God's wisdom displayed in the qualifications for elders?
10. In addition to looking at the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, what other considerations are important for a man seeking to be an elder?
11. What can various Christians do to encourage more men to become elders?



**THE ELDERSHIP**  
**(Relationships Within the Local Church)**  
**Lesson 16**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

- A. The Local Congregation Is a "Teamwork".
1. All the members, not just the eldership, must work hard to keep the right relationships among members that God wants within a local church. A local church will succeed or fail based upon how they keep these relationships.
  2. If a Christian does not want to work within these relationships, he should not choose to be a member of that local church.
- B. What are These Relationships? What Does the Local Church Owe the Eldership? And What Does the Eldership Owe the Local Church?

**II. RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH.**

- A. Eldership - Member Relationship.
1. The members' duties toward the eldership.
    - a) 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.
      - (1) "*Know them*" — Members must "know" (Gr. *oida*) their elders in the sense of having "full knowledge" of them or paying close attention to them, not just a passing acquaintance. Members should fully know the righteous lives and teaching of their elders.
      - (2) "*Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake*" — Members must "esteem" (Gr. *hegeomai*) their elders by always keeping them at the forefront of their mind, not just casually thinking about them. One way to "esteem" elders is to pray for them and compliment them for their good work. Members must look "very highly" (Gr. *huperekperissos*) upon their elders, motivated by "love" (Gr. *agape*) for them. Members should realize how important the work of elders really is and show their appreciation to them for their work.
      - (3) "*Be at peace among yourselves*" — Members must never compromise the truth, but in matters of opinion they must always work to live in "peace" (Gr. *eireneuo*) with the elders.
    - b) 1 Timothy 5:17-25.
      - (1) "*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor*" — Members must honor their elders. When elders "rule well" in teaching the "word and doctrine", they should receive "double honor" (Gr. *diplees timees*) from the members. There is a natural honor (valued, prized) that should come from

members and a special, "double honor" that should come from them when elders labor full-time in teaching. This "double honor" is a reference to wages or financial support (v. 18; 1 Cor. 9:9, 14). An elder may be supported financially when he spends time teaching and preaching in the local church.

- (2) *"Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses"* — Members must protect their elders from evil reports against them. Members should consider as gossip any unfounded accusation against an elder that cannot be verified by witnesses and the Bible. Members should ignore it, silence it, and not repeat it. Members must not give or receive unjust criticism toward the elders.
- (3) *"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear"* — Members must also protect the church and the rest of the eldership from unqualified, sinful leadership. In a case where it can be verified that an elder is guilty of sin, and that elder will not repent, members must "rebuke" (Gr. *elencho*, "convict, refute, reprove") that elder "before all, that others also may fear".

c) Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24.

- (1) *"Remember them"* - Members must "remember" (Gr. *mneemoneuo*) their elders in the sense of calling to mind their actions and contemplating those actions.
- (2) *"Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation"* - Members must "follow" or "imitate" (Gr. *mimeomai*) the godly example of their elders just like a mime would imitate the actions of others.
- (3) *"Obey them"* - Members must "obey" (Gr. *peitho*) the decisions, oversight, and teaching that the elders give because they are persuaded that the elders are practicing the truth.
- (4) *"Submit yourselves"* - Members must "submit" (Gr. *hupeiko*) to the elders, yielding to their authority and not resisting them. Members must trust, cooperate with, and not resent the elders. Take note of why it is important for members to "obey" and "submit" to the elders. It will bring "grief" and it will be "unprofitable" if members do not obey (v. 17). Of course, members are not to "obey" and "submit" to elders if it will lead them into error.
- (5) *"Salute them"* - Members must "salute" (Gr. *aspazomai*) their elders, which includes greeting, welcoming, and embracing them with warm courtesy.

d) James 5:13-15.

- (1) *"Call for the elders"* - Members must use the elders if they need help and they must let them know if they need help. Instead of calling the preacher, it would be better at times to "call for the elders" to get help. This is not an attempt to get the preacher out of work. It is a way of showing the importance of the faithful eldership. Elders are not simply "church board

members" who are out of touch with the needs of the people (Ezek. 34:4). They are caring and compassionate shepherds who are intimately involved with the sheep and they know the needs of the sheep and want to help with those needs.

2. The eldership's duties toward the members.

a) There are three general functions that the eldership must fulfill within the local church (review Lesson 10). There are also many specific duties that the eldership must fulfill toward God, themselves, and the local church (review Lesson 11). Here is a summary of the elders' duties toward the members: love them, serve them, oversee them, feed (teach) them, protect them, support them, train them, work hard for them, admonish them, care for them, exhort and convict them (when in sin), lead them, watch over them, pray for them, involve them, listen to them, deal gently with them, have confidence in them, and take time for them.

b) 1 Peter 5:2-3.

(1) *"Not by constraint, but willingly"* - God is not only concerned with what elders do, but also with how elders do their work. Elders must volunteer for their duty. God knows that an elder who is forced to serve will be unhappy and will not do his work properly.

(2) *"Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind"* - Elders must also serve enthusiastically and avoid serving merely for financial gain.

(3) *"Neither as being lord over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock"* - Lastly, elders must lead by example, never as tyrants or dominating others with their authority. Faithful elders who perform their duties toward the members with the right attitudes will one day be rewarded by Christ, "the chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4).

B. Eldership - Preacher Relationship \*\*

C. Eldership - Deacon Relationship \*\*

D. Elder - Elder Relationship \*\*

\*\* Note: For those interested in a good discussion of these last three relationships, see *Bigger Men for Better Churches* by Cleon Lyles. Except for some of the material in Part 5 ("Elder-Brotherhood Relations"), this is an otherwise good book.

**III. CONCLUSION.** When All the Members Cooperate Together, the Eldership Can Be a Success. The Lord Wants Strong Leaders and Strong Followers in the Local Church.

## Lesson Sixteen Discussion

1. If a local church is to be a successful, what relationship must exist between the elders and the members?
2. What three responsibilities do members have toward the elders in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13?
3. Can an elder receive financial support for his work? If so, under what circumstances?
4. What must members do with accusations that are raised against elders?
5. What must members do with elders who sin?
6. What five responsibilities do members have toward the elders in Hebrews 13:7,17,24?
7. James encourages members who are sick to call for the \_\_\_\_\_ (Jas. 5:13-15). Why? What can they do?
8. How would you summarize the duty of elders toward the members?
9. How would you summarize the proper attitude elders are to have toward the members?
10. Though not covered in this lesson, can you think of some responsibilities that exist in the elder-preacher relationship, the elder-deacon relationship, and the elder-elder relationship?

11. A local church can progress spiritually only with strong \_\_\_\_\_ and strong \_\_\_\_\_.

THE ELDERSHIP  
(Selecting and Ordaining Elders)  
Lesson 17

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

A. Care Must Be Taken in Selecting and Ordaining Elders.

1. We don't want man-made elders. We want "Holy-Spirit-made" elders (Acts 20:28). The Holy Spirit "makes" men elders by revealing the actions (work) and character (qualifications) of an elder in the word of God.
2. Remember, the actions described in Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5 are given by generic authority. Elders must be "ordained" in every church. The details of this generic authority, however, are not spelled out. Any expedient method to ordain elders that does not violate Scripture would be acceptable. Much of this lesson, therefore, is in the realm of expediency and some of the details below could be modified by a consensus within the local church.

B. Selecting (Acts 14:23) and Ordaining (Titus 1:5) Elders.

1. "Ordained them elders in every church" — Acts 14:23.  
*Gr. cheirotoneo*, "to stretch out the hand"; hence, "to choose", "to elect", "to appoint", see Acts 14:23; 2 Cor. 8:19.
2. "Ordain elders in every city" — Titus 1:5.  
*Gr. kathistami*, "to set down", "to place", "to put"; hence, "to appoint one to administer an office or position", Tit. 1:5; see a Bible concordance for its many passages.
3. The emphasis in the Greek word *cheirotoneo* is on "selecting". The emphasis in the Greek word *kathistami* is on "ordaining". There is nothing, however, in these two Greek verbs that point to a specific method used in "selecting" and "ordaining".

