

Local Church

Teacher Manual

Local Church

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Bill Scheidler.*

Lesson 1

The Church and the Eternal Purpose of God

I. Introduction

Read Ephesians 1:3-14 – As I read, key in on the words “will”, “mystery” and “purpose”.

- Verse 5 speaks of the “*good pleasure of His will.*”
- Verse 9 refers to “*the mystery of His will.*”
- Verse 11 refers to “*the counsel of His will*” and “*the purpose of God.*”

II. The eternal purpose of God or will of God is “mysterious”

A. A biblical “mystery” can be defined as:

1. Something above human comprehension and fitted to inspire a sense of awe; something hidden from human knowledge.
2. A secret; something carefully and intentionally hidden from the knowledge of others.
3. A profound secret; an object of curiosity and wonder; a religious truth or doctrine not discernible by human reason.

B. Greek definition of the word “mystery.”

1. Vine’s: Among the ancient Greeks, ‘the mysteries’ were religious rites and ceremonies practiced by secret societies into which anyone might be received. Those that were initiated into these ‘mysteries’ became possessors of certain knowledge, which was not imparted to the uninitiated and were called ‘the perfected’.
2. A mystery, however, in the NT is not an undiscovered secret, but a secret undiscovered by human reason, but that is now revealed by the Spirit of God.
3. Young’s Concordance gives a simplified definition “that which can only be know by the initiated”.

C. God desires to let His people in on His mysteries so that they can fully understand His purpose.

1. It takes the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s mysteries to us (John 16:13; I Cor. 2:14).

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. John 16:13

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. I Corinthians 2:14

2. It takes a spirit of diligence and a hunger on our part as well (Pro. 25:2).

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

It is God's privilege to conceal things and the king's privilege to discover them. – NLT

III. God only has one purpose

- A. The word “purpose” means the object in view, end, aim, design or intention.

1. The purpose of God arises from the will of God and stands behind all the activity of God.
2. Every ounce of creative energy expended by the Father, every ounce of redemptive energy expended by the Son and every ounce of sanctifying energy expended by the Holy Spirit has been with one thing in mind.

God does not have hobbies, He does not waste time, He does not take a vacation, He does not slumber or sleep, and He does nothing without purpose.

- B. What the purpose is not.

When you ask people to define God’s purpose you often get some of the following answers:

1. God’s purpose is evangelism—to save all of mankind. “That’s what it is all about!”

The purpose is not evangelism or “getting people saved.” The question is, “Did God have a purpose before man was lost? Does God’s purpose require the fall of mankind into sin? Did God will for sin to take place?”

2. God’s purpose is producing the image of Christ in us—character development. “That’s what it is all about!”

The purpose is not “to be like Jesus” or the development of Christian character or maturity, growth in God and Christ-likeness. This may be an aspect of God’s purpose but not the entire goal.

3. God’s purpose is serving one another or serving the nations through missions (i.e. the Great Commission). “That’s what it is all about!”

4. God's purpose is spiritual warfare or overcoming Satan and evil. "That's what it is all about!"
5. God's purpose is being in perfect relationship to God through our prayers and devotional life. "That's what it is all about!"
6. God's purpose is worship—we were born to worship. "That's what it is all about!"

All of these are secondary or subsidiary purposes that spring from the one eternal purpose. They are pieces of the whole, but they are not the whole.

C. God's one purpose has many subsidiary purposes or many facets.

1. It reflects a manifold or "many sided" wisdom" (Eph. 3:10).

...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places...

The word "manifold" here means "multi-colored, greatly diversified, abounding in variety or manifold."

2. God's grand purpose or overall design is that which brings meaning to all of the parts.

D. God's purpose was declared in the first chapter of the Bible (Gen. 1:26-28)

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

1. The purpose springs from God's Father's heart (Christ was the one who revealed that God is a father and has the heart of a father). A father's heart has six desires. A father desires:

a. A man in His image

A father's heart desires offspring. It was not good for a God of love to dwell alone. He had a desire to reproduce Himself. This is where character fits in.

b. Multiplicity of seed

A father's heart is not satisfied with only one offspring, its desire is for many sons and daughters that would be numbered as the sands of the sea,

the dust of the earth and the stars in the sky. This is where evangelism fits in.

c. Maturity

A father's heart also desires for that offspring to come to a place of maturity in responsibility, wisdom and judgment. This is where discipleship fits in.

d. Relationship

A father's heart longs for the day when his children will not only be his offspring but his friends who can enter into a close relationship with him. This is where prayer, praise and worship fit in.

e. Partnership

A father's heart desires to enter into a working partnership with his offspring. God's job is to rule and reign the universe. He desires His kids to sit with Him in His throne. This is where ministry and spiritual warfare fit in.

f. Bride for His Son

A father's heart desires a bride for the only-begotten son. This must be a bride who measures up to the measure of the stature of the son who is being married. This is where relationship and intimacy fit in.

2. It is in the church that this mystery of God's purpose will ultimately be fulfilled. It is in the church that this many-sided wisdom will be manifest.

IV. The Church is referred to in the context of a mystery.

A. It is part of the "mystery of His will" or His eternal purpose (Eph. 1).

B. The Church as the Bride of Christ is referred to as a mystery (Eph. 5:23-33).

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:31-32

C. The coming together of Jew and Gentile into one Body is the Church is spoken of as a mystery (Eph. 2:14-3:7).

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles-- 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of

men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

Ephesians 3:1-7

D. The Church is a mystery in the sense that it was not seen or fully understood by a man in the Old Testament age.

1. Ephesians 3:5 – “which in other ages was not made known to the sons of man.”
2. Ephesians 3:9 – “which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God.”
3. Romans 16:25 – “according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began.”

E. The mystery relative to the Church, however, has been revealed in the New Testament age (Rom. 16:25-26; Col. 1:26).

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith--to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. Romans 16:25-27

...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. Colossians 1:26

V. The hidden mystery has to do with the fact that the Church was in God’s mind from the very beginning and it is in the center of the Eternal Purpose of God.

A. The purpose of God was not merely to bless the nations through their connection with the chosen nation, Israel.

1. That was not something hidden in ages past.
2. That was taken for granted in the Old Testament.

B. The purpose was to create one many-membered body out of all nations (Jew and Gentile) to fulfill God’s eternal purpose and satisfy His father’s heart.

C. That eternal purpose will be fulfilled in and through the Church.

The Church will be the many-membered man in the image of God who will qualify for rulership and dominion and for the honor of being eternally linked with the Son as one flesh.

1. The Church is the Body (Eph. 4), that new creation in the image of God.

2. The Church is the Temple (Eph. 2) that place of communion and relationship with the father.
3. The Church is the Family of God (Eph. 3) which is composed of many sons and daughters all bearing the family likeness.
4. The Church is the Army (Eph. 6) that walks in authority and dominion over the enemies of God's purpose.
5. The Church is the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5) that will one day be eternally united in marriage with the only begotten Son of God.

D. The Church is, therefore, not a side issue. It is:

- Not a gap (something used to solve a short-term problem).
- Not an accident.
- Not a second thought.
- Not a substitute for something else.
- Not a parenthetical invention.

E. The Church is the instrument of God ordained to bring forth and fulfill the Eternal Purpose of God.

When we work to build the Church...

When we do everything we can to make the Church succeed...

When we invest our time, talents and material things into the Church...

We are investing them into the Eternal Purpose of God.

Therefore they have meaning and significance.

VI. God's purpose will not be frustrated (Isaiah 14:26-27; 46:9-11; 55:8-11).

This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back? Isaiah 14:26-27

Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure, calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it. Isaiah 46:9-11

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. 10 “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:8-11

Lesson 2

The Church and the Kingdom of God

I. What is the Kingdom of God?

- A. The word “Kingdom” occurs about 160 times in the New Testament and, in its simplest form, it means “royal reign or a king’s domain.”
- B. In reference to God it refers to the realm of God and the reign of God.
 - 1. The Realm of God (Ps. 10:16; 45:6; 103:19; 145:10-13)

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. Psalm 45:6

The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. Psalm 103:19

All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. they shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations. Psalm 145:10-13

When the phrase “kingdom of God” is used in this **general sense** it refers to everything that is in the universe whether seen or unseen. There is a general sense in which everything is fully under God’s authority. In this sense the kingdom is unlimited and everlasting and no one can escape its reach.

- 2. The Reign of God (Mt. 6:9-10)

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

When the phrase “kingdom of God” is used in this **specific sense** it refers only to those spiritual beings who are submitted to and cooperating with the eternal will and purpose of God. It is in this sense that the kingdom is limited and can be extended in its reach. It is in this sense that we can pray for God’s rulership and reign (kingdom) to come. When we do, we are praying that those who are not presently cooperating with God’s will and purpose will do so, thus extending the reach or borders of the kingdom.

II. What is the distinction between the terms the “Kingdom of God” and the “Kingdom of Heaven”?

There is no distinction between the terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven.” Note the parallel passages as seen in the following chart:

Kingdom of Heaven

“The **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.” Mt. 4:17

“Theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**”. Mt. 5:3

“Preach, saying the **kingdom of heaven**” tt. 10:7

“He that is least in the **kingdom of heaven**” Mt. 11:11

“to know the mysteries of the **kingdom of heaven**” Mt. 13:11

“to know the mysteries of the **kingdom of heaven**” Matt. 13:31

“of such is the **kingdom of heaven**.” Mt. 19:14

Kingdom of God

“the gospel of the **kingdom of God**.” Mark 1:14

“Yours is the **kingdom of God**.” Luke 6:20

“to preach the **kingdom of God**.” Luke 9:2

“He that is least in the **kingdom of God**” Luke 7:28

“to know the mysteries of the **kingdom of God**” Luke 8:10

“**kingdom of God**...is like a grain” Luke 13:18

“of such is the **kingdom of God**.” Mark 10:14

It is interesting to note that the term “kingdom of heaven” is most common to the Gospel of Matthew, which is recognized as the Gospel to the Jew. Perhaps Matthew chose this term over the “kingdom of God” to combat the idea that the kingdom which was right at hand was an earthly, physical kingdom. Matthew does, however, at times use both terms and, in at least one case, he uses the terms interchangeably. In Matthew 19:23-24, it says:

*“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, that it is hard for a rich man to enter the **kingdom of heaven**. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the **kingdom of God**’.”*

One the basis of this evidence we can only draw one conclusion. There is really no distinction made in the New Testament between the terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven”.

