

Local Church Membership & Organization

Last time, we studied that those who were saved in Christ were added to His body, made members of His house (family), became part of His bride, were made citizens of the kingdom, were made part of the temple and were in the brotherhood.

Now, how these people are organized by God in the local groups to work and worship together.

I. Made Up of Members Of The Body Of Christ

Roman church made up of "saints"

Rom. 1:7 "to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul was "trying to associate with the disciples" and "he was with them"

Acts 9:26-28 "And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

27 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

28 And he was with them moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord."

disciples met and were taught in the local church

Acts 11:26 "and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."

Note: Since the congregation is made up of those who are saved in Christ (to the best of our knowledge) and each one must have their own faith, it is not necessarily a family or community group.

No one is a member by physical proximity to the meeting place, or by blood relation to one, or many, of the members.

The one professing faith, and having been baptized into Christ on that profession, and then remaining dedicated to walking in Christ is fit for membership.

Our dear children, whom we teach and try to set the example for are not members yet, although we hope them one day to be. The same for our unbelieving or disobedient family members.

Membership is always individual, it is never on the family plan.

II. Offices **Eph. 4:11**

Eph. 4:11-16 "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

A. Elders/Bishops/Pastors

1.) These Are Same Office

"elders" of Ephesus

Acts 20:17 "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church."
the are "bishops" and they "pastor" the flock

Acts 20:28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

2.) Oversight Of One (Own) Congregation

every congregation had own.

Acts 11:30 “And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.”

Tit. 1:5 “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you”

Elders and deacons in Philippi

Phil. 1:1 “Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons”

over the flock that the congregation had given them, Ephesus

Acts 20:28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

over the flock among them

1 Pet. 5:1-4 “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

3.) Must Meet Certain Qualifications

1 Tim. 3:1-7 “It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.

2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money.

4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?);

6 and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Tit. 1:5-9 “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

6 namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.

7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

How can a Mormon youth be an elder?

How can an unmarried man be a bishop?

How can a man who does not meet all of these qualifications be a pastor?

4.) Plurality Of Elders

All of these verses mention elders (plural).

Every instruction and example has a plurality of elders. There is no one man rule in the Lords church to prevent abuse of power.

B. Evangelist/Minister

2 Tim. 4:5 “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Evangelist means a teller of the good news / Minister means servant.

Books of **1 & 2 Timothy** and **Titus** written to evangelists

to refute false teachers

1 Tim. 1:3-7 “As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,

4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

6 For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,

7 wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.”

to preach sound words that will save.

1 Tim. 4:6-16 “In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.”

13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all.

16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”

“preach the word” do the work of an evangelist, fulfill the ministry

2 Tim. 4:1-5 “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires;

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

C. Others

1.) Teachers - teach God's word

all should eventually reach maturity enough to teach

Heb. 5:12 “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”

teaching is a great responsibility

James 3:1 “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.”

2.) Deacons - servants

must meet certain qualifications for self and family

1 Tim. 3:8-13 “Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

10 And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

12 Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

3.) Other Offices Not Known In The N.T.

Cardinals, Monsigners, Prelates, Patriarchs, etc.

Youth Ministers, Children's Pastors