C. Some Expedient Steps in the Process of Selecting and Ordaining Elders.

1. Evaluation — Does this church have a reasonable opportunity to select and ordain elders?
2. Preparation — Has a thorough and careful study been made of the work and qualifications of elders? This step is a good opportunity to see if there are any men that "seek" and "desire" the eldership (1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:2). If there is not a plurality of men currently "seeking" and "desiring" the eldership, there may not be any need at this time to go any farther past this step.
3. Coordination — Who will be in charge of carrying out the details that lead to the selection and ordination of the elders?
4. Participation — How can the whole church participate in the selection process?

5. Tabulation — What men have been selected by the whole church?
6. Consultation — Are there any of the men selected who cannot serve as elders, either because they do not want to serve, or because they are not qualified to serve?
7. Presentation / Installation — How can the church install the men qualified to be elders in a meaningful and uplifting way?
8. Remember, some methods of selecting and ordaining elders violate Scripture: a) majority election; b) selection and appointment by the preacher only; c) elders are self-appointed; and, d) elders of one church appointing elders in another church. See also Lesson 12 II. G.

## II. SELECTING QUALIFIED MEN.

### A. Men Must Be Selected.

1. Selection is not the appointment; selection precedes the appointment.
2. Men that meet the divine qualifications are selected (nominated). A selection sheet could be provided for each member. This sheet could have a place for your name, the name of the nominee, and a list of all the qualifications to check off ("yes", "no", or "I don't know"). A formal selection sheet has two advantages: a) it adds an element of seriousness, accountability, and feedback to the process; and, b) it provides an opportunity for the nominee to engage in self-examination.
3. The church does the selecting (Acts 6:1-6; the same Greek word *kathistami*, used in Titus 1:5, is used in Acts 6:3. This would give us some background as to the method of "ordaining" elders. See also Acts 1:15-26.

### B. Objections Must Be Considered.

1. All Christians must be careful to select a man who is truly qualified (1 Tim. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:22). Hasty selection and appointment can cause serious problems for the local church.
2. Valid, scriptural objections should be voiced and reasonable time for these objections should be given for a study of God's word. If a scriptural objection is raised and sustained against a nominee, that nominee should be removed from the list of appointees. Care should be taken with those who have been nominated but will not be appointed. These men should be exhorted not to be discouraged.
3. Invalid objections based upon personal likes or dislikes should not be voiced, nor should they be allowed to hold up the process. "I just feel that he is not qualified to serve," and "I just feel that we do not need elders," are not a valid objections.
4. All objections, scriptural or otherwise, should be signed and thoroughly investigated with total discretion. Be careful in your objections. It is a serious thing to misjudge another man's character.

### III. ORDAINING ELDERS.

- A. There Is Apostolic Example for the Preacher to Ordain the Elders After the Appointees Have Been Selected by the Church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).
- B. Things That May Accompany the Ordaining "Ceremony".
  - 1. Commendation to the Lord, prayer, fasting, and the laying on of hands (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22).
  - 2. The "laying on of the hands" does not involve the miraculous. It is simply a way to identify these men publically in front of the congregation.

### IV. GOD'S WISDOM IN SELECTING AND ORDAINING ELDERS.

- A. God Does Not Want the Local Church to be Lacking (Tit. 1:5).
  - 1. A local church without elders should not be content with its present condition. First, God wants every local church to be "set in order" (Tit. 1:5). The Greek word *epidiorthoo* translated "order" means "to set straight again". Second, God wants every local church not to be "lacking" or "wanting" (Tit. 1:5). The Greek word *leipo* used here means "to be left behind, to lack, destitute". See Luke 18:22, James 1:4-5, 2:15, Titus 1:5, and 3:13 for its uses. Let us do all that we can to see that God's wisdom governs the local church.
  - 2. Review Lesson 8.

### V. CONCLUSION.

- A. The Selecting and Ordaining of Elders is One of the Most Important Decisions a Local Church Will Make.
- B. This Decision Should Be Made in a Way That Involves the Whole Church and It Should Be Made in a Way That Unites the Local Church, Not in a Way That Divides It.



## Lesson Seventeen Discussion

1. Why must great care be taken in the selecting and ordaining of elders?
2. T or F — The NT gives a detailed outline of the process of selecting and ordaining elders.
3. The two different Greek words translated "ordain" in the KJV are \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 14:23) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Titus 1:5). How are they different in meaning?
4. What important steps must be taken before selecting and ordaining elders?
5. T or F — Each man that is selected (nominated) is automatically appointed.
6. What guidelines should and should not be used to select a man for the eldership?
7. If there are any objections to a man's nomination, how should those objections be handled?
8. There are a few facts in the NT about ordaining elders. List them.
9. What is God's wisdom concerning ordaining elders in every church?
10. What attitudes should the local church have toward the decision to select and ordain elders?

**DEACONS**  
**(The Function and Duties of Deacons)**  
**Lesson 18**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

A. Deacons in the Local Church (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13).

1. Deacons are closely related to the elders as they work together in the local church. A specific list of duties for the deacons is not given in the NT. Good deacons serve in whatever capacity they are needed and they adjust to meet the needs at hand. There is great flexibility in their work. Overall, a deacon must have a servant's heart.

B. Our Attitude Toward Deacons.

1. Many Christians have the same indifferent attitude toward deacons that they have toward elders. The function and duties of deacons are either ignored or they are made into something that is not Biblical. Let us not stress the importance of the eldership in a way that we neglect the importance of deacons. The work of deacons is important. Deacons should not be viewed as second-rate, "errand boys" for the elders.

**II. BIBLICAL TERMS FOR DEACONS.**

Note: The Greek and English word studies here are based on the King James Version. Other versions should be consulted which have slightly different words in the scriptures listed. The scriptures cited are limited to those which refer to local church servants (deacons).

A. Greek word — *diakonos* = "servant", "helper", "waiter", "attendant", "minister".

B. English translations.

1. Servant(s) (*diakonos*) = "servant" (seven passages in the NT).
2. Minister(s) (*diakonos*) = "servant" (eighteen passages in the NT).
3. Deacons (*diakonos*) = "servant of the local church" (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8, 12).

C. Notes.

1. There are different Greek words for "servant" in the NT. Two of them are *doulos*, meaning a bondservant or slave (the relationship to the master is emphasized), and *diakonos*, meaning a servant who executes the commands of a superior (the relationship to the work is emphasized).
2. Like the word "elder," the word "servant" (*diakonos*) is used in two ways: a) a general meaning — any "servant" or "minister" with no special set of qualifications; and, b) an official meaning— a "deacon" or special servant of the local church with a special set of qualifications. The context determines which meaning, general or special, is used.

3. The verb *diakoneo* means "serve" (used 36 times in the NT). This verb is used twice in connection with deacons in 1 Timothy 3:10, 13 where it is translated "office of a deacon" (KJV). There is no Greek word for "office" in the text. "Serve as deacons" is a better translation here, since the Greek word *diakoneo* is a verb. The noun *diakonia* means "service" (used 33 times in the NT).

### III. OBSERVATIONS ON THE BIBLICAL TERM "DEACON".

#### A. The Function of Deacons.

1. From the word study above, it is clear that the function of a deacon is to serve the members of the local church. Deacons should be careful not to let themselves merely maintain an honorary title, "office", or position. They have a function to perform; a work of service to do. Would there be any reason to have deacons who didn't have some work to do? No. The servants in Acts 6:1-6 were appointed to meet a specific need (Acts 6:3; "business" is from the Greek work *chreia*, meaning "necessity" or "need"). They were not appointed and then some work found for them to do later.
2. Deacons serve, but they do not have authority over the members beyond what the elders delegate to them. The denominational concept of "deacons" who function as a quasi-body of elders (decision-makers) is foreign to the NT. They are not an "official board of directors," nor are they "church administrators".

#### B. A Term Used in Plurality.

1. Like "elders", each time the Greek word *diakonos* is used for servants in the local church it is used in the plural (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). There is to be a plurality of "deacons" in a local church, not one deacon.