III. How does God extend His kingdom in the earth?

A. God uses human channels to extend His kingdom relative to earth.

1. All authority and power is in God.
2. God, however, delegates authority to man.
3. Those who receive this delegated authority become *instruments* of the kingdom, *channels* of God’s authority and *vehicles* through which God will extend His kingdom in the earth.

B. God has used several channels or instruments through which to represent and extend His kingdom.

1. **Adam and Eve** were to bring the earth under God's dominion or authority (Gen. 1:26-28).
2. **The Patriarchs** of old were to administrate God's purposes (Gen. 9:1-2; 12:1-3).

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand."

Genesis 9:1-2

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Genesis 12:2-3

3. **Israel** was chosen as a nation to represent God's kingdom (Ex. 19:5-6).

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.

4. When Israel was in disobedience God even used **Gentile kings** at times to represent His purpose (II Chr. 36:22-23).

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!

5. **Jesus Christ** came to the earth as God's representative as He preached the kingdom and laid the foundation for the church.
6. **The Church** is the last instrument of the kingdom before the King of the kingdom returns (Mt. 16:18-19; 21:42-44; Eph. 3:10).

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Matthew 16:18-19

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." Matthew 21:42-44

C. The *instrument* that God uses may change, but the *purpose* remains the same.

IV. What did Jesus tell us about the Kingdom of God?

As the instrument of the Kingdom Jesus fulfilled His responsibility and He prepared the way for the church that would follow. Jesus preached the kingdom (Mt. 4:23). His teaching can be summarized as follows:

A. Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God was at hand (Mt. 4:17).

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

B. Jesus taught that the Kingdom was presently spiritual and not natural (Luke 17:20-21).

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

1. It is not of this world system (John 18:36).

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

2. It belongs to those with spiritual qualities (Mt. 5:3, 10).

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven... Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3. It is entered into through a spiritual experience (John 3:3-5).

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

4. It is build on the spiritual law of love (Mark 12:32-34).

So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

5. It is within you (Luke 17:21).

- C. Jesus taught that we are to make seeking the kingdom a priority (Mt. 6:33).

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

V. What is the relationship of the Church and the Kingdom? Are they identical?

The Church and the Kingdom are not identical. You cannot use the word interchangeably. The Church is the instrument of God to extend the kingdom of God.

VI. What message of the Kingdom is important for us today?

- A. Enter the kingdom yourself through the new birth experience (John 3:3-5).
B. Exercise childlike humility before the King of the kingdom and His kingdom principles (Mt. 18:3; 19:14).

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3

- C. Make service to the King of the kingdom number one in your life (Luke 9:59-62; 14:15-24; Mark 10:17-27).
D. Structure your life in such a way as to be a kingdom extender. Become a channel that God can use. Take dominion over your corner of the world!

Lesson 3-4 The Universal Church

I. Introduction (Mt. 16:13-19)

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" 14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

- A. The New Testament meaning or definition of "the church" has almost been lost to us because of the variety of ways in which this word is used.
- B. Your definition of the church is important because whatever your definition, it will determine where you put your time and effort.

II. The Church Defined

A. What the Church is not

How you define the Church will determine where you focus your energies.

- 1. It is not a building for Christian worship.
 - a. The word "church" is never used in scripture to refer to a material building.
 - b. The building is only the place where the Church (i.e. the people of God) meets. It is the sheep shed.
 - 2. It is not a sect or denomination (e.g. Lutheran, Baptist, etc.).
 - 3. It is not Christian worship or a worship service.
- B. When Jesus used the word "church" He used it in two ways.
- 1. He used it to refer to all believers of all ages in Christ.
 - a. This aspect of the Church is sometimes referred to as ***the invisible, the mystical, the universal church.***

- b. Jesus Himself used the word in this sense when he said, “Upon this rock I will build my church.”
- c. Jesus was not speaking here of a specific local congregation.
- d. The universal church involves a mystical union of all believers of all ages into a spiritual body.

It is this church that makes up the Family of God, the Body of Christ, the Army of the Lord, and the Church of the Living God. It is this church that will meet the heavenly husband as the Bride of Christ.

- e. The universal church is referred to specifically approximately 14 times in the New Testament primarily in the Book of Ephesians—the Book of the Church.

2. He used it to refer to a local congregation of believers (Mt. 18:15-20).

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. 18 Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

- a. Out of 114 references, about 95 refer to the local church.
- b. This aspect of the church is called ***the visible church or the local church***.
- c. It involves a specific group of people in given localities which are marked out by confession of faith, discipline of life, obedience in baptism, gathered to the person of Jesus Christ, having gifted ministries and keeping the memorial of the Lord. They are always spoken of as complete units within themselves, which may voluntarily cooperate and fellowship with other local churches.

III. New Testament Definitions: The Greek word “Ekklesia”

What did the disciples think of when Jesus said “church”? Jesus did not make up a new word; He used a concept that was part of the Greek culture.

- A. The literal meaning of the word “ekklesia” is “the called out ones”.

- B. In secular Greek society “ekklesia” referred to an assembly of free citizens called out from their homes and/or places of business to give consideration to matters of public interest (Acts 19:32, 39, 41).
- C. In the New Testament: this word is used 114 times and 110 times it definitely refers to the church or “the called out ones” of Jesus Christ.
1. Jesus himself introduces this usage when he refers to “His church” (Mt. 16:18). The personal pronoun “my” differentiates this company from other groups of people.
 2. The church of Jesus Christ consists of those people who have been “called out” from the world (I Pet. 2:9-10), who have separated themselves unto God and have gathered together unto the Lord Jesus Christ for worship and fellowship.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

IV. Key Verses in Dealing with the Universal Church

A. Matthew 16:18-19

Here Jesus tells us certain things about the universal church. According to Jesus, the church is:

1. To be built by Christ.

He said that He would build His church.

2. To be owned by Christ.

He said that it would be His Church.

3. To be unified.

He said that he would build a church (singular) not churches (plural).

4. To be victorious over Satan’s authority.

He said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the onslaught of His church.

5. To be the channel of God’s authority.

He said that this church would be an agent of his authority and that He would entrust the keys of the kingdom to it.

6. To be fully supported by heaven's authority.

He said that heaven would back up the actions of the church on earth.

- B. Ephesians is the Epistle of the universal church.

It contains nine references to the universal church.

1. Ephesians 1:19-23 (Col. 1:18)

...and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

- a. Christ is the head of the Church.
- b. The Church is to make up the fullness of Christ.
- c. The Church is to share in Christ's authority.

2. Ephesians 3:10-11

...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord...

The purpose of God that was not fully understood in past ages will be made known through the agency of the Church to principalities and powers.

3. Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- a. Christ is going to be glorified in the Church.
- b. The Church is everlasting, extending to the ages to come.

4. Ephesians 5:22-33 (6 references to the church)

- a. Christ is the head of the Church.
- b. Christ is the savior of the Church; the Church is His body (See also: Col. 1:24).
- c. The Church must be subject or submitted to Christ.
- d. Christ loves the Church and gave himself for it.
- e. The Church is Christ's reward for redemption.

- f. The Church is in the process of being sanctified.
- g. The word of God is the cleansing agent of the Church.
- h. The Church will ultimately be glorious, like Christ.
- i. The Church will be pure, holy, without blemish.
- j. The Church is mystically linked to Christ as one flesh, just as a husband and wife.
- k. The Lord cherishes the Church.

5. I Timothy 3:15

...but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

The Church is the pillar and ground of truth.

V. Some Principle Qualities of the Universal Church

A. The Church will be unified (unity is not necessarily uniformity).

1. The Church has a unity with diversity (Eph. 4:4-7)

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

- a. It is one body...with many members
- b. It is one temple...with many stones
- c. It is one flock...with many sheep
- d. It is one holy nation...with many citizens
- e. It is one vine...with many branches
- f. It is one family...with many brothers and sisters

2. The Church will experience two kinds of unity

a. The unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3)

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

This is the kind of unity that is created in each member of the body the moment he is born into that body.

b. The unity of the Faith (Eph. 4:13)

...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

This is the kind of unity that develops and is to be achieved as we submit to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

3. The Church will become one as it follows after Christ, the Head (Eph. 4:13).

The foundation of the unity of the Church is in its relationship to God. The Church is one because its God and Father is one, because its loyalty is to one Lord and because it is indwelt by one Holy Spirit.

B. The Church will be glorious

1. The Church will be holy unto the Lord (Eph. 5:23-32).

- a. Nowhere in the New Testament do we read of a defeated, failing, battered Bride. The only descriptive words are “glorious and holy”.
- b. The Church may be called holy for various reasons. The following are among the most important of these:
 - i. The Church is holy because it belongs to a holy God and everything that is so closely related to God is holy. The Church is a holy, special people for God’s own possession (I Pet. 2:9)
 - ii. The Church is holy because it is separated from the world (John 15:19; 17:14-16; II Cor. 6:17). The Church is not separate from the world because it refuses to have any contact with the world; it is to be separate from the world in spirit and life while carrying on its ministry in the midst of the world.
 - iii. The Church is holy because it is consecrated to God (Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22; Rom. 12:1; Jam. 4:7). It is consecrated to God for His indwelling, for His fellowship, for His service and for His glory (Ps. 93:5).
 - iv. The Church is holy because it is cleansed from sin (Eph. 5:26; Heb. 13:12; II Cor. 7:1; I Th. 5:23-24; I John 1:7, 9; Tit. 3:5; 2:14). Impurities are to be purged out (I Cor. 5:7).
 - v. The Church is holy because she is to marry Christ. The Son of God is going to have a worthy bride (II Cor. 6:14). God wants His Church to be holy, to be a pure and chaste virgin unspotted by the world and sin.
- c. The members of the Church are called “saints” or “holy ones” (Phil. 1:1).

2. The Church to date has never been the glorious and perfect body that Christ desires. It has been at times a very poor example of what the grace of God can produce. The historic church has been but a pale reflection of its Lord and a very imperfect instrument for the fulfillment of God's purposes. Its sins are many. It has betrayed Christ, trifled with false gods, stooped to compromise, left the sheep unfed, and in so many ways failed to fulfill the sacred trust committed to its charge. But God will have such a church that will be a powerful instrument in his hands. His word has declared it.

C. The Church will be victorious.

1. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mt. 16:18-19).
 - a. The Church cannot be overcome by Satan's wisdom or power (that is, the church that is built by Christ).
 - b. The Church will march against Satan's gates and be victorious.
2. The keys of the kingdom are entrusted to it (Mt. 18:15-20; 16:18-19).
3. The power to bind and loose will be in the hands of the Church (Mt. 16:18-19; 18:18).
4. The Church will be instrumental in dealing the deathblow to Satan (Rom. 16:20; Eph. 1:20-23).

