

# THE CHURCH

SECTION X

## APPOINTMENT X: THE CHURCH

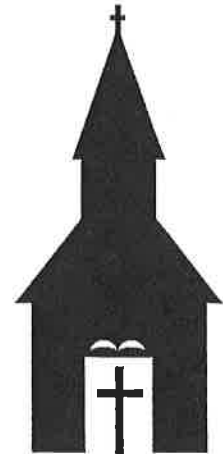
### Objectives:

1. To define the church Biblically ((local and universal)
2. To describe the essential relationships of an effective body, according to the New Testament
3. To outline the basic responsibilities of the church

*To learn more about what a Biblical church is, refer to the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's letters.*

### I. FOUNDATION - The Church (local and universal) is...

- A. Not a building! It is the “called-out ones”. Those set apart by God. (I Cor. 1:1-3)
- B. People from that area who are involved with the church versus people being sent in for “a season”. The people are rooted in the community (Philippians. 1:1, Acts 20:17)
- C. Christ is the Head (Ephesians 4:15-16) and the “called-out ones” are the Body of Jesus
- D. Led by the Power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)
- E. Under proven leadership (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1)
  1. ALL men – I don’t know why, but I am not going to question God or think that He means “something different” because of the changes in our culture. Cultures change but God doesn’t, and these are very clear passages on how to set up a church and what the people in leadership of overseers are to “look like or be”. (Think about it – all the apostles were men)
  2. Definition of an Elder or Overseer: (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1)
    - a. Overseer (I Tim. 3:1) – 2175 episkopos = anyone who seeks the office of overseer; exercising ones duties. (T Tim. 3:2 & Titus 1:7) = episkopos = to look or watch over
    - b. Elder (Titus 1:5&6) – 4565 presbyteros = another term for the same person as bishop or overseer (Acts 20:17, 28). The term elder indicates the mature spiritual experience and understanding of those so described; the term bishop or overseer indicates the character of the work undertaken.
  3. Characteristics of an Elder or Overseer (I Timothy 3, Titus 1)
    - a. Above reproach
    - b. Husband of one wife
    - c. Temperate
    - d. Self-controlled
    - e. Respectable
    - f. Hospitable
    - g. Able to Teach (not a responsibility of a deacon)
    - h. Not given to much wine
    - i. Not violent but gentle
    - j. Not quarrelsome
    - k. Not a lover of money
    - l. Manage his family well
    - m. Not a recent convert
    - n. Good reputation with outsiders
  4. Summary: In the Christian churches, those who, being raised up and qualified by the work of the Holy Spirit, were appointed to have the spiritual care of and to exercise oversight over the churches. The New Testament shows that these were to be set up in a plurality in each church. (Acts 14:23, 20:17, Phil. 1:1, I Tim. 5:17, Titus 1:5) \*The duty of the Elders is described by the verb “episkope” (overseer). Elder and Overseer are the same with the elder being the name and overseer stating what they do.



5. Think about how a church is set up. We should be seeking “plurality of Godly leadership-run” churches and not a one person “Pastor-Run” or a “Congregational Run” church.
6. Definition of a Deacon (I Tim. 3:8-12) – 1356 diakonos = servant. Those who serve in churches. Views a servant in relationship to his work. (See I Timothy 3 for characteristics)

## II. Family

- A. All members are to be involved (Romans 12:3-8, I Peter 4:10-11, I Corinthians 12:4-7). All have at least one spiritual gift and needs to be exercising it within the body.
- B. Cross-generational – Older Christians (men and women) teach younger Christians by word and deed (I Peter 5:5, Titus 2:3-8, I Timothy 5:1-2)
- C. Family Unit (Colossians 3:18-21, Ephesians 5:22-6:4): Striving for spiritual unity among the believers of the church.
- D. Importance of meeting together to encourage each other and keep our focus on Christ (Hebrews 12:24-25). Do not forsake the assemble of meeting together and think that you don’t need to be involved with a church. We are a body, and the body needs to work together as such.

## III. Function of the Church

- A. **GLORIFY GOD!!!!** God doesn’t exist for our ends. We were created for His purposes. Do not desire all the benefits with none of the responsibility.
  1. Ephesians 1:3-14 – the praise of His Glory (I Peter 4:10-11)
  2. I Corinthians 10:31 – Do all to glorify God
  3. Example of a Biblically purpose driven church:
 

“This church shall seek to glorify God by making disciples who love God, serve one another, and reach the world for Christ. We commit ourselves to five priorities: 1) **The Bible**, mastering God’s truth, thus living distinctively Christian lives (II Timothy 2:15). 2) **Prayer**, daily communication with our Father, which is an expression of our love for Him, and dependence upon Him for everything in our lives (Philippians 4:6-7). 3) **Worship**, honoring God as we sacrificially serve Him with our time and money, as well as worshipping Him in our private devotions and corporate life in the Body (Romans 12:1). 4) **Community**, building an authentic family that meets the needs of others by actively serving each other with our God-given gifts (Acts 2:42-47). 5) **Outreach**, actively sharing Jesus Christ with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers in such a way as to bring people to Christ (Acts 1:8)

