

# The Church- Part 3

## Church Structure

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren,” (1 Jn. 3:16). This Bible study discusses church structure from the most basic relationship to the more involved. In all relationships we are to show His love. Church structure must be understood with respect to the various relationships involved, because it is as we are “knit together” that the body is formed. Being grafted into the body of Christ is not joining an organization, it is forming relationships - - first with Jesus, then with the rest of the Body. As people find themselves added to the church, they must consider questions such as, “Who should I look to for guidance? Who should be my friends, and what is my responsibility to others in the church?”

1. The Most Important Relationship Our personal relationship with Jesus through the Word, prayer and worship takes priority over every other relationship.

- A. Needing Jesus. We relate to Jesus the most.
  - 1. The greatest commandment is to love God. (Mk. 12:30; Deut. 6:5; 10:12; Ps. 31:23).
  - 2. It is only by being in relationship with Him that we can give to others. (Phil. 2:1-5).
  - 3. He alone is our high priest. (Heb. 2:17, 3:1, 4:14-15, 5:5, 6:20, 7:26, 8:1, 9:11, 10:21).
  - 4. We can love (be in relationship with others) because He has first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:19).
  
- B. Meeting Jesus. This relationship is cultivated by:
  - 1. The Word. (1 Sam. 3:21)
  - 2. Prayer. Speaking with God and not to God. (Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8).
  - 3. Worship. (Jn. 4:23-24).

### IMPORTANT POINTS

Describe the Christian’s most important relationship and how to develop it.

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II. The Family Relationship The home is a basic substructure of the church. People need to have their relationships at home in order before they consider other relationships.

- A. The Man's Role. The man is the head of the wife. (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23).
  - 1. He teaches her. (1 Tim. 2:11; 1 Cor. 14:35).
  - 2. He rejoices over her. (Pr. 5:18; Ecc. 9:9).
  - 3. He lays his life down for her. (Eph. 5:25; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 Cor. 7:33).
  - 4. He meets her physical needs. (1 Tim. 5:8).
  
- B. The Woman's Role. The woman submits to the husband. (1 Pet. 3:5; Eph. 5:22).
  - 1. The submission is to be similar to the church's submission to Christ. (Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18).
  - 2. Her submission is a testimony to the husband. (1 Pet. 3:1; Pr. 12:4).
  - 3. This submission results in purity in the woman. (1 Pet. 3:1-2).
  - 4. The older women are then to train the younger women to be submissive and love their families. (Titus 2:3-5; Pr. 31:26).
  
- C. The Children's Role. The children obey the parents. (Co. 3:20).
  - 1. The children are to give honor to their parents. (Eph. 6:2; Pr. 31:28; Deut. 5:16).
  - 2. Children obey the parents in the Lord. (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20).
  - 3. Disobedience is judged by the Lord. (Pr. 30:17; Deut. 21:18-21; Lev. 20:9; Mk. 7:9-13).
  
- D. The Parent's Role. Parents have a responsibility to the children to:
  - 1. Teach them how to walk in the way of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:7; Pr. 22:6; Ps. 78:5).
  - 2. Give them encouragement to walk in His way. (1 Thes. 2:11-12).
  - 3. Teach them right from wrong. (Pr. 13:24, 19:18, 22:15, 23:13, 29:15).
  - 4. Provide for physical needs. (1 Cor. 12:14).

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

Describe the family relationship that Christians have with each other.

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III. The General Relationship with Each Other "Fellowshipping is Christians coming together under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ. As each believer is in a close

relationship with Jesus, we have unity of mind and purpose. (1 Jn. 1:7; Rom. 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3, Ps. 133:1).

A. Same Family. All Christians are a part of the same family.

1. Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers. (Heb. 2:11-12; Jn. 20:17; Matt. 12:50; Rom. 8:29).
2. We are the Father's children. (1 Jn. 3:1; Rom. 9:26, 8:16).
3. We all have a family relationship with each other. (1 Tim. 5:1-2; Matt. 23:8; Rom. 12:5).