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. Romans 16:20

Lesson 5

The Local Church

I. Introduction

A. Review of the definition of the local church

1. The local church is also referred to as *the visible church*.
2. The local church is a specific body of believers in a given locality.
 - a. Acts 8:1 – “the church which was at Jerusalem”
 - b. Romans 16:5 – “the church that is in their home”
 - c. I Corinthians 16:1 – “the churches of Galatia”
 - d. I Corinthians 16:19 – “The churches of Asia”
 - e. The seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1-3)
 - Ephesus (2:1)
 - Smyrna (2:8)
 - Pergamos (2:12)
 - Thyatira (2:18)
 - Sardis (3:1)
 - Philadelphia (3:7)
 - Laodicea (3:14)

B. Matthew 18:15-20 is the key passage that Jesus gave relative to the local church.

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. 18 Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

II. The Local Church according to Jesus (Mt. 18:15-20)

Jesus tells us much about the local church in Matthew 18. Some of the truths and implications that we can extract from Jesus’ words include:

A. The local church is composed of brothers and sisters (vs. 15).

1. The local church is meant to be a family setting.
2. The local church is a place of close relationship.
3. The local church is to be a place of belonging.

B. The local church is not perfect (vs. 15).

1. Members of the local church will have conflicts.
2. There will be difficulties to work through until Jesus comes.
3. If we are to succeed as the church we must be committed to conflict resolution and working through the process.
4. God has provided a means whereby those conflicts can be resolved.

C. The local church is a place of discipline (vs. 16-17).

1. It is not a loose-knit group having no responsibility or accountability to the other.
2. It is a place where we get involved in each other's life.
3. It is a place where sin is confronted and discipline is administered.

D. The local church is a defined body of believers (vs. 17).

1. It is a place where you are known to be a part.
2. It is a place from which you can be expelled.
3. You are either a part of a local church or you are not part of a local church.

E. The local church is a channel of God's authority (vs. 18).

1. The authority of God (heaven) is vested in the local church.
2. God supports the disciplining actions of the church.
3. To be disciplined by the church is to be disciplined by Christ.

F. The local church is to be a place of unity and agreement (vs. 19).

1. Its power is dependent upon it.
2. The presence of God confirms it.

G. The local church is to be a place of fellowship in faith and prayer (vs. 19).

1. There is a gathering together.
2. There is a corporate asking of God.
3. There is a corporate expectation for God to act.

H. The local church is a place where Christ promises to dwell (vs. 20)

1. It is the habitation of God by the Spirit.
2. There is a manifestation of God's presence that is unique to the gathering together of God's people.

I. The local church is a gathering identified with the name of Christ (vs. 20)

1. It carries the authority of His name.
2. It is to be His representative in that given locality.

J. Other implications

1. One person cannot make up a local church.
2. The local church is to be a place of order.
3. Until the church is completed, there is going to be a great need for love, patience and a lot of forgiveness (Mt. 18:21-22).

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

III. The local church is the means by which the purposes of God will become a reality (Eph. 4:1-16).

A. Paul states the prerequisite (vs. 1-3). The heart attitudes we must have:

1. Humility
2. Gentleness
3. Patience
4. Bearing with one another in love
5. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

B. Paul states the reason for our effort (vs. 4-6)

1. There is only one body.
2. There is only one Spirit.
3. There is only one hope.
4. There is only one Lord.
5. There is only one faith.
6. There is only one baptism.
7. There is only one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all.

C. Paul states the means by which God will perfect the church (vs. 7-12)

1. The grace of God working in each person
2. The leadership ministries working to equip the saints for works of service
3. The saints using their gifts to build up the Body of Christ

D. Paul states the goal toward which we are moving (vs. 13-16)

1. A church that experiences unity of faith (vs. 13).

2. A church that has an intimate relationship with Christ (vs. 13).
3. A church that represents Christ completely (vs. 13).
4. A church that is prophetic leading society in a sure path (vs. 14).
5. A church that matures into Christ's character (vs. 15).
6. A church where every member knows their part and does their part (vs. 16).

IV. The Two Aspects of Truth

A. The Universal Church

1. The universal church focuses on our relationship to the Lord and the kingdom aspect of God's work.
2. The key to the church being the church in the universal sense is for every believer to be in harmony **with the Lord** of the church.

B. The Local Church

1. The local church focuses on our relationship to our brothers and sisters in Christ.
2. The key to the church being the church in the local sense is for believers to be in harmony **with other believers**.
 - a. Unity is the key to the presence of the Lord in the church (Acts 1:14; 2:1-2).
 - b. Unity is the key to the power of the church (Mt. 18:19).

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

- c. Unity is the key to the witness and testimony of the church (John 17:22-23).

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

- d. Unity is the key to fulfilling the destiny of the church (Mt. 16:18).

- C. The universal church and the local church represent the two planks of the cross. The cross is the key to both the universal and the local church.

1. The vertical plank (universal church) – God-ward
2. The horizontal plank (local church) – man-ward
3. Jesus died for both. He died to reconcile man to God and to bring harmony and peace between all men.

Lesson 6

The Church in the Old Testament

I. Introduction

A. There are some who would suggest that the church is nowhere to be found in the Old Testament.

1. It is true that the actual English word “church” does not appear in the Old Testament.
 - a. It is important to remember that the word “church” is translated from the Greek word “ekklesia” in the New Testament Greek text.
 - b. It is also important to remember that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and, therefore, would not contain the actual word “ekklesia.”
 - c. It is interesting to note, however, that in the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint, the Greek word “ekklesia” occurs about 100 times (we’ll come back to this thought later).
2. It is true that even the Old Testament prophets did not understand their own prophecies concerning Christ and the Church (I Pet. 1:10-12; Mt. 13:16-17).

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into. I Peter 1:10-12

But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Matthew 13:16-17

3. It is true that in the Old Testament Age much of that which was brought forth in the New Testament Age was hidden, kept secret or was in mystery form (Eph. 3:5, 9-11).

B. The Church can be found in the Old Testament, but in mystery form in the following three lines of evidence.

1. The nation of Israel, the “called out ones” of the Old Testament, was the “church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38; I Cor.10:1-4, 11).

2. The Old Testament prophecies concerning what God would do in and through the church
 - a. Paul indicates that it was through the Gospel which was promised through the Old Testament prophets that he was separated to his call. (Rom. 1:2).
 - b. Paul understood the present dealings of God in the church by virtue of the Old Testament writings (Rom. 16:25-27).
3. The types and shadows of the Old Testament foreshadow the church (Heb. 9:9, 23-24).

II. The First Line of Evidence: The “Called Out Ones” of the Old Testament.

A. In the Old Testament, God had His called out ones.

1. While the word “ekklesia” is Greek and, therefore, is not used in the Hebrew Old Testament, the concept of “ekklesia” is definitely in the Old Testament.
 - a. The word “ekklesia” occurs about 100 times in the Septuagint.
 - b. The word “ekklesia” in the Septuagint comes as a translation of the word “kahal” and it refers to the called out and assembled ones or the congregation of the Lord (See: Deut. 23:2-8; I Chr. 28:8; Neh. 13:1; Mi. 2:5).

*The children of the third generation born to them may enter the **assembly of the LORD**. Deuteronomy 23:8*

*Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the **assembly of the LORD**, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave it as an inheritance for your children after you forever. I Chronicles 28:8*

*On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people, and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the **assembly of God**... Nehemiah 13:1*

2. The New Testament refers to Old Testament Israel as the church or “ekklesia” in the wilderness (Acts 7:38).

This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina... Acts 7:38, KJV

3. Both Israel in the Old Testament and the Church in the New Testament are called out ones (I Cor. 10:1-4, 11). Both Israel and the Church:
 - Were Objects of Grace
 - Were Called Out of Bondage

- Experienced the Feast of the Passover
- Were Separated by Water and Cloud
- Were Made Distinct from Other Nation.

God separated Israel from the other nations, just as he has separated the church from the world system (See: Num. 23:9; Ex. 11:7; Lev. 20:22-26; John 15:18-19; 17:14-17; I Cor. 4:13; II Cor. 6:14-18).

4. Israel, to a great extent, experienced in the natural realm what the New Testament Church experienced in the spiritual realm.

B. The Old Testament Church served as a foundation for the New Testament Church.

The Christian Church did not begin on an absolutely new foundation. It built upon the foundation already laid in the Old Testament. The history of the Jews was preparation for the history of the Church....The Scriptures of the Jews permeate the New Testament of the Christian Church.

--The New Testament Church, Miller

1. They were both part of the same plan. God's plan was typified in the Old Testament and exemplified in the New Testament, but the plan is one. God's original plan suffered no defeat.
2. The one Church has one destination—the New Jerusalem, the City of God whose gates are the twelve tribes of Israel (Old Testament) and whose foundations are the twelve apostles of the Lamb (New Testament) (See: Mt. 8:11).

And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

C. The Old Testament Church looked forward to Christ; the New Testament Church was built upon Christ.

D. The terms that are applied to Israel and the Church are the same.

Term Used	O.T. Church	N.T. Church
A Chosen People	Deuteronomy 10:15	I Peter 2:9
A Holy Nation	Exodus 19:6	I Peter 2:9
The People of God	Psalms 100:3	II Corinthians 6:16
A Priesthood	Exodus 19:6	I Peter 2:9
God's Treasure	Exodus 19:5	Matthew 13:44
The Bride or Wife	Isaiah 54:6; 62:5	II Corinthians 11:2-3
God's Vineyard	Isaiah 5:7	Matthew 20:1; I Cor. 3:9
God's Inheritance	Isaiah 19:25	I Peter 5:3
Israel	Isaiah 44:6	Galatians 6:16
God's Flock	Jeremiah 23:3	I Peter 5:2
A House	Ezekiel 18:31	I Timothy 3:15
A Light	Isaiah 60:1,3	Matthew 5:14
God's Witness	Isaiah 43:10	Acts 1:8
A Church	Acts 7:38	Galatians 1:13

The great mystery hidden for ages but preached by the apostles in the New Testament was that the Jew and the Gentile were now made one (Eph. 2:14; 3:5-6), in one body and one building. This building is built upon the foundation laid by the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles, Jesus Christ being the Chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20-22). The old and new were built into one habitation of God through the Spirit.

There is but one foundation with the prophets of the old dispensation and the apostles of the new dispensation together forming the basis for the new spiritual and true Israel, the Church of Jesus Christ!