### B. Witness to the World

1. Redemptive – Make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:46-49, Acts 1:8)
2. Characterized by:
  - a. Love for one another (John 15:13 and 13:34-35, I John 3:14-18 and 4:20)  
(Ex: boy giving for his sister)

A little boy spent his days romping with his sister, whom he dearly loved. They rolled in the grass, climbed trees together, and made great Western adventures together. One day the little girl became very sick. The whole family went to the hospital in a big city for the first time. After a few tests, the doctor said, “She will need a blood transfusion if she is going to make it. Little boy, your blood will work. Are you willing to give it?” The boy was so upset that he left crying for a long time. Finally he came back and agreed. The doctor prepared the needles and said, “Don’t worry. It will only hurt a little. It will be over quickly.” (Remember, the boy knew nothing about hospitals.) With tears streaming down his face, the boy looked up from the table where he lay and stuttered, “Doctor, ...wh...wh...when do I die?”

- b. Compassion for the needy (James 1:27, 2:15-16) “Don’t tell them Jesus loves them till you are ready to love them too...” by Steve Camp

### C. Toward the Church

1. Equip the saints (Ephesians 4:7-17) – Stimulate growth in Christian living through the exercise of the gifts. This includes both leadership and laity. Equipping by
  - a. Teaching – Public (formal) and private (informal)
  - b. Example (Philippians 4:9)
  - c. Exhortation, consultation, encouragement, admonition, reproach, and rebuke (II Timothy 4:2, I Thessalonians 2:11-12 and 5:14-15)
2. Edification
  - a. To present the bride pure (2 Corinthians 11:2) – It is essential for the believer to reflect accurately the character of Christ as we carry out the commission of Christ. No cheap imitations! A.W. Tozer said:

“The popular notion that the first obligation of the Church is to spread the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth is false. Her first obligation is to be spiritually worthy to spread it.”
  - b. Preventative measures
    - i. John 17:17 – Sanctify by the Word
    - ii. Colossians 3:16 – Allow Christ’s Word to live in us.
  - c. Remedial action (Matthew 18:15-20, I Corinthians 5:1-13, I Thessalonians 3:6-15)

George Veerwer in “No Turning Back” said:

“To rebuke and exhort another Christian is one of the hardest things to do properly. It is easier to overlook the fault, but love must correct at all times.”

### IV. Reasons why we should be an active part or member of a local church

#### A. It’s a strategic aspect of three parts of the Christian life.

1. Believing - “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.” Acts 16:31; Acts 4:10-12
2. Belonging - You are a member of God’s very own family...and you belong in God’s household with every other Christian! (Ephesians 1:19 LB)
3. Becoming - From the very beginning God decided that those who came to Him should become like His Son. (Romans 8:29)

#### B. It’s the primary Biblical model for ministry in the New Testament (Benefits of being a parts of a local body)

1. It identifies me as a genuine believer. (Ephesians 2:19, Romans 12:5)
2. It provides me a spiritual family to support, encourage, and hold accountable. (Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 18:15-17)
3. It gives me a place to discover and use my gifts in ministry. (I Cor. 12:4-7)
4. It places me under the spiritual protection of godly leaders. (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28-29)
5. It gives me the accountability and need to grow. (Eph. 4:11-16)

- V. How Do I Choose a Church? (Some things to consider)
- A. Remember the purpose of the church is always to glorify God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - B. Are people vitally growing and contributing to the growth of one another? (serving others and not just looking for their personal needs to be met)
  - C. What are the teachings on God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit? Are they in line with Scripture? (which implies you need to study to have some ideas of what they say)
  - D. Does the church have an understanding and passion for discipleship that is resulting in a healthy, growing, multiplying ministry?
  - E. Is God's Word being accurately represented? (Is it being represented at all?)
  - F. Is the church led by the power of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:8 (Not just human agenda or talent)  
CAUTION: I'm not referencing "spirit-filled" in the occasional misguided charismatic understanding of Spirit-filled (which puts an over emphasis on tongues and other dramatic manifestations), but a more Biblical centered and Holy Spirit guided empowerment, manifested by the character of the fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22,23 – that always glorifies Christ.  
(See Matthew 7:21-23)
  - G. Does the teaching challenge me to be more like Christ, as well as encourage me to be grounded in the Word of God?
  - H. Are the people being equipped to do the work of ministry?
  - I. Is the church committed to reaching the lost in its community and throughout the world? (Are there a healthy number of new believers coming to Christ and growing in their faith?)
  - J. Does the church have a well thought through understanding and active role in reaching the world (other cultures and countries) for Christ? (Matthew 28 :19-20)