B. Same Submission. Christians should submit their lives one to another. (Eph. 5:21; 1 Cor. 16:15-16). This involves opening one's life to others for:

1. Confession of secret sins. (Ja. 5:16).
2. Instruction. (Rom. 15:14)
3. The order for submission is first to the Lord, then to each other. (11 Cor 8:5)

C. Same Concern. Christians should care for one another and build each other up. (Rom. 14:19, 15:2). This involves:

1. Speaking encouraging words. (Eph. 4:29, 5:19; 1 Thes. 5:11).
2. Practicing hospitality. (1 Pet. 4:9; Rom. 12:13, 16:16; Lu. 3:11).
3. Not doing evil against each other. (Ja. 4:11, 5:11; Rom. 14:13; Co. 3:9)
4. Serving in practical areas. (1 Pet. 4:10; Gal. 5:13).

IV. The Close Relationships Each member should know how to develop close relationships with a few people. This is between people who are of the same age in the Lord, but also needs to be with those who are older and more mature.

A. Close Relationships. We need close friends to:

1. Have an increase in strength. (Deut. 32:30; Ecc. 4:9-12; Lu. 10:1).
2. Learn from to grow in maturity. (Pr. 13:20, 27:17).
3. Point out sins in our lives. (Pr. 27:6; Gal. 2:11-14, 6:1).

B. Discipleship Relationships. Discipleship is when older person in the Lord raises up a younger believer. Paul taught Timothy and Titus to be disciples.

1. Paul had a spiritual father-son relationship with Timothy and Titus. (1 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4).
2. Paul took them along and showed them his way of life. (Gal. 2:3; 1 Cor. 4:14; 11 Tim. 3:10-11).
3. Paul desired their company more than anyone else's. (11 Tim. 1:3-4, 4:9; Titus 3:12; 11 Cor. 2:12-13; Ac. 17:15).
4. He gave them personal instructions to help them learn to minister out. (1Tim. 1:18-19; Titus 2:1-15).
5. Timothy took on Paul's hear. (Ph. 2:19-22).
6. The discipleship relationship involved Timothy and Titus in:
  - a. Accompanying Paul and ministering to his needs, as did John. (Mark Ac. 15:37-38, 20:4, 18:5).

- b. Preaching with Paul. (11 Cor. 1:19).
- c. Taking on Paul's heart. (Phil. 2:19-22; 11 Cor. 8:16).
- d. Being sent out to preach. (1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5; 1 Thes. 3:2).
- e. Attaining to the same anointing as Paul. (1 Cor. 16:10; Heb. 13:23).
- f. They in turn raising up other faithful men. (11 Tim. 2:2).

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

Explain the progression of the discipleship relationship that Paul had with Timothy and Titus.

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V. Relationships with Elders Each member should know who to look to for guidance and instruction.

A. Qualifications for Elders.

- 1. Elders are older, more mature Christians. (1 Tim. 1:6-7).
  - a. Elders don't argue. (11 Tim. 2:23-26).
  - b. They have their finances in order. (1 Tim. 3:3; 1 Pet. 5:2).
  - c. They know how to relate in a family. (Titus 1:6; 1 Tim. 3:4-5).
  - d. They must be blameless in overcoming the flesh. (Titus 1:7-8; 1 Tim. 3:2-3).
- 2. They are appointed in each city, and set in by authority. (Ac. 14:23; Titus 1:5).
- 3. The elders minister to two groups of people. (Titus 1:9).
  - a. Believers. (Ja. 5:14).
  - b. Unbelievers. (Titus 1:10-11; 1 Tim. 1:3-4).

B. The Elder's Responsibility. Elders are set up for oversight of the body, much as the watchman of the Old Testament.

- 1. Elders are to watch over the flock in a righteous way. (Ac. 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2; Isa. 56:10-11; Eze. 34:2-3).
- 2. They are to be watchman who call out to people. (Eze. 33:1-9, 3:17-21; Isa. 62:6; Hos. 9:8; Jer. 31:6; Isa. 52:8).
- 3. They must give an account for the souls they watch over. (Heb. 3:17; Eze. 33:6).