It must be remembered that there have always been tares in the Kingdom. In the Church in the Old Testament, natural Israel, there were those who had been circumcised externally but had not had the circumcision of the heart (Jer. 9:25-26). The same is true in the Church in the New Testament, spiritual Israel. There are those who are Christians in name only. But that does not alter the fact that there has been a true Church in every generation which has consisted of the faithful righteous.

- E. The Apostle Paul had the revelation of this mystery which is summarized in Ephesians 2-3. In the New Covenant something takes place between Jew and Gentile that is exciting in Paul's mind. He used some significant terminology to describe the new relationship of the Jew and Gentile in the new covenant, including the following:

1. One Body (I Cor.12:13, Eph. 2:14-16; 4:4)

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

I Corinthians 12:13

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. Ephesians 2:14-16

2. Abraham's Seed (Gal.3:26-29)

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

3. Children of Promise (Gal. 4:28)

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

4. Fellow Heirs (Eph. 3:6)

...that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel...

5. The New Man (Col. 3:10-11)

...and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

F. Paul unfolds this purpose in detail in Ephesians 2:11-22. An outline of this passage reveals the following truths:

1. Paul described the former condition of the Gentiles

- Gentile in the Flesh
- Uncircumcision
- Without Christ
- Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel
- Strangers from the Covenants of Promise
- Having No Hope
- Without God in the World
- Far Off
- Enmity from God and Man

2. Paul described the present condition of the Gentiles

“But Now...”

- In Christ Jesus
- Made Nigh by the Blood of Christ
- At Peace with God and Man
- Made One With the Jew
- Middle Wall of Partition Broken Down
- Enmity Abolished
- One New Man
- Both Reconciled to God in One Body
- Preaching of Peace to Those Which Were Far
- Both Have Access to the Father

3. Paul described the new relationship that results:

- No More Strangers and Foreigners
- Fellow Citizens with the Saints
- Of the Household of God
- Jew and Gentile Joined Together

There is now no distinction in Christ between the Jew and Gentile. When Christ came, all those Jews who did not believe were cut off of the tree of faith and all those Gentiles who believed were added into the tree of faith becoming the spiritual seed of Abraham.

III. The Second Line of Evidence: The Old Testament prophets foretold of those things that would become realities in the New Testament Church.

- A. It is clear that while the Old Testament prophets did not fully understand their own prophecies, they did understand that they were for a later people and a later time (II Pet. 1:16-21; I Pet. 1:10-12).

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into. I Peter 1:10-12

- B. Jesus said that the prophets would have loved to have seen and heard the things that were happening in our day (Mt. 13:16-17).

But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Think about the following:

1. Moses would have loved to see and experience the true Passover.
2. Isaiah and Joel would have loved to experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
3. Elijah and Elisha would have enjoyed the ministry of Christ and the early apostles in signs and wonders.
4. Malachi would have been blessed watching the ministry of John the Baptist as he prepared the way of the Lord.
5. Amos would have loved to have been present in meeting in Acts 15 where James quoted his prophecy concerning rebuilding of the Tabernacle of David and the coming in of the Gentiles.
6. Jonah would have loved to witness the three days and three nights culminating in Christ's resurrection.

C. The New Testament apostles continually interpreted the events taking place in the New Testament Church through the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets.

1. The choosing of Judas' replacement (Acts 1:20; Ps. 69:25; 109:8).
2. The outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21; Joel 2:28-32).
3. The coming in of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God (Acts 13:47; 15:16-17; Amos 9:11-12).
4. The rejection of the kingdom message by national Israel (Acts 28:26-29; Is. 6:9-10).
5. The cutting away of the natural branches and the grafting in of the wild olive branches (Rom. 9-11).

IV. The Third Line of Evidence: The types and shadows of the Old Testament point to the New Testament Church.

A. The New Testament writers saw many of the occurrences in the Old Testament as being prophetic of what would come to us in the Church.

1. They were not types to the people of the Old Testament, they were realities.
2. The New Testament continually uses Old Testament pictures, types and symbols to illustrate the revelation of the Church.

B. The Book of Hebrews cannot be understood without a good knowledge of the Old Testament sacrifices, the priesthood and the service of the tabernacle.

Note: In Lesson 8 we will look more closely at some of the types and shadows as we look at the names and titles of the Church.

Lesson 7

Building According to the Pattern

“Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18b

I. Introduction

- A. We all have a desire for a church that overcomes the forces of darkness.
- B. God desires are the same, He wants to bless and prosper His people.
- C. If we are to prosper, we must do God’s work God’s way.
 - 1. God is no respecter of persons.
 - 2. God is a respecter of principles.
- D. This is true in every area of life.
 - 1. It is true in our finances.
 - 2. It is true in our families.
 - 3. It is true in our businesses.
 - 4. It is true in our marriages.
 - 5. It is true in our child rearing.
 - 6. It is true in our relationships.
 - 7. It is true in all of church life including, government, worship, etc.
- E. There are many principles that position us to receive the blessing of God.
 - 1. There is the principle of prayer.
 - 2. There is the principle of worship.
 - 3. There is the principle of unity.
 - 4. There is the principle of “building according to the pattern.”
- F. There are some important questions that need to be asked if we are to experience God’s blessing on what we are doing.
 - 1. Is the local church that we are building truly HIS church (Mt. 16:18)?
 - 2. Is the Lord the one who is truly building the house (Ps. 127:1)?

Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

- 3. Are we building according to the pattern that He has revealed to us (Heb. 8:5)?

...who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said,

“See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

II. The Church is Christ’s institution, it is His house (Heb. 3:1-6).

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. 3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

- A. The **idea** was God’s. The concept of the church did not originate in the mind of man (Eph. 1:9; 3:10-11). It was the result of His “good pleasure.”
- B. The **pattern** was God’s. He did not leave it up to the ingenuity or forethought of man (Heb. 8:5).
- C. The **materials** were purchased by Christ’s blood (Acts 20:28).

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.

- D. It is to be the House of God in the fullest sense. If the Lord is going to build His church, if it is going to be something that He will live in, it stands to reason that we must build it according to the divine blueprint or design (Ps. 127:1).

III. God only has one pattern for the Church that He is building.

- A. There are several sources from which one can get a pattern.
 - 1. Our pattern can come from **the world system** (Rom. 12:1-2). This is equivalent to bringing the secular business mind to the affairs of the church. Israel wanted a king like all of the other nations. Getting such a king cost them dearly.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2, NIV

- a. On the positive side, every local church needs to follow biblical business and financial practices.

b. On the negative side, a local church is more than a business and must walk in a realm of faith based on the clear word of the Lord.

2. Our pattern can come from **religious tradition**. Most people have a tradition or even a culture from which they have come. However our traditions may or may not be based on the Word of God and may not bring life. Only the elements of our tradition that support God's pattern can be maintained.

a. Traditions are good if they help us to better implement biblical truth (II Th. 2:15; 3:6).

Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. II Thessalonians 2:15

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. II Thessalonians 3:6

b. Traditions are bad if they hinder us from obeying the word (Mt. 15:6b).

Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

c. Someone has said that the last seven words of any church are, "We never did it that way before."

3. Our pattern can come from **the mind of regenerate man**.

a. Just because we are Christians and have a good heart it does not mean that every thought and idea that we have comes from God.

b. It is possible to be sincere, but to be wrong. Sincerity alone is not enough.

c. God is looking for those who will worship Him in spirit (sincerity) and in truth (according to the word or pattern of the Lord) (Jn. 4:24).

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

4. Our pattern can and must come from **God**.

B. God is a God of order and has a plan and a pattern for everything that He does.

1. There was order in creation (Gen. 1-2).

2. There was a pattern for the first man (Gen. 1:26; 5:1).

3. There was a pattern or divine order for acceptable worship (Leviticus).

4. There was an order for conquest in the taking of the land (Joshua).

5. There was an order in the singers and ministry in the Tabernacle of David (I Chr. 6:32).

They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order.

6. The New Testament church is to be a place of order (Col. 2:5).

For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

- C. God is very detailed and exact about how he wants things done.

All you have to do is read the book of Leviticus to know that God is very detailed and exact about how He wants things done. People died by divine judgment when they did not follow some of those details. Many churches have good intentions, but they are not finding the blessing of God. If we are going to be successful we will have to be like David and seek Him after the due order (I Chr. 15:13).

For because you did not do it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order.

- D. For every structure that God ever commanded to be built, He provided the pattern.

1. The Ark of Noah (Gen. 6:14-16)

Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.

2. The Tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 25:9,40)

According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it. Exodus 25:9

3. The Temple of Solomon (I Chr. 28:11-12, 19)

Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things... "All this," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans."

4. Ezekiel's Temple (Ezek. 43:10-12)

Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they are

ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, its entire design and all its ordinances, all its forms and all its laws. Write it down in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design and all its ordinances, and perform them. This is the law of the temple: The whole area surrounding the mountaintop is most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.

5. The New Testament Church (I Cor. 3:10)

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

6. The City of God (Rev. 21:15-7)

Note that everything had to be measured. It had to measure up to the Divine standard.

And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

E. The glory of God can only fill that which is according to the pattern.

1. The Ark of Noah (Gen. 6:22; 7:1)

Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

Genesis 6:22

Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.

Genesis 7:1

2. The Tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 40:33-35)

And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

3. The Temple of Solomon (II Chr. 5:1-14)

...indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy

endures forever,” that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God. II Chronicles 5:13-14

4. Ezekiel’s Temple (Ezek. 43:4-5)

And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

5. The New Testament Church (Eph. 3:17-21; Col 1:27)

...to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:19-21

6. The City of God (Rev. 21:10-11)

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.

F. The pattern of God cannot be violated if we are to experience the **full** blessing of God. We may experience a measure of blessing, but the closer we can come to God’s plan the greater the blessing will be. There are some who tampered with the pattern and found very negative results.

1. The Example of Cain (Gen. 4:1-16; Heb. 11:4)

2. The Example of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2)

3. The Example of Hophni and Phineas (I Sam. 4)

4. The Example of Uzziah (I Chr. 26:16)

VIOLATOR	VIOLATION	JUDGMENT
Cain	His own form of worship/without blood	Banishment from the “presence” at the gate of Eden
Nadab and Abihu	Strange fire that was not kindled by God	Death
Hophni and Phineas	Uncleanness and improper order moving ark.	Death, Ark in Captivity
Uzziah	Presumption to enter into the priest office	Leprosy and banishment from the House of God

- G. The plan and pattern of God is never out of date. Styles of church architecture may change over the generations, but God's basic plan for the church never changes. It is applicable to every time zone, every culture and every nation.