#### C. Some Questions About Deacons.

1. Is there such a thing as an "office" of a deacon? Yes and No. Yes, if by "office" you mean the function or duty of deacons (service). No, if by "office" you mean a mere title or position. Review Lesson 12 II. B.
2. Is every Christian a "deacon" who performs work or service in a local church? No. "Deacon" is used in a special way in the NT to mean men qualified to perform specific duties under the oversight of the elders and appointed by the elders to do this work. Is a "deacon" in any way different from other members in the local church? Yes. See Philippians 1:1.
3. Do deacons automatically "move up" to become elders? Are they "junior elders" or "elders-in-training"? No.
4. Can a local church have deacons without elders? The NT is silent here. We have examples of deacons with elders present (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13), but no examples of deacons without elders. We must not act where the NT is silent.
5. How can a local church select and appoint deacons? The same way it can select and appoint elders. See Lesson 17.

6. How should Christians treat the deacons who serve them? All Christians should cooperate with the deacons as they do their best to serve. We should honor them (1 Tim. 3:13).
7. Are there women deacons (deaconesses) in the local church? No. This question will be answered in more detail in another lesson.

#### **IV. DUTIES OF DEACONS.**

- A. Specific Duties of Deacons Are Not Outlined in the NT, But the Nature of Their Work is Implied in the Word "Deacon".
- B. It is Not the Specific Duty of Deacons to:
  1. Preach — although servants like Stephen and Philip did preach later (Acts 6:5; 7:1ff; 8:4-5; 21:8).
  2. Oversee the local church — this duty belongs to the eldership. Deacons are under the oversight of the eldership because they are a part of "all the flock" (Acts 20:28). We should be careful not to say that the local church is governed "by the elders and deacons". Deacons should not try to "out vote" the elders. Deacons do not have an "equal voice" with the elders.
  3. Plan and perform duties not authorized in the New Testament.
- C. It is the Duty of Deacons to:
  1. Administer to the physical needs of the local church (Acts 6:1-6). Whether or not the men chosen in Acts 6:5 were "deacons" in the same sense as 1 Timothy 3:8-13 is still open to discussion. However, the main point is that we have an example of men being appointed specifically to assist with physical needs.
  2. A part of ministering to the physical needs of the local church would include ministering to the practical needs of the local church (the treasury, finances and budget, worship services, men's duty roster, building and yard maintenance, Bible class materials, the care of widows and other needy members, etc.)
  3. When deacons perform their important duties with zeal and proficiency, they relieve the elders from burdensome tasks that are essential to the local church's welfare. This allows the elders time to do important spiritual works (Acts 6:2, 4).

**V. CONCLUSION.** Deacons Perform the Important Function of Serving Members of the Local Church. This Is an Awesome Responsibility Not to Be Taken Lightly. Deacons Will Be Greatly Rewarded for Their Work (1 Tim. 3:13).

## Lesson Eighteen Discussion

1. What should our attitude be toward deacons in the local church?
2. What does the Greek word for deacon (*diakonos*) mean?
3. How many times is the Greek word *diakonos* translated "deacons"?
4. What is the basic function of deacons in the local church?
5. What important lessons can be learned about service from each verse of Acts 6:1-6?
6. Explain the denominational concept of "deacons".
7. T or F — A local church can have one deacon.
8. T or F — The "office of a deacon" refers to the function or duty (service) of a deacon.
9. T or F — All Christians can be "deacons" because all Christians serve members of the church.
10. T or F — There is no clear example in the NT of a local church with deacons, but no elders.
11. What are some duties that deacons can and cannot perform in the local church?
12. According to 1 Timothy 3:13, what reward can deacons have?

DEACONS  
(Qualifications Given to Timothy)  
Lesson 19

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

A. The Qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 Can Be Grouped Together:

1. By positives (must be) and negatives (must not be).
2. By areas of life (character, habits, and domestic relations).

B. Two "Preliminary" Qualifications:

1. First, a deacon must be a man.
2. Second, a deacon must "first be proved". The Greek word *dokimazo*, means "to test", "to examine", "to prove", with the expectation of approval. See Lesson 14 Introduction for more on the phrase "first be proved".
3. Like an elder, a man must first have these qualifications in place in his life before he is appointed a deacon.

**II. QUALIFICATIONS GIVEN TO TIMOTHY.**

A. Grave.

1. Gr. *semnos*, "reverent", "august", "dignified", "venerable", "respectful"; hence, "serious", see Phil. 4:8; 1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Tit. 2:2.
2. A deacon must not be frivolous, but take his God-given work of service seriously.

B. Not Double-tongued.

1. Gr. *dilogos*, lit. "two words," "twice speech," "saying the same thing twice"; hence, "repetition", see 1 Tim. 3:8.
2. A deacon must never engage in double-talk, saying one thing to one person and then giving a different view of the same thing to another person with the intent to deceive (for example, speech that is hypocritical, insincere, or deceitful).

C. Not Given to Much Wine.

1. Gr. *mee oino pollo prosechontas*, lit. "not wine much addicted". The Greek word *oinos*, "wine", is the general word for wine in the NT, whether fermented (alcoholic) or unfermented (non-alcoholic) grape juice. See a Bible concordance for its many passages. The Greek word, *prosecho*, means "to turn one's mind to", "attend to", "to be occupied with"; hence, "give oneself up to". See a Bible concordance for its many passages.

2. A deacon must not be addicted to wine.

D. Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre (see Lesson 14).

E. Holding the Mystery of the Faith in a Pure Conscience.

1. Gr. *echo*, "steadfast adherence". Gr. *musterion*, in the NT means "that which can be made known only by divine revelation" (that is, the "gospel"). Gr. *katharos*, "cleansed". Gr. *stmeideesis*, literally, "to know with"; hence, our mind tells us what it knows. Each of these Greek words are used too many times in the NT to list here.
2. A deacon must be a firm believer, loyal to the gospel in belief, and pure in practice. An entirely intellectual attachment to the gospel may lead to doubt and questioning later on.

F. Blameless (see Lesson 15).

G. The Husband of One Wife (see Lesson 14).

H. Ruling Their Children and Their Own Houses Well (see Lesson 14).

**III. CONCLUSION.** God Has Set the Standard for Deacons. Each Man Must Fit the Qualifications, Not the Other Way Around. Men Should Begin Now to Qualify Themselves to Serve as Deacons in the Lord's Church.

## Lesson Nineteen Discussion

1. In what ways are the qualifications for deacons the same as the qualifications for elders?
2. What two "preliminary" qualifications must be considered for a deacon?
3. What does "grave" mean?
4. Describe how a deacon is to use his tongue.
5. What relationship is a deacon supposed to have with wine? Thought question: Is this qualification different in principle from the one given to elders (1 Tim. 3:3)?
6. List the four qualifications for deacons that are exactly the same for elders.
7. What relationship is a deacon supposed to have with the gospel?
8. What two-fold reward can deacons receive for their faithful service (1 Tim. 3:13)?
9. Thought question: What qualification regarding children is not required of a deacon that is required of an elder?



# ELDERS, DEACONS, AND THEIR WIVES

## Lesson 20

### I. INTRODUCTION.

#### A. Wives of Elders and Deacons.

1. Not only must the men seeking to be elders and deacons be qualified, but their wives as well must have the right kind of spiritual character. Often too little attention is given to the wives of elders and deacons.

#### B. 1 Timothy 3:11.

1. Is the reference in 1 Timothy 3:11 to females, a reference to: a) all the women in the local church, b) the wives of both elders and deacons, c) the wives of deacons, d) women assisting the deacons, or, e) women deacons (deaconess)? Because of the immediate context of 1 Timothy 3:1-13, the approach taken in this lesson views these females as the wives of elders and deacons.
2. Is it women or wives? Grammatically, the Greek word *gunaikas* could go either way, "women" or "wives", depending on the context. Both are used in the various English translations. We will use "wives" in this lesson because of the immediate context of 1 Timothy 3:1-13. The qualifications of male elders and deacons who are "husbands" (v. 2, 12) would naturally lead to a discussion of their "wives".
3. Are there to be women deacons (deaconess) in the local church? No. There is no authority for women deacons. What about Romans 16:1? In some Bible versions, Phoebe is called a "deacon" or "deaconess". It must be kept in mind that *diakonos* in Romans 16:1 means a "servant". Phoebe served in the Lord's church just like all members serve. The words "deacon" or "deaconess" found in some Bible versions in Romans 16:1 is an interpretation, not a translation. Phoebe was a "servant" in a general sense of service, not a "deacon" in the special sense of an appointed position of service.