4. Elders set an example for the people to follow. (11 Thes. 3:9; 1 Pet. 5:3; Act. 20:35).

C. The Member's Responsibility. Members have a responsibility to the elders.

1. In the Old Testament, provision was made for priests from the people in several areas. (Lev. 2:3, 10:13, 27:21; Num. 3:48, 5:9, 18:9, 12, 21; Deut. 18:3; 11 Ki. 12:16).
2. The body of Christ has a financial obligation to the elders. (1 Cor. 9:6-14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).
3. Members are to submit to the elders' authority. (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5; Act. 16:4).
4. Members must respect them and hold them in the highest regard. (1 Thes. 5:12-13).

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

What is the purpose of elders?

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Expound on the member's responsibility toward elders.

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VI. Relationships with Deacons When areas of practical need arise, faithful men are chosen to serve. Deacon comes from the Greek diakonos, which means to be a servant.

A. Qualifications for Deacons. (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

1. Deacons are to be men with a pure heart and proper character. (vs. 8-9).
2. They are to be tested before they are set in office. (vs. 10).
3. Their families are also to be in proper order. (vs. 11-12).
4. Deacons who have served well are rewarded. (vs. 13; 11 Sam. 23:3-4).

B. The Pattern for Deacons. (Ac. 6:1-7).

1. There were practical needs in the Body of Christ that the elders could not tend to without neglecting the ministry of the Word. (vs. 1-2)
2. To fulfill these needs, the brothers chose men who were going on with God. (vs. 3-5).
3. They were set in office by authority and with prayer. (vs. 6).
4. This order caused the kingdom to advance. (vs. 7).

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

What is the purpose for deacons?

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VII. Relationships with Offices of Ministry There are special gifts of ministry to the church for building up the body. “And the Lord gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:11-13).

A. Defining the Ministry. God has appointed five areas of ministry. (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:27-28).

1. Apostles. These men go through great suffering as they lay down the foundation in churches. (1 Cor. 9:1; 4:9-13; Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:10).
2. Prophets. These men speak both of things to come and things presently. (Act. 11:27-30, 21:10-11).
3. Evangelists. (An evangelist brings the Gospel to the masses and to individuals while training the local church to do the same. (Ac. 21:8, 8:5-6, 34-35).
4. Pastors. In the New Testament church, this was not just one man but a group of elders (shepherds). (Ac. 20:17, 28).
5. Teachers. These men have a thorough knowledge of the scriptures in bringing forth the Word. (Ac. 18:24-28; Ja. 3:1; Ecc. 12:9).

B. Receiving Ministry. These ministries build up the church members.

1. The authority these men receive is for building men up and not for pulling them down. (11 Cor. 10:8; 12:19).

2. They train up the body much as a child is subject to guardians until he is old enough to inherit the estate. (Gal. 4:1-2; Eph. 4:14; 1 Cor. 3:1-2).
  3. The instrument these ministries use for building up the body is the Word of God. (Col. 1:25; Ac. 20:32, 1 Thes. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:11; Titus 1:3).
- C. Giving Ministry. Each individual is prepared to give after being equipped by these ministries. Each member is prepared to minister as they receive the teaching and training from these ministries.
1. In being a part of this five-fold ministry, Paul desired to present everyone perfect in Christ. (Col. 1:28).
  2. The writer of Hebrews wanted the people to go on this point of perfections where they could teach others, and so leave the foundational things. (Heb. 6:1-3, 5:12).
  3. At this point as a perfect man, we have unity with each other. (Eph. 4:13; 1 Cor. 1:10; 11 Cor. 13:11; Ac. 4:32).

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

Describe the five offices of ministry.

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Explain the purposes of these ministries.

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VIII. Point of Decision As a Christian grows from being supported and trained by the body of Christ, friends, elders, and ministers, they will begin to minister to other new Christians. God is desiring that these areas of relationship would be strengthened and purified so that His church could become a functioning unit that is holy and separated from the world. As God continues to do this work, His church will be the instrument that

wins the lost of the world. “For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself,” (Deut. 14:2).

**PERSONAL APPLICATION - CHURCH STRUCTURE**

1. According to the role(s) that I fit into, are my family relationships at home in order?

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2. Am I making an effort to show the same submission and concern that other Christians are giving me?

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3. How can I develop closer friendships and a better discipleship relationship to help me grow in the Lord?

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4. At this point of decision, I desire to be trained by the five offices of ministry that I could give...

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