IV. Why is this issue of the pattern so important?

It is important because unless the Lord builds the house all of our labor is in vain. When we get involved in any area, whether it is personal finances, family structure and order, business practices, child rearing or local church issues, the question should be, "Does the Bible address this subject?" If the Bible does, it should immediately settle the issue in our minds, because God's word is His will.

Quotations of Note

"Dr. Z.T. Cody expressed it well in his address before the Baptist World Congress held in Toronto, Canada in 1928: "I confess that a church of Christ which holds to the Evangelical faith and that is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there the church is. God forbid that I should reject what Christ accepts. But I do believe that churches should be consistent with the gospel of salvation that has been committed to the churches. I do believe that the churches of Christ should conform to the New Testament model. This is the everlasting norm. Churches born of the New Testament should be like the New Testament as children born of Adam should have the likeness of Adam's body. I would not say that one born with only one arm or one leg, or born with six fingers on each hand was no man. I do not know how much you could cut off or add to and yet have a man. I am not interested in the process. I once saw a man who had lost both arms and yet has done more in life than some of us more normally endowed. The same might be truthfully said of some churches. But notwithstanding all of this, I do claim it is better to perpetuate the normal." - The Doctrine of the Church, Turner

"Has not the history of twenty centuries of Christianity proved that the plan of the primitive church is the only one which is suitable for all times and places, is most flexible in its adaptation to the most diverse conditions, is the best able to resist and stand against persecutions, and offers the maximum possibilities for the full development of the spiritual life?"

"Each time that man has believed himself to be more intelligent than God, that he has painstakingly developed a religious system 'better adaptable to the psychology of man,' more conformable to the spirit of the times, instead of simply following the neo-testamentary model, his attempt has been short-lived because of failure due to some unforeseen difficulty.

"All heresies and deviations in the church spring from the abandonment of the Scriptures and of the model for the church which they present. Clement of Alexandria, even in his time, used to say, 'One becomes heretic when one does not submit to the Scriptures. Those who undertake great things must necessarily fall to great depths if they do not cling to the rule of truth which they have received from the Truth Himself.'"

--I Will Build My Church, Kuen, pg. 27

Lesson 8

The Names and Titles of the Church

I. INTRODUCTION

Read: Ephesians 3:8-11

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

- A. The word “manifold” occurs in no other place in the New Testament. It means “very many sided, *much* varied, having *great* diversity or variety.”

God’s wisdom which He has revealed through the Church is like a precious diamond with many facets or faces. To get a true picture of the whole it must be looked at from different angles.

- B. In order to give us a greater understanding of the Church, God has given us various pictures and metaphors of the Church in the Bible. In fact, over seventy different names and titles are given to the Church, each one unfolding another facet of divine truth relative to the Church.

- C. By studying these various metaphors and symbols, we can better discover the nature and purpose of the Church. The Church is likened to many things including:

1. The Branch of the Lord’s Planting (Is. 60:21).
2. The City of the Living God (Heb. 12:22).
3. The Church of the Firstborn (Heb. 12:23).
4. Heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22).
5. General Assembly (Heb. 12:23).
6. Mount Zion (Heb. 12:22).

*For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore...22 But you have come to **Mount Zion** and to the **city of the living God**, the **heavenly Jerusalem**, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the **general assembly and church of the firstborn** who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*

Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24

7. The Flock of God (Ezek. 34:15; I Pet. 5:2).

8. A Golden Lampstand (Rev. 1:20).
9. God's Field (I Cor. 3:9).
10. God's Heritage (Joel 3:2; I Pet. 5:3).
11. An Inheritance (Ps. 78:71); Is. 19:25).
12. The Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).
13. The Mountain of the Lord's House (Is. 2:2).
14. The Pillar and Ground of Truth (I Tim. 3:15).
15. A Pleasant Portion (Jer. 12:10).
16. A Vineyard (Jer. 12:10 Matt. 21:41).
17. Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9).
18. Congregation of Saints (Ps. 149:1; 89:5).
19. The Olive Tree (Rom. 9-11).
20. The Royal Priesthood (Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10; I Pet. 2:5-9).
21. The Army of the Lord (Eph. 6:10-18).
22. The Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
23. The Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16:29).
24. The Holy Nation (I Pet. 2:5-9).
25. The House of the Lord (Heb. 3:6; I Pet. 2:5; I Tim. 3:5; I Cor. 3:16).
26. The Light of the World (Mt. 5:14; Jn. 8:12; Is. 60:1-3).
27. The Salt of the Earth (Mt. 5:13).
28. A Peculiar People/Treasure (I Pet. 2:5-9).
29. The Temple of God (I Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:20).
30. The Family of God (Eph. 3:14-15).

II. There are many other New Testament names or references to the Church.

(The following lists extracted from *I Will Build My Church* by Kuen)

A. The New Testament frequently associates the Church with the name of her leader.

1. The Church of the Living God (I Tim. 3:15).
2. God's Building (I Cor. 3:9).
3. The Churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16).
4. The Church of God (Acts 20:28; II Cor. 1:1).

B. Other times the churches are named with reference to their members.

1. The Churches of the Saints (I Cor. 14:33).
2. The Churches of the Gentiles (Rom. 16:4).
3. The Church of the Firstborn (Heb. 12:23).
4. The Church of the Thessalonians (I Th. 1:1; II Th. 1:1).
5. The Church of the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16).

C. At times the word "church" is associated with a geographical term.

1. The Church at Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).
2. The Church at Antioch (Acts 13:1).
3. The Churches of Macedonia (II Cor. 8:1).
4. The Churches of Asia (I Cor. 16:19).

5. The Churches of God in Judea (I Th. 2:14).
6. The Churches of Galatia (I Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:2).
7. Or simply, the church that meets in their house (I Cor. 16:19; Philemon 2; Col. 4:15; Rom. 16:5).

D. Some significant titles not found in the Bible.

1. Churches of Rome, Jerusalem, Etc. – When it spoke of a city the church was united in one (singular).
2. Church of Macedonia, Galatia, Etc. – When an area is referenced it was always multiple local churches (plural).
3. Church of Paul, John, Peter, Etc. – In the New Testament we do not find a church named after a person.
4. Congregational Church, Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church, Etc. – In the New Testament churches were not named after their doctrine or forms of church government.

III. Each name or title tells us something unique or emphasizes a particular facet regarding the nature of the Church.

For Example:

A. The Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:6-9).

1. The new covenant relationship is likened to a marriage contract (I Cor 6:16-17).
2. The church is to be espoused to one husband (Hos. 2:19; II Cor. 11:2).
3. The church is to remain faithful and keep herself pure (II Cor. 11:2).
4. The Bride is now being made ready (Mt. 25:10; Rev. 19:7-8).
5. The emphasis of this picture of the Church:
 - a. That she who is now legally joined to Him through vows of espousal may be personally joined to Him when He comes to take her to Himself as the returning Bridegroom (Mt. 25:6).
 - b. That the two may become one (Gen. 2:24; Jn. 17:11, 21).

B. The Army of God (Eph. 6:10-13)

1. Christ is our captain and chief leader (Heb. 2:10, KJV).
2. We are enlisted as good soldiers of Christ (II Tim. 2:3-4).
3. We are involved in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:12).
4. Our armor is provided by God (Eph. 6:13-18).

5. Our weapons are not carnal (II Cor. 10:3-5).
6. God is raising up an army to deal with Satan and it is going to be victorious.
7. The emphasis of this picture of the Church:
 - a. That we might war a good warfare (I Tim. 1:18).
 - b. That we might withstand in the evil day (Eph. 6:13).

Note: In the next number of lessons we will be looking at three other pictures of the church that are extremely significant. We want to take more time to look at each of them in depth. We will study the church as the Temple of the Lord, the church as the Family of God and the church as the Body of Christ.

Lesson 9

The Church as the Temple or Building

I. Introduction

- A. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, “On this rock I will build my church.” When Jesus uses the word “build” He immediately puts the church in the context of a building, temple or house.
- B. There are three concepts or terms that are used in connection with the Church as a building.

1. Building

A building is an edifice for any use or that which is being build as a dwelling or a house (I Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19-21).

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.
I Corinthians 3:9

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22

2. Temple

A stately edifice consecrated to a deity forming a seat of their worship (II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21).

For you are the temple of the living God. II Corinthians 6:16

3. House

A building intended for habitation (I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6; I Pet. 2:5).

And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. Hebrews 3:5-6

...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. I Peter 2:5

- C. These terms are consistent with God’s expressed desire for relationship (Ps. 132:13-14).

For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: "This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it."

1. God desires to dwell with and in His people (Ex. 25:8; Num. 35:34; I Kg. 6:11-14).
 - a. He expressed this desire when He instructed Moses regarding the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:8).

Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.

Exodus 25:8

- b. He expressed this desire when He spoke to Solomon regarding the Temple (I Kgs. 6:11-13).

The word of the LORD came to Solomon: "As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel." I Kings 6:11-13

2. God has always made provision for His dwelling among men.

- a. The Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8).
- b. The Gate of Eden (Gen. 3:24).
- c. The Altar of Stone (Gen. 8:20; Ex. 20:24-25).
- d. The Tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 25:8).
- e. The Tabernacle of David (I Chr. 15:1; 16:1).
- f. The Temple of Solomon (I Kg. 8:1-13).
- g. The New Testament Church (Mt. 18:20; 28:20).
- h. The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-3).

3. God's dwelling with man has always been on His terms, according to His pattern.

II. Christ's House or Temple is an enduring house.

- A. It is an enduring house because Jesus is the architect and principle builder (Mt 16:18; Ps. 127:1).

1. He is the wise master builder who builds on the rock (Mt. 7:24-27).

- a. It will stand the test of the rains.
- b. It will stand the test of the winds.
- c. It will stand the test of the floods.

2. He is the wise builder who counts the cost before he builds (Luke 14:28).

- a. He knew it would cost Him his life.
- b. He was willing to pay the price.

c. His personal sacrifice ensures success.

B. It is an enduring house because it is built upon a sure foundation.

1. If a building is to stand the test of time, the foundation is the most important part (Ps. 11:2).
2. The foundation was laid by the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20-22; 3:5).
3. That rock foundation is Jesus Christ Himself who laid His life down for the church (Mt. 16:18; Rom. 9:33; I Cor. 3:11; 10:4; I Pet. 2:7-8).