### II. WIVES — THEIR QUALIFICATIONS (1 TIMOTHY 3:11).

#### A. Grave (see Lesson 19).

#### B. Not Slanders.

1. Gr. *diabolos*, literally, "to throw over or across"; hence, "slandorous", "accusing falsely", see 1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 2:3.
2. A wife must control her tongue, never gossiping, or falsely accusing someone with the intent to harm the reputation of another.

#### C. Sober (see "vigilant" in Lesson 14).

#### D. Faithful in All Things.

1. Gr. *pistas en pasin*, "trustworthy, dependable in all things".
2. A wife must be trustworthy and dependable in whatever duty or responsibility she is given by God as a wife and mother, as a Christian, and as a member of a local church.

### III. WIVES — THEIR SUPPORT.

#### A. She Influences Her Husband's Actions.

1. Some wives influence their husbands for worse (Gen. 3; Gen. 27; 1 K. 21; Ac. 5). Some wives influence their husbands for better (1 Sam. 25; Esther 2; Luke 1-2; Ac. 18).

#### B. She Supports or Hinders Her Husband's Work.

1. The wife of an elder or deacon should work together with her husband and be a support and "help meet" companion regarding his work in the local church (Gen. 2:18).
2. The wife of an elder or deacon is one of full-time service. Therefore, this wife must have the spiritual character that will allow her to: a) not resent her husband's time and energy spent serving others; b) actively participate in her husband's service when needed; and, c) be discrete with her husband's knowledge of local church matters.
3. The wife of an elder or deacon, like all wives, should also consider the principles of marriage discussed elsewhere in the NT (1 Cor. 7:2-3, 10-11, 34; Eph. 5:22-24, 33; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-7; Tit. 2:4-5).

#### C. She Builds Up or Tears Down Her Husband's Reputation.

1. Depending upon her influence and support, the wife of an elder or deacon could easily build up or tear down her husband's reputation within the local church which in turn would affect how successful his work is.

### IV. CONCLUSION: Behind Every Great Elder and Deacon Is a Great Wife.

## Lesson Twenty Discussion

1. Who is being discussed in 1 Timothy 3:11? Give the different possibilities and your choice.
2. What does "grave" mean?
3. How is a woman to use her tongue according to 1 Timothy 3:11?
4. What two qualifications of elders are the same for their wives?
5. Give some areas of life in which a woman can be "faithful in all things".
6. Give some examples of how a wife can influence her husband for better or for worse.
7. Give some examples of how a wife can hinder and support her husband's work.
8. Give some examples of how a wife can affect her husband's reputation positively and negatively.
9. The success of a good elder or deacon is due in part to whom?

# THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

## Lesson 21

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. An Evangelist is One of the "Gifts" in the Local Church (Eph. 4:11).
- B. Who is an "Evangelist"? Gr. *euangelisteos*, lit. "a messenger of good"; hence, "one who brings good news, see Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5. The "evangelist" (*euangelisteos*) is a person who "preaches" (*euangelizo*) the glad tidings of the "gospel" (*euangelion*) to others, both saints and sinners. See a Bible concordance for the many uses of "preach" (*euangelizo*) and "gospel" (*euangelion*).
- C. There are a number of Greek words that show what a faithful evangelist does in addition to "preaching" the truth. The evangelist is a herald of truth (*keerux, keerugma, keerrusso*). He sets forth truth (*katangelo*). He explains truth (*ektitheemi*). He reasons the truth through discussion (*dialegomai*). He completely exposes the truth (*dianoigo*). He sets forth truth for the purpose of argument and proof (*partitheemi*). He teaches the truth (*didaktos, didaskalos, didasko*). He exhorts with the truth (*parakaleo*).

### II. THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST.

Note: Because of space limitations this study has been taken entirely from Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, two evangelists who needed divine instruction about their work. Keep in mind that there is much to be learned about the work of the evangelist from other scriptures in the NT. 2 Corinthians is another good source for the study of the evangelist.

- A. His Morality – "Take Heed to Thyself".
  1. The life of the evangelist must be pure in all things. There are many things that he must be and many things that he must not be. Note that none of the evangelist's "qualifications" deal with formal education, oratory, or social graces.
  2. The evangelist must: stand against false teachers (1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3-5); refuse human wisdom and empty discussions (1 Tim. 4:7; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 2:16-19, 23; 4:3-4); be a faithful, trustworthy Christian (1 Tim. 1:19; 1 Tim. 6:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:5, 13; 2:2); be godly (1 Tim. 4:7-8); set the right example (1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:7); spend time in reading, exhortation, teaching, and personal growth and self-motivation (1 Tim. 4:13-15; 2 Tim. 1:5-7, 14); guard himself and his teaching (1 Tim. 4:16); treat all church members the right way (1 Tim. 5:1-3); stay healthy (1 Tim. 5:23); flee sin, follow righteousness, and fight the good fight of the faith as a good soldier of Christ (1 Tim. 6: 11-12; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:3-5); suffer hardship with the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8; 4:5; 2:8-13); be strengthened in grace (2 Tim. 2:1); train others to teach (2 Tim. 2:2); handle accurately the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15); be ready for every good work (2 Tim. 2:20-22; 3:17); flee youthful lusts and follow righteousness (2 Tim. 2:22); be able to teach (2 Tim. 2:24); be gentle, forbearing, and meek (2 Tim. 2:24-26; 4:2); turn away from evil men and abide in the truth (2 Tim. 3:1-15); be vigilant in all things

(2 Tim. 4:5); be hard working (2 Tim. 4:5); fulfill his ministry (2 Tim.4:5); come to the aid of others (2 Tim. 4:9-22; Tit. 3:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:15-18); be pure in doctrine and speech (2 Tim. 2:7-8); be serious (2 Tim. 2:7); and, refuse factious people (Tit. 3:9-11).

3. The evangelist must not: allow himself to be despised (1 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:15); receive an unjust accusation against an elder and be partial to certain members (1 Tim. 5:19-22, 24-25); be ashamed of Jesus or fellow-Christians (2 Tim. 1:8); be entangled in the world (2 Tim. 2:4); and, fight with others (2 Tim. 2:25).

#### B. His Mission – “These Things Teach”.

1. The work of the evangelist is to instruct others about how God wants them to behave (1 Tim. 3:14-15). The evangelist is primarily an instructor or teacher, not a "church administrator" or "church chaplain". The work of the evangelist is not limited to making new converts or planting churches. Evangelists are also to teach Christians in well-established churches.
2. The evangelist must instruct others about: prayer (1 Tim. 2:1-7); roles of men and women (1 Tim. 2:8-15); selection and appointment of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9); apostasy and grievous times (1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Tim.3:1ff); the care of widows (1 Tim. 5:4-16); elder's support (5:17-18); the servant-master relationship (1 Tim. 6: 1-3; Tit. 2:9-10); contentment (1 Tim. 6:6-10); riches (1 Tim. 6:17-19); striving about words to no profit (2 Tim. 2:14); duties of the aged and the young (Tit. 2:1-6); unrighteous and righteous living (Tit. 2:11-3); good works (Tit. 2:14; 3:1,8,14); and, civil responsibilities (Tit. 3:1-3).

#### C. His Message — "Preach the Word".

1. The message of the evangelist comes from God's word— the Bible. He does not preach himself, human wisdom, or religious tradition. He preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. The evangelist should "hold the pattern of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13), handle "aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), "abide in" the truth (2 Tim. 3:14), believe "all scripture inspired of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), and "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2).

