



The Church



Foundations
for
Life



Word “church” refers to:

- Local congregation of professing believers
- A denominational group
- The universal body of true Christian believers
- A building used for religious purposes



Origination

- Began on day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47)
- Peter proclaimed finished work of Christ
- Continues today as evangelism and discipleship take place
- Will be complete when Christ returns for His own (Eph 4:13)

Purpose of Church Today

- To be a visible church of those who profess to be Christians.
- We become a testimony to the world that Christ has risen



Mission of the Church

- To make disciples who will engage in worship, growth, fellowship and service.
- The mission to make disciples is carried out through the evangelizing of the lost and the edifying of the saints.



One Definition of Church

- Summation of Acts 2:42-47

“The local church is a community of regenerated believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. In obedience to scripture, they organize under qualified leadership , gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and communion, are unified by the Spirit, are disciplined for holiness and scatter to fulfill the Great Commandment and Great Commission as missionaries to the world for God’s glory and their joy.”

The Basic Task of the Church

- To teach sound doctrine. Titus 2:1
- The leaders must be faithful to sound doctrine
- Churches tend to do many things that distract from the basic task.
- Leaders are often drawn in directions that dissipate their energies from this task



Three forms of Church Government

- Episcopal
- Presbyterian
- Congregational



Episcopal

The
Roman
Catholic
Church



- Chief ministers are bishops
- Apostles were the supreme leaders of church
- They entrusted power to some
- That power was succeeded for generations
- Church of England (Catholic church) maintains this as well as Lutheran churches
- More Christians accept this than any other government.

Presbyterian

- Importance of elders
- John Calvin based Geneva churches on
 - Pastor
 - Teacher
 - Deacon
 - Elder
- Used throughout Europe and then America



Congregational

- Emphasis on congregation
- Appeared after the Reformation
- Decisions a matter of congregational vote
- Developed in Holland, then America (via pilgrims from Leiden in 1620)



Scriptural Support

- All forms are implied in Scripture
- Only one is fully described and developed
- Elder rule (Presbyterian) Hebrews 13:17
- Elder and overseer interchangeable
- Paul and Barnabas appointed elders (Acts 14:23)
- Paul directed Titus to appoint elders (Tit 1:5)

Elders

- Highest position of authority 1 Pet 5:2-4
- Responsible for Direction, Doctrine, Discipline
- 1 Tim 3 lists requirements
- “Blameless” – no great blot on life
- Above reproach as God’s steward
- Not self willed, quick tempered, addicted to wine, pugnacious or fond of sordid gain

Elders

- Must be hospitable v8
- Love what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word v8-9
- Elder should know priorities and live by standards of God's Word.



Deacons

- Servants
- Collect funds, distribute relief, provide mercy
- Help poor, jobless, sick, widowed, elderly, homeless, shut-in, disabled.
- Counsel and guide people
- Visit people in their homes
- Minister to the needs of others in the church

Deacons

- Qualifications found in 1 Tim 3:8-13
- Personal Character
 - Dignity
 - Not double-tongued – always righteous in speech
 - Not addicted to wine – have clear thinking
 - Not fond of sordid gain – can handle money

Deacons

- Spiritual Character
 - Convictions based on knowledge of doctrine
 - Must have proved himself faithful in service
 - Morally pure – consecrated and devoted to wife
 - Leads family well – demonstrate management ability in home with family



Discipline

- Applicable only to those who desire to be associated with the church, and is not meant to give license to Church leadership in gray area trivia, but rather the end result should be to purify the Church (1 Cor. 5:6-8), to restore an erring person, to deter sin, and to demonstrate the reality of righteous living to the unsaved world.

Sin Often Requiring Discipline

- Divisiveness - II Thess. 3:11; Tit. 3:1-11; Rom. 16:17-20.
- Unruly, disorderly and undisciplined living - II Thess. 3:6, 11, 14; I Thess. 5:14.
- Disruptive conflict between members - I Cor. 6:5; Phil. 4:2-3; Matt. 18:15-18.
- Sins of the flesh - I Cor. 5:11; 6:9-10. In particular, but certainly not exclusively, homosexuality (lesbianism) should be addressed in this context. God's Word is clear that these unnatural relationships must never be tolerated in the church (Rom. 1:26-27).
- Public denial of the doctrines of Mosaic Church - I Tim. 6:3; II Tim. 2:16-18; Tit. 3:10; II John 1:10-11; Rev. 2:14.

Steps for Church Discipline

- First step: Note and mark those who are in need of correction - Rom. 16:17; II Thess. 3:14.
- Second step: Arrange a private meeting with the offender - Matt. 18:15. Rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him
- Luke 17:3.



Steps for Church Discipline

- Third step: Set up a second meeting, this time with several others present - Matt. 18:16. During these preliminary private and semiprivate meetings the individual should be repeatedly admonished (Tit. 3:10), rebuked (II Tim. 4:2), and warned (I Thess. 5:14), for the sake of bringing about genuine repentance in the life of the offender. If genuine repentance does occur, the offender should seek the forgiveness from the circle of offense, and no more.

Steps for Church Discipline

- Fourth step: As a final resort, the unrepentant one is to be brought before the entire Church - Matt. 18:17; I Tim. 5:20.
- Fifth step: Upon refusal to submit to Church discipline the guilty party is to be spiritually excommunicated.
 - He is to be denied Christian fellowship:
 - II Tim. 3:5, II Thess. 3:6, I Tim. 6:3, 5, Titus 3:10, II Thess. 3:14
 - He is to be delivered over to Satan:
 - I Cor. 5:5, I Tim. 1:20

Steps for Church Discipline

- Upon refusal to heed the warning and correction of the Elder Board and of the Church, he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the Church with the hope of future repentance and reconciliation. There shall be no appeal to any court as a result of this decision (1 Cor. 6:1-2)

Responsibility of Church Body

- In all matters of church discipline, the church congregation is expected, with no exceptions, to keep silent about the matter to any and all outside the congregation, avoiding the common sin of “slander” (II Cor. 12:20).



Ordinances

- The word *ordinance* comes from two Latin words which in their final meaning signify “that which is ordered or commanded.” This term has been used to describe the two institutions:
 - Baptism
 - Lord’s Supper

Baptism

- Confess identity with Christ to others
- As Christ went through death, burial and resurrection, so the Christian emerges from the water dead to sin
- Only an illustration of what has taken place in the Believer, baptism has no saving virtue
- Baptism is always for the Believer – not for infants. No recorded instance of it.

Baptism

- Immersion – example set forth in Scripture
- Affusion – (sprinkling) not mentioned in Scripture
- Given to the church by Christ, so it is our responsibility to participate in it.



The Lord's Supper

- Spiritual experience
- Transubstantiation – bread and wine actually become the body and blood
- Consubstantiation – body and blood exist alongside the bread and wine
- Christ cannot be sacrificed again
- First supper, He had not yet been crucified

The Lord's Supper

- Instructions found in 1 Cor 1:27-29
- Only for those who are Believers
- Observe with respect and reverence
- Time of heart-searching, confession and restoration
- Early church practiced frequently
- We practice until Christ returns



Practical Exercise

- Write a sign to put out in front of the building of a church you establish.
- How would you ensure that you maintain focus in your church as you grow?
- What key staff positions would you have in your church – with what duties?
- How would you facilitate community in a growing church?