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 3:11

C. It is an enduring house because its cornerstone is tried and true.

1. Christ Himself is the cornerstone (Mt. 21:42; Is. 8:14; 28:16).

So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed." Isaiah 28:16

- a. He is the stone that was inspected and rejected by the religious leaders (the builders) of His day (I Pet. 2:6-8; Acts 4:11).

Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. I Peter 2-8

- b. He is the stone that was inspected and accepted by God and a perfect stone (Is. 28:16).

2. Christ as the cornerstone is the beginning stone or the first stone laid (the firstborn).
3. Christ as the cornerstone is the one to whom the whole building is aligned (Eph. 2:20).

III. Christ's house or temple is a spiritual house made of spiritual materials.

- A. The temple is composed of living stones (I Pet. 2:4-5). God builds with stone not brick. Brick is easier but it is manmade and more corruptible.

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1. These stones are being dug out of the pit of this world (Is. 51:1-2).

Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug.

2. These stones are being cut and shaped before being laid on the foundation (I Kg, 5:17-18; 6:7).

And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, and hewn stones, to lay the foundation of the temple. So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites quarried them; and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple. I Kings 5:17-18

And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built. I Kings 6:7

3. These stones must be “fitly framed together” (Eph. 2:21-22, KJV).

We who believe are carefully joined together, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also joined together as part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit. –NLT

- B. The temple is composed of individuals whose lives need to be built out of solid materials—gold, silver and precious stones (I Cor. 3:9-16).

1. The temple will have to stand the test of fire (Num. 31:21-24; Job 23:10; I Pet. 1:7).

2. There are two groups of materials:

- a. Imperishable

These are materials that can withstand the test of fire—those that are produced under pressure. Fire can only further purify these materials that are produced by God. They are characterized as Gold, Silver and Precious Stones.

- b. Perishable

These are materials that are reduced to ashes by fire—those that are produced by the self-effort of man. They are characterized as wood, hay and stubble.

C. The temple is built as these stones are continually produced and continually placed in proper relationship to each other. This involves two processes:

1. Multiplication (Acts 9:31; 12:24; 6:1; 7:17).

Multiplication is the gathering of lively stones for the building. It refers to the work of evangelism. Evangelism is the gathering of building materials. A pile of materials does not in and of itself make a building or a house. Multiplication is necessary, but it must lead to edification.

2. Edification (Acts 9:31; Heb. 10:25).

The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it grew in strength and numbers. The believers were walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Acts 9:31

Edification is the placing, arranging and the putting in order of the stones that have been gathered. This is the assembling of the stones into the structure.

D. The temple is built as we focus on those things that edify or build. The New Testament gives us ten things that build:

1. The Word of God (Acts 20:32).
2. The Five-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).
3. Body ministry (I Cor. 14:26).
4. Spiritual sacrifices (I Pet. 2:5).
5. Being rooted and built up in Christ (Col. 2:7).
6. Praying in the Spirit (Jude 20; I Cor. 14:2-5).
7. Love (I Cor. 8:1).
8. Right communication (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6).
9. Harmony and peace (Rom. 14:19).
10. Seeking to please our neighbor (Rom. 15:2).

IV. Christ's house or temple is being built by skilled workmen.

A. Christ Himself is the Master Builder (Mt. 16:16-18; Eph. 2:10; Heb. 3:1-6).

B. The early Apostles and Prophets laid the foundation for the church (Eph. 2:20-22).

C. The five-fold ministry have been given by Christ to the church to help edify or build up the saints (living stones) and to assemble the building (Eph. 1:11-16; I Cor. 3:9-10; Eph. 2:19-22; Heb. 11:10, 16; Rev. 21:14).

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ... Ephesians 4:11-12

D. Every believer who has come to a place of maturity is also to participate in the building process (I Cor. 3:9-10; I Cor. 12; Eph. 4:16; Rom 12:3-8; I Pet. 4:10-11).

For we are fellow workmen (joint promoters, laborers together) with and for God; you are God's garden and vineyard and field under cultivation, [you are] God's building. According to the grace (the special endowment for my task) of God bestowed on me, like a skillful architect and master builder I laid [the] foundation, and now another [man] is building upon it. But let each [man] be careful how he builds upon it... I Corinthians 3:9-10, Ampl.

V. The picture of the church as the Temple or House of God helps us understand another facet of the church.

This picture of the temple helps us to better understand God's purpose for the Church, that the people of God might be perfectly joined together so that He might fill us with the fullness of Himself (Eph. 3:19-21; Ex. 25:8; I Kg. 8:29-30; II Cor. 6:16).

Lesson 10

The Church as the Family/Membership

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Church of Jesus Christ is referred to as a family or household (Eph. 2:19; 3:14-15; Gal. 6:10).

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. Ephesians 2:19

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named... Ephesians 3:14-15

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10

- B. There are many things that God wants us to understand about the church from this picture of the family.

1. He wants us to understand our family relationships.

- a. We have a heavenly Father (Ps. 68:5; 89:26; Is. 64:8; Mt. 5:16; 6:1-9).

A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation. God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. Psalm 68:5-6

But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand. Isaiah 64:8

- i. We are called the children of God (Rom. 8:15-17).
- ii. The Father has provided the seed for our new birth (I Pet. 1:23).
- iii. The Father has loved us with a true father's love (II Cor. 13:14).
- iv. The Father loves us enough to discipline us (Heb. 12:5-10).
- v. The Father has laid up an inheritance for us (Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:11-14; Col. 3:24; I Pet. 1:4; Heb. 9:15).

- b. We have an elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 8:21; Heb. 2:14-17).

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. Hebrews 2:14-17

- i. He is the firstborn (Rom. 8:29).
 - ii. He is the pattern Son (I Pet. 2:21).
 - iii. He is our Kinsman Redeemer
- c. We have many brothers and sisters in an extended family (I Pet. 1:22; Mark 10:29-30).

So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life." Mark 10:29-30

- i. We are all partakers of the same blood (John 6:53).
- ii. We must be born into the family by the new birth (John 1:12-13; 3:3).
- iii. We all bear the family name (Mt. 28:20; Eph. 3:15; Rev. 22:14).
- iv. We must honor our Father (Mal. 1:6; Ex. 20:12; Pro. 20:20).
- v. We must obey our Father (Deut. 21:18; Pro.1:8; 23:33).

II. As a true family the Church has a defined membership.

A. Just like in a natural family, the church is an exclusive group of people.

1. The word "church" in the Greek language means "called out ones." The Church of Jesus Christ is to be exclusive in that it is to include only those people who have been called out from the world and separated to Christ by the Gospel. It consists of those whose citizenship is in heaven.
2. It should be noted that while church membership is exclusive, it is clear that attendance to church services should be open to all (I Cor. 14:23-25; Jam. 2:2-4).

Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

I Corinthians 14:23-25

3. The early church knew who was a part of the church and who was not a part of the church. Notice the word "together" in the following passages (Acts 2:44; 14:27; 15:30; 20:7-8; I Cor. 5:4; I Cor. 14:23, 26).

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.
Acts 2:44-45

Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. Acts 14:27

So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. Acts 15:30

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ... I Corinthians 5:4

Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place...
I Corinthians 14:23a

How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. I Corinthians 14:26

4. The early church was aware of those who were added to their numbers (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 6:7).

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. Acts 2:41

And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.
Acts 2:47b

However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. Acts 4:4

- B. Just like in a natural family there is a process in becoming a member of the family.
 1. There is a spiritual process that makes one a part of the universal church.
 - a. This process involves repentance (Acts 2:38-39; 5:14; 11:24).
 - b. This process involves faith in the saving work of Christ (Rom. 10:9).
 - c. This process involves water baptism (Mk. 16:16).
 2. There is a practical or natural process that makes one an official part of a specific local church.
 - a. Believers in the New Testament who were added to the Lord were also added to the local church (Acts 2:41, 47).

- b. In the New Testament all members of the universal church were also members of a local church. Any idea of enjoying salvation or being a Christian in isolation is foreign to the New Testament.
- c. It is impossible for any true believer to fulfill all of the admonitions to the people of God without being vitally connected to a physical, visible expression of the body of Christ on earth (Eph. 4:11-16).

...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:13-16

- d. In the New Testament there was only one local church in a city. If you were a Christian you were part of it unless you had been expelled because you were under discipline. Because today there are many local churches in any given city, it is common for local churches to have a process of official membership to assist the leaders of the local assembly in determining to exactly whom they are to commit themselves in pastoral care and for whom they will give an account before the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:17).

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

- C. Just like in a natural family there are advantages or privileges of being a member. Some of these advantages include the following:

- 1. Fellowship (Col. 2:2; I John 1:3). When a person is an official part of a local church they will find it easier to develop deeper levels of fellowship and family and relationships.

...that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. I John 1:3

- 2. Fulfillment (I Cor. 12:12-27). When a person is an official part of a local church they will experience a greater sense of belonging and a significant ability to contribute to the success of the whole.

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. I Corinthians 12:26-27

3. Fruitfulness (Eph. 4:16). When a person is an official part of a local church they have greater productivity and impact in the lives of others.

...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:15-16

4. Accountability (Gal. 6:1-2). When a person is an official part of a local church they experienced a greater sense of necessary, godly accountability and responsibility.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

5. Growth (I Th. 5:12). When a person is an official part of a local church there is a greater opportunity to receive consistent pastoral care and oversight.

And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

6. Power (Deut. 32:30; Eccl. 4:9-10). When a person is an official part of a local church there is a greater release of power as believers bind themselves together for a common goal.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

7. Presence of God (Mt. 18:19-20). When a person is an official part of a local church they enter into a realm where God gives special promises of His presence in a greater measure.

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

Every true believer in Christ must consider the question of church membership. All of the dynamics of the Christian life must be worked out in the context of others of like faith. The local church is God's vehicle through which He would strengthen and equip His people. To reject the local church is to resist God's plan and elevate oneself above God. We need the Lord, but we also need each other if we are going to become all that God desires for us to become.

Lesson 11

The Church as the Family Self Governing

III. As a true family the Church should be autonomous.

A. The Word “Autonomous”

1. Dictionary Definition

- a. Independent and self-governing
- b. Independent of any other organism
- c. A self-governing community or local group in a particular sphere.

2. Latin Origin

The word “autonomous” comes from two Latin words and literally means “self-law.”

- a. “Auto” = self
- b. “Onomos” = law

3. For the purposes of our study, the definition of “autonomous” as it relates to the natural family and the local church is:

“Self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating”

B. First of all, the local church should be self-governing.

1. That means that the local church looks to no outside authority, no special group functioning outside or above the local church to effect its decisions. The local church is the final court of appeal:

- a. For disputes between believers (Mt. 18:15-17).