#### D. His Method — "Put the Brethren in Mind".

1. The method of communication used by the evangelist when he teaches may vary depending upon the audience and the circumstances surrounding his lesson. The evangelist is both "positive" and "negative" in his approach to teaching the truth. He must use these methods "in season and out of season;" that is, when it is favorable and unfavorable (2 Tim. 4:2).
2. The evangelist may need to: remind (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 2:14; Tit. 3:1); command (1 Tim. 4:11; 6:17); charge (2 Tim. 2:14); teach, reprove, correct, and instruct (2 Tim. 3:16); reprove, rebuke, and exhort (2 Tim.4:2; 1 Tim. 4:13 6:2; Tit. 1:13; 2:15); speak authoritatively (Tit. 2:15); and, confidently affirm (Tit. 3:8).

E. His Motive — "Save Thyself and Them That Hear Thee".

1. The motive behind the evangelist's work is not carnal, but spiritual. The evangelist does what he does to save himself and others. Saving souls is his main concern, not power, prestige, personal advantage, or money (2 Cor. 2:17). The evangelist can maintain his proper motive if he will remember that he is a "minister (servant) of Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 4:6), a "man of God" (1 Tim. 6:11), a "workman that needs not be ashamed" (2 Tim. 2:15), and, the "Lord's servant (slave)" (2 Tim. 2:24).
2. The evangelist preaches so that he can save himself and those who hear him (1 Tim. 4:16).

### III. SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EVANGELIST

A. Authority.

1. What kind of authority does he have? Authority comes from his message, not from his position (Tit. 2:15).
2. Can a woman be a preacher? No, she would violate 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 in her public speaking to a mixed audience and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 in her speaking in an authoritative manner (Tit. 2:15).

B. Marriage, Location, and Financial Support.

1. Can he marry? Yes (Acts 21:8-9; 1 Cor. 9:5; 1 Tim. 4:1-3).
2. How long can he stay in one place? As long as it is expedient (Acts 18:11; 19:9-10; 20:31).
3. Can he receive financial support from the local church treasury? Yes (1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 11:7-9; 12:13; Phil. 4:14-18; 2 Tim. 2:6).

C. Classification and Formal Education.

1. Can he specialize ("Pulpit Ministers," "Youth Ministers," "Prison Ministers," "Evangelistic Missionaries")? Is he directly "called" by God and "ordained"? Can he be called "Priest," "Pastor," "Father", or "Reverend"? Is there a difference between the "Clergy" and the "Laity"? The answer is "No" to each of these questions. There is no authority for any of this in the NT.
2. Must a man have a formal education in order to preach? No (Mk. 6:2-3; Jn. 7:14-17; Acts 4:13).

### IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. An Evangelist Has a Particular "Work" to Do and "Ministry" to Fulfill (2 Tim. 4:5). More Evangelists Are Needed with the Right Spiritual Character to Do This Work.
- B. A Local Church and Its Evangelist Should Have a Thorough Understanding of What is Expected of Each Other. More Local Churches are Needed Who Will Properly Support (Physically and Spiritually) the Evangelist in His Work. A Local Church Should Not Require More or Less of the Evangelist Than What God Requires in His Word.

## Lesson Twenty-One Discussion

1. Who is listed as a "gift" in the local church along with "apostles", "prophets", "pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11)?
2. What does the word "evangelist" mean and what two other words are related to the word "evangelist"?
3. List the various things that the evangelist is to do with the truth in addition to "preaching" it. Do these responsibilities tell us anything about the preacher's character and personality?
4. How would you summarize an evangelist's morality? What must he do and not do?
5. What is the primary mission or work of the evangelist? How can a local church help and hinder this work?
6. What is the message of the evangelist and how can the evangelist stray from this message?
7. List the positive and negative methods of communication used by the evangelist in his teaching. Is the approval rating of the evangelist today sometimes based upon his communication methods?
8. What should and should not be the motive behind an evangelist's work?
9. What other terms are used in 1-2 Timothy and Titus to describe the evangelist?

10. T or F — An evangelist has no authority.
11. T or F — A woman can be a preacher.
12. T or F — An evangelist cannot marry.
13. T or F — An evangelist cannot stay long in an established local church.
14. T or F — An evangelist cannot be supported financially by the local church.
15. T or F — An evangelist is a member of the "clergy".
16. What should be the main concern on the mind of a man who wants to become an evangelist?
  
17. What should be the main concern for a local church who wants to have an evangelist work with them?



# TEACHERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

## Lesson 22

### I. INTRODUCTION.

#### A. God Calls Mankind to Salvation Through Teaching, Hearing, and Learning.

1. Sinners are to be taught (Jn. 6:44-45).
2. Saints are to be taught (Mt. 28:19-20).
3. The knowledge that is taught to saints and sinners is the inspired word of God and it is taught by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles (Lk. 12:12; Jn. 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:13). Today, Bible teachers use the same words of the Apostles to teach sinners and saints.

#### B. The Local Church Is a Teaching / Educational Institution.

1. One mission of the local church is to teach God's word (1 Tim. 3:15). The local church is not the originator of truth, but it is the proclaimer and protector of the truth. When we lose sight of this mission we cease to be pleasing to God!
2. This mission is accomplished through education only. God depends upon education. God made man teachable, therefore, teachers are included in the organization of the local church.
3. Local churches are judged by Christ based on the teaching (doctrine) permitted in them (Rev. 2:14-16, 20-25).
4. Some present-day conditions in the local church: a) shortage of teachers due to a lack of desire to teach, a fear of criticism, too lazy to prepare a lesson or deal with under-motivated students; b) untrained and poorly qualified teachers; c) little to no curriculum or unorganized curriculum; d) improper learning environment (improper classroom facilities); e) less Bible teaching and more "fun and games"; f) lack of teacher training classes; and, g) lack of parental concern for good Bible classes (parents who don't care about the quality of teaching or the need for their children to get their lesson prepared).
5. Remember the warnings of old (Judg. 2:10; Hos. 4:6).

#### C. Local Churches in the NT Were Teaching Institutions.

1. Sinners were taught (Acts 4:1-2, 18; 5:21, 25, 28, 42; Rom. 6:17; Eph. 4:20-21; Col. 1:28; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11).
2. Saints were taught (Acts 2:42; 11:26; 15:35; 18:11; 20:20; Rom. 15:4; 16:17; 1 Cor. 4:17; Col. 2:6; 2 Thess. 2:15).

## II. TEACHERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH. \*\*

### A. God Wants "Teachers" in the Local Church (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28-29).

1. Members of the local church are to be teachers, not just the evangelist (1 Tim. 4:6, 11, 13, 16: 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 2:7). Elders are also to be teachers (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 5:17; Tit. 1:9).
2. Each Christian has a responsibility to teach in some way (Heb. 5:11ff). Each one is expected to teach. Each one should want to teach. Each one should want to be a better teacher. Yes, there are biblical warnings against teaching without a controlled tongue (Jas. 3:1ff), but that should not hinder us from wanting to be a teacher.

### B. Who Is a "Teacher"?

1. Gr. *didaskolos*, "teacher", see a Bible concordance for its many passages. The other related Greek words are *didaktikos* (able to teach), *didaktos* (teach, instruct), *didasko* (to teach), *didakee* and *didaskalia* (that which is taught [doctrine], and the act of teaching).
2. A teacher (*didaskolos*) teaches (*didasko*) doctrine (*didakee*) to the student.