Jesus placed into the hands of the local church the process that is needed to deal with the issues of offence in the assembly. The final court of appeal is the local church itself.

- b. For questions of doctrine (Acts 15).

The doctrinal decision in the fifteenth chapter of Acts was a local church matter and it was ultimately the leadership of the Jerusalem Church that determined its own policy. The problem had arisen from people who claimed to represent the Jerusalem Church and its teaching. The problem was taken back to the source of the problem. The local church made an official ruling regarding its own church policy. The policy was broadcast only in the sense of trying to clarify the Jerusalem position on the matter and to undo the damage caused by these false representatives.

- c. For discipline of moral conduct (I Cor. 5:1-5).

For the man who was excommunicated in the case, the final action was taken by the local church. There was no other outside court of appeal. The action of the local church was final. The action taken was the responsibility of the entire assembly.

- 2. The issue of church government is an issue that historically has distinguished one church from another.
 - a. The names of various churches are based on several things.
 - i. Their founder (e.g. Lutheran, Mennonite, Etc.)
 - ii. Their distinct doctrine (e.g. Baptist, Pentecostal, Etc.)
 - iii. Their belief about themselves (e.g. Assembly of God, Church of God, Etc.)
 - iv. Their form of church government (Presbyterian, Episcopal, Congregational, Independent)
 - b. The fact that churches are named after government shows the importance of this area in people's minds and the fact that people have been willing to establish or break fellowship over governmental issues.
- 3. The government of the church can be the most important aspect of a church's life.

Your government will affect many things:

- a. It will affect a church's ability to fulfill the will of God.
- b. It will affect a church's ability to reach the vision God has given to its leaders.
- c. It will affect a church's ability to be led and directed by the Holy Spirit.

If the leaders of the Church (i.e. those who are responsible to make decisions) are not personally under the authority of the Holy Spirit in their lives, listening to the voice of the Lord and submitted to His Word, the Church will not be able to be led and directed by the Lord of the Church. Christ exerts His headship through God-anointed and God-appointed leaders.

4. Four Basic Facts Concerning Church Government.

- a. **Fact #1: God has established government in His House (the Church).**

Most people will acknowledge the fact that there is government in the family realm (Eph. 6:1) and in the realm of civil government (Rom. 13:1), but many of those same people do not see the Church as an authority in their lives. In relation to the Church, the Bible says that we are to obey those who have the rule over us (Heb. 13:17).

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

- i. With no government there will be a lack of order (I Cor. 14:40; Col. 2:5). God is not the author of confusion. In the book of Judges, when everyone did what was right in their own eyes it led to a weakened condition among God's people.
- ii. There are those who rule in the House of God (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; Rom. 12:8).

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

Hebrews 13:7

b. Fact #2: God has a plan and pattern for government in His House

(See previous lesson).

If the Book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament does not represent God's plan then God has not provided us a plan. This is simply inconceivable. When God cared so much about the pattern relative to the "shadow" (the Tabernacle of Moses, Etc.), how could He be less interested in the "real" or that to which the shadow pointed (the Church)?

c. Fact #3: God identifies the rulers in His House as elders (I Tim. 3:5; 5:17).

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. I Timothy 5:17

There are other forms of government that God could have chosen.

i. Dictatorship or "One Man Rule"

This is a very simple form of government. Decisions can be made very quickly. But since it is built on one person, the local church will only as strong as that person is strong. Since no leader is perfect every church needs a system of checks and balances to ensure that it stays on track.

ii. Democracy or "Rule by the People"

In a growing church the new people always outnumber those who have been Christians for a long time. Democracy ends up being a "rule by

the immature” since they will always have the swing vote. This would never work in the natural family and it will not work in the local church.

iii. Central Control or “External Control”

This is government that comes from outside of the local church. While the local congregation may have some latitude, the primary decisions are in the hands of those who are not a part of the local scene. This can hinder the local church in fully implementing its unique vision and tailoring its programs to the unique nature of its city or community. This does not mean that local churches that are in their infant stages do not need apostolic input. However, once the local leadership has officially been put into place, that local leadership team must become the local church authority.

iv. Deacon Board or Council or “Rule by an Elected Board”

This form of government is where members of “The Board” are elected by the people for terms of office ranging from one to three years (or longer). In these situation there may or may not be biblical qualifications for those who serve and there is usually a constant turnover of leadership in the local church.

v. Co-Equal Plurality or “Rule by Committee”

This form of government sounds good on paper. It is where a team of leaders or elders function as a group with no one designated as the chief or head elder. This form of government does not work in any realm of society. Where it is purported to be working, one person is usually recognized as the spiritual head.

God did not choose any of these forms for His House.

vi. God chose plurality of elders with a chief or senior elder as His form of government.

aa. Many elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17; I Tim. 5:17; Jam. 5:14; I Pet. 5:1-4)

Elders of the church are always referred to in the plural. Actually, in order to have some checks and balances, there needs to be at least three elders.

So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Acts 14:23

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. Acts 20:17

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. James 5:14

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. I Peter 5:1-4

bb. One senior elder (Acts 12:17; 15:4-7, 12, 13, 22; Phil. 4:1-3)

James, the brother of the Lord, functioned as the senior elder or senior pastor of the Church at Jerusalem. In addition, when the Lord addressed the local churches in the Book of Revelation, He addressed His letter to the set man or the “angelos” (messenger) of the churches (Rev. 2:1).

- Peter acknowledged James’ leadership (Acts 12:17).
- James had the final word at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:19).
- Paul acknowledged James’ leadership (Acts 21:18).

cc. This has always been God’s form of government. God has always used plural leadership with one of those leaders placed as head (See Chart below).

- In the Godhead (I John 5:7; I Cor. 11:3)

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. I John 5:7

But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

I Corinthians 11:3

While the three members of the Godhead are equal in person, there is an order of headship. The Father is the ultimate figure. The Father sent the Son, the Son sent the Spirit. The Spirit bears witness to the Son and the Son bears witness to the Father.

- In the Family (Gen. 2:24; I Cor. 11:3-16; Eph. 5:22-24; I Pet. 3:1)

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the

church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Ephesians 5:22-24

While husband and wife are equal in person, there is an order of headship in the home that is ordained of God. The head of the woman (wife) is the man (husband).

- In Israel (Num. 11:16-17; 27:16-17)

So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone. Numbers 11:16-17

"Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." Numbers 27:16-17

While God gave Moses multiple elders to help in the work of pastoring the children of Israel, Moses was the "set man" or recognized head.

- In the Synagogue (Acts 18:8,17)

Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized. Acts 18:8

While each synagogue was governed by a team of elders, each synagogue had a recognized chief elder or ruler of the synagogue.

- In the Church (Tit. 1:5; Acts 21:18)

While each local church is to be governed by team ministry, that is, a team of elders, there should be one senior or chief elder who serves as the recognized head of the team. This has always been God's form of government in every realm of His design.

Refer to the following chart:

	Equality	Headship
The Godhead	Three Persons	Father
The Family	Two Parents	Husband
Israel	70 Elders	Moses
The Synagogue	Elders/Rulers	Chief Ruler
The Church	Elders	Chief Elder

d. Fact #4: God determines the kind of individuals that are to be rulers in His House (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

Strict adherence to the guidelines given in the New Testament is the only thing that will ensure the fact that this form of government is any better than the rest. It is the fact that the leaders of the church have demonstrated through their personal lives that they are personally submitted to Christ, are an example for others to follow and have a track record of hearing from God that makes them candidates for leadership. Christ can rule through these kinds of people.

We can summarize the qualifications listed by Paul into four categories (Note: We will take a close look at these when we look at the ministry of elders in Lesson 18).

- i. They must be people with **proven character**. That is, they have allowed the work of sanctification to take place in their lives and they manifest the fruit of the Spirit.
- ii. They must be people of **spiritual vision**. That is, they have a vision to see God's purposes established and they have the maturity to make sacrifices in the present to see those purposes come to pass.
- iii. They must be people with their **homes in order**. That is, they have demonstrated their ability to rule and provide pastoral covering for the church by virtue of the fact that they have established the Kingdom of God in their own homes.
- iv. They must be people with the **spiritual gifting** for this ministry. That is, they are not only good people but they also have a gift of leadership or the "charisma" needed to enable them to teach, to exhort and to convince those who oppose the Gospel (Heb. 13:7).

These are the same qualifications that were laid out in the Old Testament for the elders who served under Moses. God's leaders were to be "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" (Ex. 18:21).

Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

Lesson 12

The Church as the Family Self-Supporting

III. (Continued)

As a true family the Church should be autonomous, that is, self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.

C. Second of all, the local church should be self-supporting.

1. Each local church should ultimately be able to support itself.
 - a. There are pioneer situations that will need some initial assistance for the establishing of a new congregation.
 - b. There could be seasonal times of extra stress where one church will give to help another church weather a financial storm (Acts 11:29-30). It should be noted, however, that the giving of such funds does not give the donor the right to dictate to the church receiving such funds.
 - c. Each local church should own their own property, pay their own bills and should not be controlled financially or materially by another church or organization.
2. God has provided a divine financial system that makes it possible for each local church to be financially independent.

To better understand God's financial plan for the local church it is necessary to be familiar with God's financial system in the Old Testament. This does not mean that the New Testament Church must follow all of the Mosaic admonitions in regard to finance, but it is significant that there is only one financial system that God ever gave to any nation in the world and that is the system of the tithe that God gave to the nation of Israel. We have to assume that this system at least reflects God's heart in principle form.

a. The Old Testament Tithe

i. Before the law

- aa. Abraham had offered tithes to Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God (Gen. 14:18-20).

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

- bb. Jacob also in a time of consecration to the Lord vowed to give God a tenth or a tithe (Gen. 28:20-22).

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”

ii. Under the law—Moses

aa. The Lord’s Tithe

The principal area of tithing in Israel’s economy was referred to as the “Lord’s tithe” (Lev. 27:30-33). This tithe consisted of ten percent of all their increase before anything else was taken out. It was used primarily for the support of the Levites or ministers of the congregation (Num. 18:21-24).

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’s. It is holy to the LORD. Leviticus 27:30

Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting. Numbers 18:21

bb. Other Old Testament Giving

In the Old Testament the Lord’s tithe was only the beginning of their giving. They had an additional tithe that was to be set aside to be used for religious observances (Deut. 14:22-26). In addition to this, every third year they were to give an additional tithe for the poor and needy (Deut. 14:28-29). For this reason the third year was called “the year of tithing” (Deut. 26:12-14). Beyond the tithes, which were mandatory, there were a variety of free will offerings that were entirely up to the individuals (Deut. 12:6).