### C. Teachers' Qualifications (2 Tim. 2:2).

1. "The things which you have heard from me".
  - a) The New Testament gospel is to be passed on through teaching.
  - b) A teacher must learn and teach the doctrine of Christ, not the doctrines of men (Acts 2:42; 13:12; 2 Jn. 9-11; for the teachings of men see Mt. 15:9; 16:12; Jn. 7:16-17; Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:22; Heb. 13:9; Rev. 2:14, 15, 24; etc.).
2. "Faithful men".
  - a) Gr. *pistos*, "to be trusted", "trustworthy", "reliable", see a Bible concordance for its many passages. The word "men" in "faithful men" is from the Greek word *anthropos* meaning "a human being, male or female". These qualifications are for both male and female teachers.
  - b) A teacher must be trustworthy and reliable in character, life, and attitude toward God's word.
3. "Able to teach others also".
  - a) Gr. *hikanos*, "sufficient in ability", "enough", see a Bible concordance for its many passages.
  - b) A teacher must have a sufficient ability to accurately instruct others in the word of God. According to 2 Timothy 2:15, a teacher must handle the word of God "accurately" ("rightly") through proper study and interpretation of the scriptures (word studies, observing the context, background studies, etc.). He or she should never "twist" the scriptures through improper interpretation (2 Pet. 3:16).

#### D. Teachers' Roles.

1. The three roles of a teacher grow out of the three qualifications outlined above.
2. Three roles of a teacher:
  - a) *"The things which you have heard from me"* – the teacher as a Bible student. The Bible teacher is first a Bible student. The Bible class teacher cannot teach what he or she does not know. Effective teaching demands consistent learning. A teacher who stops learning fails as a teacher.
  - b) *"Faithful men"* – the teacher as a leader. The Bible teacher is a visible and influential person. The Bible teacher has the power to mold and transform the minds, attitudes, and lives of the students. A trustworthy, reliable teacher will be a good leader.
  - c) *"Able to teach others also"* – the teacher as one who discipulates others. The Bible teacher makes disciples by teaching them after baptism (Mt. 28:20). The Bible class teacher should follow the example of Jesus as he made disciples. Jesus was committed to God, he befriended his students, he role-modeled the truth, he served his students, and he always taught the truth.

#### E. Teachers' Concerns.

1. "Am I practicing what I teach?" (Ezra 7:10).
2. "Am I teaching with boldness?" (Acts 18:24-26; 28:30-31).
3. "Am I open to a greater understanding of God's word?" (Acts 18:26).
4. "Am I teaching error innocently?" (Acts 18:24-26; 19:1-5).
5. "Am I willing to teach in the midst of opposition?" (Acts 5:21-29; 18:9-11).
6. "Am I teaching with enthusiasm?" (Rom. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:11).
7. "Am I teaching God's word or teaching what pleases my students?" (2 Tim. 4:3-4; Gal. 6:6-10).
8. "Am I teaching correctly now and am I learning more to teach better later?" (Heb. 5:11 – 6:3).
9. "Am I teaching what I do not know ... Am I teaching error ... Am I teaching without proper preparation ... Am I teaching something that will lead someone to hell?" (Jas. 3:1-2; 1 Tim. 1:7; Mt. 15:14).

\*\* This lesson has focused on the need and place of a Bible teacher in God's plan for the organization of the local church. For those interested in becoming better Bible teachers there are several inexpensive "how to" books on teacher training written by brethren. In addition to reading the Bible (the best teacher-training manual available), you may want to read the following good books: *Teaching: The Heart of the Matter* by John A. Smith; *Stairway to Teaching* by Bobbie Miller; *Success at Bible Teaching* by Sam Binkley and Martin Broadwell; *A Generation*

*That Knows Not God* by Bob and Sandra Waldron; *Effective Study and Teaching of God's Word* by Glen Barnhart; and, *At the Feet of the Master Teacher* by Daniel H. King, Sr.

### **III. CONCLUSION.**

- A. More Trustworthy Teachers Are Needed in the Local Church Who Will Say, "I Have a Responsibility to My Lord, I Have a Responsibility to My Congregation, I Have a Responsibility to My Bible Class."
- B. More Encouragement from the Students is Needed for the Teachers in the Local Church (Gal. 6:6).

## Lesson Twenty-Two Discussion

1. What three things does God use to "draw" mankind to Himself (Jn. 6:44-45)?
2. In order to "make disciples", there must be "\_\_\_\_\_ (them)" and "\_\_\_\_\_ (them)" (Mt. 28:19-20).
3. What is one mission of the local church? List the ways that some local churches have lost sight of this mission.
4. What is the teaching situation like in many local churches and what can be done to correct it?
5. A poor teaching organization in the local church may lead to what two problems (Judg. 2:10; Hos. 4:6)?
6. Who is a teacher? What scriptures show that God wants teachers in the local church?
7. What three qualifications of a teacher are given by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2?
8. What three roles does a teacher have? How can a teacher be faithful and unfaithful in each of these roles?

9. What three things did Ezra set his heart to do (Ezra 7:10)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. List the positive qualities of Apollos as a teacher (Acts 18:24-28).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. Both Peter and Paul were willing to teach in the midst of \_\_\_\_\_.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What admonition is given to teachers in Romans 12:7 and 1 Peter 4:11?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. What temptation do teachers face according to 2 Timothy 4:3-4?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. According to Hebrews 5:11 – 6:3, what does God expect of all Christians?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. What warning does James give to teachers in James 3:1-2? Why this warning?

# A WOMAN'S WORK IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

## Lesson 23

### I. INTRODUCTION.

#### A. We Must Avoid Two Extremes:

1. "Feminism" (or "Women's Liberation") where women take on the same roles that men have in the home and in the church.
2. Limit women to very little service at all (tell them to sit down and be quiet).
  - a) Men fear that woman might "run the church".
  - b) Envy and jealousy among women.
  - c) Women are too busy to work for the Lord.
  - d) No teaching or training program for women.

#### B. The Issue Over Women's Work in the Local Church Is Not One of Superiority or Equality. The Issue Is Authorized Function.

#### C. Women in the Local Church, What Are They Authorized to Do?

### II. A WOMAN'S LIMITATIONS.

#### A. The Limitation of Occasion (1 Cor. 14:34-36).

1. A woman is forbidden to speak in the assemblies of the saints (the assembly is under discussion, vv. 23, 26). The kind of "speaking" that a woman is forbidden to do in the assembly is the kind of "speaking" that addresses the whole assembly of both men and women (vv. 26-36). Preaching would be forbidden, but commenting in a Bible class would not. A woman addressing a group of women would not be forbidden.
2. Her "silence" (Gr. *sigao*) means she is to hold her peace; be silent.

#### B. The Limitation of Attitude (1 Tim. 2:11-15).

1. A woman is not forbidden to teach at all. She is forbidden to do a certain kind of teaching – teaching (authoritatively) over a man. Paul is speaking of a certain kind of teaching (Acts 4:18). Her "silence" (Gr. *hesuchias*) here is not speechless, but quietness.
2. For this reason, a woman is not authorized by the NT to function as a preacher who exercises authority in preaching (Tit. 2:15), or function in any way that would cause her to exercise authority over a man.
3. Because she is a woman, and not a man, she is not authorized by the NT to be an elder (1 Tim.3:1-2) or a deacon (1 Tim. 3:12).

#### C. Question: Is There Anyone, Including Jesus (1 Cor.11:3), Who Is Not Limited In Some Way In God's Plan? No.

### III. WHAT CAN A WOMAN DO?

#### A. Evangelism.

1. There were women in the NT local churches who could prophesy (Ac. 2:17-18; 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:4-16). Though the gift of prophecy does not exist today, this shows that God used women in NT local churches to teach others.
2. Woman in the local church can evangelize:
  - a) Directly — by explaining to someone the way of God more accurately, like a husband-wife teaching team situation (Acts 18:24-28).
  - b) Indirectly — by supporting and assisting gospel preachers (Rom. 16:3-6, 12-13; Phil. 4:2-3; Acts 16:13-15; Gal. 6:6; 3 Jn. 5-8). She can invite others to hear the gospel preached (Jn. 4:28-30), open her home for a place to assemble (Acts 12:12), distribute teaching materials (tracts), help with the bulletin, make contacts, etc.

#### B. Edification.

1. The passages that speak of edifying one another are addressed to all local church members, not just men (Eph. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:14; etc.).
2. Women in a local church can edify:
  - a) A woman can be a teacher of young people (Tit. 2:3-5) — counsel, teach children's classes in and out of the church building, prepare and order teaching aids, etc.
  - b) A woman can be an example to her husband (1 Pet. 3:1-7) — she can help convert him to the Lord, she can help qualify and support her husband to be a preacher, elder, deacon, leader, teacher, etc. (1 Tim. 3:11).
  - c) A woman can be a teacher and guide to her own children (1 Tim. 5:14; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15).
  - d) A woman can be an encouragement to the saints (1 Thess. 5:14) — she can make visits, write cards, make calls, assistance with building maintenance or communion preparation, enthusiastically participate in singing (teaching in song; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), prayers, Lord's supper, Bible study, contribution, confess her faith publicly (Rom. 10:9-10), avoid gossip that leads to disunity (1 Tim. 5:13), etc.

#### C. Benevolence.

1. There were woman in the NT who contributed to the physical needs of Jesus (Mt. 27:55-56, 61; Mk. 14:3-9; Lk. 8:1-3; 23:49, 55-56).



2. Women in a local church can be charitable - they can perform good works (1 Tim. 2:10, 5:9-10, 16; Acts 9:36-39), prepare food and clothing for needy saints, assist with house duties, visitation, transportation, etc.

#### IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. God Has a Place for Women in the Local Church. There Is Much Work That Women May Do Without Going Beyond the Scriptural Boundaries of God's Word.
- B. Woman Not Only Have the Right to Do Many Things, But the Responsibility Also. They May Do Many Things and They Should Do Them. More Women Are Needed to Do All That They Can Do.
- C. Ladies, Will the Lord Say of You, "She Hath Done What She Could" (Mk. 14:8)?

## Lesson Twenty-Three Discussion

1. What two extremes must we avoid when trying to determine a woman's work in the local church?
2. What is, and is not, the issue over a woman's role in the local church?
3. Are there any limitations that God has placed upon what a woman can do in the local church?
4. What can a woman do, both directly and indirectly, to evangelize the lost?
5. How can a woman edify the saints and other people she is with?
6. What can a woman do to be benevolent and charitable to the needy?
7. Ladies, what will you do as a member of the local church to be more active in the work that the Lord has for you? Look over the scripture references again. Is there an example of a Christian woman doing something in the local church that you did not know could be done? What specifically will you begin to do today that you have not done before?

**MEMBERS OF THE BODY**  
**(Saints in the Organization of the Local Church)**  
**Lesson 24**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

A. Local Church Organization Demands Total Membership Organization.

1. Local church organization is not just about having elders and deacons. Paul address "all the saints" in Philippians 1:1 in addition to the elders and deacons.
2. A local church that is properly organized has a membership where every member is functioning for the good of the body.
3. When a person is baptized into Christ, the Lord adds him to the one body of Christ – the "universal church" (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13). However, that person must then voluntarily "join" himself to a local assembly of Christians – the "local church" (Acts 9:26-29), so that he can fulfill his member responsibilities and his "one another" responsibilities.

B. Members of the Body of Christ.

1. The universal church is the "body" of Christ (1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12-13; Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4; 5:23,30; Col. 1:18,22,24; 2:19; 3:15).
2. The local church is also the "body" of Christ (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:14-31; Eph. 4:7-16).

C. Saints' Responsibilities in the Local Church.

1. In addition to assembling for worship (Heb. 10:25) and teaching others (Heb. 5:11ff), what other responsibilities do the saints have? Because saints are "members" of the "body" of Christ, they have many "member" responsibilities toward the "body."
2. In Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4, Paul outlines seven "member" principles. Much of what Paul writes here deals with the special spiritual (miraculous) gifts given by the Holy Spirit. But, the same seven "member" principles would apply today to our ordinary gifts and talents that we use to serve the local church. This lesson will focus on the last of these seven principles, reciprocal action.

**II. SEVEN MEMBER PRINCIPLES IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

- A. Diverse Function -- "All Members Have Not the Same Office" (Rom. 12:4).
- B. Collective Obligation — "Not One Member, But Many" (1 Cor.12:14, see v. 27-30).
- C. Unified Effort — "Many Members, But One Body" (1 Cor. 12:20).
- D. All Are Necessary — "Those Members of the Body ... Are Necessary" (1 Cor. 12:22).
- E. No Division — "That There Should Be No Schism in the Body" (1 Cor. 12:25).
- F. Effective Working — "That Which Every Joint Supplies" (Eph. 4:16; see also Col. 2:19).

G. Reciprocal Action — "Members One of Another" (Eph. 4:25; Rom. 12:5).

1. "One another" means reciprocal action. The action that is reciprocal is action that is done by *all* the members to *each other* — *each* member giving and receiving things. *Each* member, young and old, has equal responsibility to do these things. Study the passages below carefully to see what responsibilities *you* have toward *all* the members. These are mutual obligations for *each* member and they are not optional. You may be surprised how many there are in the NT! Of course, the negative "one another" passages below speak of actions that should be avoided.
2. Positive "one another" passages:
  - a) Peace one with another (Mk. 9:50).
  - b) Love one another (Jn. 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; Rom. 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 Jn. 5).
  - c) Members one of another (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:25).
  - d) Tenderly affectionate one toward another and preferring one another (Rom. 12:10).
  - e) Same mind one toward another (Rom. 12:16; 15:5).
  - f) Exhort, edify, and consider one another (Rom. 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25).
  - g) Comfort one another (1 Thess. 4:18).
  - h) Receive one another (Rom. 15:7).
  - i) Admonish one another (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16).
  - j) Salute or greet one another (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Pet. 5:14).
  - k) Wait or tarry one for another (1 Cor. 11:33).
  - l) Same care one for another (1 Cor. 12:25).
  - m) Serve one another (Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 5:5).
  - n) Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2).
  - o) Forbear one another (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13).
  - p) Be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving one to another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
  - q) Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
  - r) Submit or subject one to another (Eph. 5:21).
  - s) Confess your sins one to another (Jas. 5:16).
  - t) Pray one for another (Jas. 5:16).
  - u) Be hospitable one to another (1 Pet. 4:9).
  - v) Consider one another (Heb. 10:24).

- w) Speak, teach, and admonish one another in songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
  - x) Follow after good one toward another (1 Thess. 5:15).
  - y) Fellowship one with another (1 Jn. 1:7).
3. Negative "one another" passages:
- a) Receive glory one of another (Jn. 5:44).
  - b) Lust one toward another (Rom. 1:27).
  - c) Judge one another (Rom. 14:13).
  - d) Puffed up for one against another (1 Cor. 4:6).
  - e) Lawsuits one with another (1 Cor. 6:7).
  - f) Bite and devour another (Gal. 5:15).
  - g) Provoking and envying one another (Gal. 5:26).
  - h) Lie not one to another (Col. 3:9).
  - i) Preferring one before another (1 Tim. 5:21).
  - j) Hating one another (Tit. 3:3).
  - k) Speak not one against another (Jas. 4:11).
  - l) Murmur not one against another (Jas. 5:9).

### **III. LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.**

#### **A. No True Local Church Membership.**

1. What happens when each member of the local church (would "attendee" be better?) does not really function as a true member of the body? There will be problems.
2. There will be work problems. Carnality and materialism will take over and there will be no time left for the spiritual and physical needs of other members. All the work of evangelism, edification, and benevolence will be left in the hands of only a few spiritually-minded members.
3. There will be emotional problems. There will be no close attachment to the local congregation and "withdrawing fellowship" will not affect the conscience. Independence among members will take over and no mutual dependence on others will be felt. Cold personalities one toward another will exist in and out of the assembly.
4. There will be attendance problems. Members will attend the services, but do nothing outside the assembly. Some will attend very little or not at all. Membership will be viewed by some as just attendance. Some will simply fill a space on a pew, take the Lord's supper, drop some money in the plate, and do little more than that. However, they will certainly find the time to be critical of the leadership and others now and then.

B. What is the Solution? Take Local Church Membership Seriously.

1. Local church membership is not just about having your name in a church directory. The local church is a cooperative or collective "body", not a social club to visit a few times a week and pay dues.
2. The membership in the local church is to be no sham or cheap falseness. Membership should be taken seriously (Acts 5:10-11, 13-14; 9:26-30).

C. What Does Each Member Owe the Local Church? Loyalty, Dependability, Hard Work, and Presence at Each Service.

**IV. CONCLUSION.** Local Church Organization Means Every Member Possible, Using Every Talent Possible, Every Day Possible, to Serve Every Member Possible.

## Lesson Twenty-Four Discussion

1. What people are a part of the local church in addition to the elders and deacons?
  
2. Christians are sometimes called the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-14).
3. What should each Christian in the local church do with his or her abilities, talents, or gifts, knowing that:
  - There is a diversity of function within the body?
  
  - The members of the body work together in a collective action?
  
  - The members of the body are to be unified, not divided?
  
  - All of the members of the body are necessary?
  
  - Every member of the body is to be working?
  
4. What happens in a physical body when one member (arm, leg, heart, etc.) does not function properly? What application can be made to the local body of Christ?
  
5. What are some problems that occur when Christians do not function as active "members" of the body of Christ?
  
6. What is the solution to these problems?

7. What does each member of this local church owe the local church?
8. Take each positive "one another" passage and write down one goal for each one that will help you carry out each responsibility. Be prepared to discuss in class what each passage means and what you plan to do specifically to fulfill each one.
- a) Peace one with another (Mk. 9:50).
  - b) Love one another (Jn. 13:34-35; Rom. 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11; 2 Jn.5).
  - c) Members one of another (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:25).
  - d) Tenderly affectionate one toward another (Rom. 12:10).
  - e) Same mind one toward another (Rom. 12:16; 15:5).
  - f) Exhort and edify one another (Rom. 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25).
  - g) Comfort one another (1 Thess. 4:18).
  - h) Receive one another (Rom. 15:7).
  - i) Admonish one another (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16).
  - j) Salute or greet one another (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 1 Pet. 5:14).



- k) Wait or tarry one for another (1 Cor. 11:33).
- l) Care one for another (1 Cor. 12:25).
- m) Serve one another (Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 5:5).
- n) Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2).
- o) Forbear one another (Eph. 4:2).
- p) Be kind and tenderhearted one to another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
- q) Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
- r) Submit one to another (Eph. 5:21).
- s) Confess your sins one to another (Jas. 5:16).
- t) Pray one for another (Jas. 5:16).
- u) Be hospitable one to another (1 Pet. 4:9).
- v) Consider one another (Heb. 10:24).

w) Speak one to another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

x) Follow after good one toward another (1 Thess. 5:15).

y) Fellowship one with another (1 Jn. 1:7).

**WHERE HE LEADS, I WILL FOLLOW**  
**(Jesus's Example for Local Church Workers)**  
**Lesson 25**

**I. INTRODUCTION.**

A. Local Church Organization in Review.

1. Lessons 1-4 studied organization concepts: the NT pattern, autonomy, cooperation, and maintaining organizational purity.
2. Lessons 5-24 studied organization personalities: leaders, elders, deacons, the wives of elders and deacons, evangelists, teachers, a woman's work, and members.

B. Local Church Workers.

1. Who can the men and women in a local church turn to for an example of work and service?
2. Who is the best example for local church workers? What is the best training manual for the various functions in the local church?

**II. JESUS IS THE GREAT EXAMPLE.**

A. Jesus is the Example for Leaders.

1. Jesus is the great leader (Mt. 9:9; Jn. 1:43). He is a leader...
  - a) With firm principles (Mt. 16:24; 19:21-11; Lk. 9:57-62; Jn. 21:19, 21).
  - b) On the move (Mk. 1:38).
  - c) Out in front (Mk. 10:32).
  - d) With goals (Lk. 2:49; Jn. 4:34-38; 8:29).
  - e) With urgency (Lk. 2:49; 4:43; 13:33; 19:5; Jn. 9:4; 10:16).
  - f) Made like us (Jn. 1:14; Heb. 2:17).
  - g) Who calls others to follow (Jn. 10:3).
  - h) With personal care (Jn. 10:3, 27).
  - i) On the move in the right direction (Jn. 12:26; 14:3).
2. Leaders in the local church can learn much from this example.

B. Jesus is the Example for Elders.

1. Jesus is the great shepherd (Mt. 2:6; 9:36; 25:32; 26:31; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:17). He is a shepherd with...
  - a) Personal care (Jn. 10:1-3, 5, 14-15).

- b) Leadership skill (Jn. 10: 3-4, 26-27).
  - c) Provision of nourishment (Jn. 10:7-10, 28-30).
  - d) Self-sacrifice (Jn. 10:11-18).
2. Shepherds (elders) in the local church can learn much from this example.
- C. Jesus is the Example for Deacons.
- 1. Jesus is the great servant (Isa.42:1; Ac.1:1; 10:38; Phil.2:7-8). His service is...
    - a) Immediate (Mk. 1:20, 21, 29; etc.).
    - b) Impartial (Mk. 1:38-39).
    - c) Compassionate (Mk. 1:41; 3:5; 6:34; 10:13-16, 21).
    - d) Accompanied by suffering (Mk. 8:31).
    - f) Sacrificial (Mk. 10:45).
    - g) With obedience (Mk. 14:36).
    - h) Honored (Mk. 16:19).
  - 2. Servants (deacons) in the local church can learn much from this example.
- D. Jesus is the Example for Evangelists.
- 1. Jesus is the great evangelist (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 11:5; Lk. 7:22; 8:1; 20:1). He preached...
    - a) The gospel (Mk. 1:14).
    - b) Repentance (Mk. 1:15).
    - c) With exhortation (Lk. 3:18).
    - d) Salvation (Lk. 4:18-19).
    - e) With urgency (Lk. 4:43).
    - f) Peace (Ac. 10:36).
  - 2. Evangelists in the local church can learn much from this example.
- E. Jesus is the Example for Teachers.
- 1. Jesus is the great teacher (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 21:23; 26:55; Mk. 6:6; Lk. 2:46; 4:15, 31; 5:3, 17; 6:6; 13:10, 22, 26; Jn. 3:2; 8:2, 20; Acts 1:1). His teaching was...
    - a) Life-changing (Mt. 5:2ff).
    - b) Authoritative (Mt. 7:28-29; 22:33; Mk. 1:21-22, 27; 11:18; Lk. 4:32).
    - c) Truthful (Mt. 22:16).
    - d) Easily understood (Mk. 4:1f).
    - e) Compassionate (Mk. 6:34).

- f) Explicit (Mk. 8:31; 9:31).
- g) Regular (Mk. 10:1).
- h) Divine in origin (Jn. 3:2; 7:16-17; 8:28).
- i) Energetic (Jn. 7:14, 28).
- j) Candid (Jn. 18:19-21).

2. Teachers in the local church can learn much from this example.

F. Jesus is the Example for All Members.

1. Jesus is a great "member" of the Godhead (Col. 2:9). He worked together in...

- a) Humility (Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8).
- b) Subjection (Jn. 6:38; Mt. 26:39; Mk. 14:36; Lk. 22:42; 1 Cor.11:3).
- c) Mutual dependence (Jn. 5:30; 8:28, 42; 12:27).
- d) Unity (Jn. 10:30; 17:20-23).
- e) Cooperation (Jn. 16:13-15).
- f) Honor (Jn. 17:4).

2. All members in the local church can learn much from this example

**III. CONCLUSION.** Jesus Is Our Example and Pattern For All the Workers in the Local Church.  
Will You Follow Where He Leads?

## Lesson Twenty-Five Discussion

1. What example does Jesus give for leaders?
2. What is lacking in many leaders today that was present in the life of Jesus?
3. What example does Jesus give for elders?
4. What is lacking in many elders today that was present in the life of Jesus?
5. What example does Jesus give for deacons?
6. What is lacking in many deacons today that was present in the life of Jesus?
7. What example does Jesus give for evangelists?
8. What is lacking in many evangelists today that was present in the life of Jesus?
9. What example does Jesus give for teachers?
10. What is lacking in many teachers today that was present in the life of Jesus?
11. What example does Jesus give for all the members?
12. What is lacking in many members today that was present in the life of Jesus?

**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.