There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. Deuteronomy 12:6

iii. Under Jesus’ Ministry

aa. Jesus came to fulfill the law (Mt. 5:17).

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

bb. Jesus came and confirmed the law (Mt. 23:23; Luke 20:25).

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the

law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Matthew 23:23

How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest part of your income, but you ignore the important things of the law--justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but you should not leave undone the more important things. –NLT

- cc. Jesus taught the principle that stood behind the law and He internalized the law (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 6:38).

Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.” Mark 12:41-44

If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving--large or small--it will be used to measure what is given back to you. Luke 6:38, NLT

- dd. Jesus introduced a higher law—the law of love (Is. 42:21; Mt. 5:18-30; Mt. 22:36-40; Acts 20:35).

The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable. Isaiah 42:21, KJV

Jesus made it clear that when we are operating on the basis of the royal law of love, that we will automatically fulfill what is contained in the letter of the law. The higher law of love encompasses the lower law.

b. New Testament Giving

- i. New Testament giving functions in the higher law. Note: The higher law always supersedes and contains the lower law.
- ii. New Testament giving operates on a higher level and includes these requirements. These requirements were not necessarily demanded in the Old Testament. In the New Testament we are to give—
 - Generously (II Corinthians 8:2; 9:6),
 - Willingly (II Corinthians 8:3,12),
 - Proportionately (II Corinthians 8:14-15; 9:6),
 - Lovingly (II Corinthians 8:24; I Corinthians 13:3),
 - Cheerfully (II Corinthians 9:7),
 - Thankfully (II Corinthians 9:11-12),

- Sacrificially (Hebrews 13:16; Mark 12:44),
- As unto the Lord (Matthew 25:40).

iii. Paul outlines principles of New Testament giving in II Corinthians 8-9.

- Giving in faith requires a grace from God to give (8:1-2). When we walk in the law of love and have a godly desire to give, God will favor us to be able to give generously even when all of our personal needs are not met.
- Giving in faith requires giving willingly beyond our natural ability to give (8:3). If we only give what we know we can give it requires no faith on our part.
- Giving in faith views giving as a privilege not as drudgery to the degree that we may even plead with a recipient to receive our offering (8:4).
- Giving in faith requires a giving of ourselves totally to the Lord first so that we will be able to be obedient to His leading in our giving (8:5). If Christ is the Lord of our lives, He is the Lord of our finances as well.
- Giving in faith requires having a desire to excel in this act of grace (8:6-7). To excel is to go beyond the expected measure. It means to outdo or surpass the normal limits.
- Giving in faith is based on love which is willing to put the needs of others ahead of our own so that they might be made rich by our sacrifice (8:8-9).
- Giving in faith involves making commitments of faith and then following through with those commitments (8:10-11).
- Giving in faith is determined by the willingness and the sacrifice involved not on the actual size of the gift (8:12).
- Giving in faith requires a willingness to stretch out in faith believing that God will supply what we need in the future through the proper functioning of the Body of Christ (8:13-15).
- Giving in faith will be tested by circumstances that come against the commitments that that we have made (9:1-5). True faith will, however, give us the courage of those commitments to follow through on our promises.
- Giving in faith involves a generous sowing of seed realizing that unless there is a significant deposit there can be no significant return (9:6).
- Giving in faith is done cheerfully because it springs from a deep appreciation and spirit of thanksgiving for everything that the Lord has done for us (9:7).

- Giving in faith recognizes that God is a debtor to no one and that He will be generous with us beyond our generosity to Him (9:8-11).
 - Giving in faith is a testimony to others of the grace of God in our lives that will not only inspire faith to rise up within them but will cause them to praise God in greater ways (9:12-13). In other words, generous faith is contagious.
 - Giving in faith will inspire others to participate in what we are doing with their encouragement and prayer support (9:14).
3. Churches that follow these basic New Testament principles of giving will never have a financial problem.
 4. Churches that fail to teach biblical principles of giving to their membership are robbing the people of the blessing of God that can only come when God's principles are followed (Mal. 3:6-12).
 5. Church leaders need to diffuse the reasons (or should say excuses) that people give for not tithing for their own sakes. The following are the most common reasons that people give for not tithing:
 - a. Reason #1: I can't afford it!

The truth is they can't afford not to. Tithing releases the windows of heaven and rebukes the devourer (Mal. 3:8-12).
 - b. Reason # 2: God doesn't need my money.

The truth is our giving is a reflection of our heart. Where our treasure is, there our heart is as well (Mt. 6:21).
 - c. Reason #3: I forgot!

The truth is they are undisciplined in their giving. Try that line of argument with the rest of your household bills. Tithing must be a priority, the first check written from our increase (Pro. 3:9-10).
 - d. Reason #4: I don't see the benefit.

The truth is we do not do it to get something in return. However, the benefits of tithing are both natural and spiritual. Faithfulness with money positions us to receive true spiritual riches (Lk. 16:10-12).
 - e. Reason #5: It is Old Testament not New Testament.

The truth is New Testament giving is stricter than Old Testament giving. Giving in the New Testament surpasses giving in the Old Testament. People who do not want to tithe will try to spiritualize their position by saying that I let the Spirit lead me in my giving. The truth is most people who say this do not give

very much. If they genuinely prayed about their giving patterns, the Holy Spirit would challenge them to come up higher. He always does.

When you practice true New Testament giving and you will go well beyond tithing.

Lesson 13
The Church as the Family
Self-Propagating

III. (Continued)

As a true family the Church should be autonomous, that is, self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.

D. Third, the local church should be self-propagating, that is they should be missionary in their heart, spirit and practical expression.

1. The missionary heart of the local church springs from the heart and nature of God Himself. God's nature is missionary or outgoing.

Notice the definitions of God found in the Bible.

- a. God is Spirit (John 4:24). God is effulgent, pervading, and impossible to contain.

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

- b. God is Light (I John 1:5). God is ever penetrating, diffusive and dispelling darkness.

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

- c. God is Love (I John 4:16, 18). God is always reaching out to include more and more as objects of His love.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. I John 4:16

- d. God is Consuming Fire (Heb. 12:29). God, like fire, is never satisfied, burns passionately and always hungers for more.

For our God is a consuming fire.

2. The missionary heart of the church springs from that fact that the local church is the instrument of God to fulfill His Eternal Purpose. This involves growth, expansion and increase to the point where God's glory covers the whole earth (Gen. 1:26-28).
3. The missionary heart of the church finds its impetus in the commission given to it by Jesus Himself. The commission that Jesus gave to the church included the following elements:
 - a. Preaching the Gospel to every creature and every nation under heaven (Mark 13:10; 16:15; Luke 24:47).

- b. Witnessing of Christ to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).
 - c. Baptizing all those who respond to the Gospel (Mt. 28:19).
 - d. Making disciples out of all those who were converted (Mt. 28:19).
 - e. Bringing healing and deliverance to all those in such need (Mark 16:15-18).
 - f. Teaching the converted a lifestyle of obedience to all of God's commands (Mt. 28:20).
4. The missionary heart of the church is further fueled by the condition of mankind apart from Christ.
- a. Apart from Christ all people are sinners and are under the sentence of death (Rom. 5:12).
 - b. Apart from Christ all people are children of wrath (Eph. 2:3).
 - c. Apart from Christ all people are alienated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18).
 - d. Apart from Christ even upright, moral and decent people are lost and need to be saved (Rom. 3:23; John 3:3; Acts 11:13-14).
 - e. Apart from Christ all people are destined for eternal damnation (Rev. 20:10-15).
5. The missionary heart of the church is inspired by the message that it bears.
- a. Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; I Cor. 8:4).
 - b. The message of the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).
 - c. The message of the Gospel is a message of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18-19).
 - d. The message of the Gospel opens the door to abundant life (John 10:10).
6. The missionary heart of the church must be challenged by God's desire for all men to be saved (II Pet. 3:9). This heart is seen in the following:

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

- a. God's challenge to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Genesis 12:3b

- b. God's challenge to Israel (Ex. 19:5-6).

*Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; **for all the earth is Mine**. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel*

- c. Solomon's prayer of dedication (I Kgs. 8:28-30, 41-42, 59-60).

...that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name. I Kings 8:43b

- 7. The missionary heart of the church must be activated by the realization that the commission of Christ will only be fulfilled by the church in the church age.
 - a. God does his work through His Church (Mt. 16:18; II Cor. 5:18-21), not angels (I Pet. 1:12).

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. I Corinthians 5:18-21
 - b. The message of the Gospel must find its voice in God's people (Rom. 10:14-15).

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?
 - c. The church must reach the world prior to the Second Coming of Christ, because after that there will be no more opportunity (I Th. 4:13-18; II Th. 1:3-12).
 - d. If the church does not do it, it will not get done (Eph. 3:8-13).
- 8. The missionary heart of the church should be motivated by being a mature expression of the local church.
 - a. Every mature local church should be autonomous, that is, self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.
 - i. Every mature local church should be self-governing, that is they contain within themselves the power to make all final decisions regarding the vision and function of the local assembly.
 - ii. Every mature local church should be self-supporting, that is they have the ability within themselves to fund the vision and the functions of the local assembly.

- iii. Every mature local church should be self-propagating, that is, they have the ability to reproduce themselves in spiritual offspring and perpetuate themselves into the next generation.
- b. The local church propagates in several ways:
 - 1. Reaching individual souls through aggressive evangelism in its local community.
 - 2. Raising up and equipping leaders to carry responsibility and vision.
 - 3. Extending the Kingdom of God in their nation by planting other reproducing local churches.
 - 4. Touching the nations of the world through their own or cooperative efforts with other local churches.
- c. Every mature local church should take seriously the commission of God given to mankind (Gen. 1:26-28) and of Christ given to the church (Mt. 28:18-20).

Lesson 14

The Church as the Family Discipline

IV. As a true family, the local church is a place of discipline.

A. The foundation for discipline in the local church

The foundation for discipline in the church comes from two important instructions given to us by Jesus Himself.

1. Jesus gave a commission to the church that involves making followers of Christ into “disciplined ones” (Mt. 28:19-20).
2. Jesus gave instructions to the church as to how to handle difficulties that arise between members of the church (Mt. 18:15-18).

B. The necessity of discipline in the local church

1. Without church discipline there is no clear standard of right and wrong among the congregation.
2. Without church discipline sinning members go on sinning, destroying their own potential fruitfulness in God.
3. Without church discipline there is the potential for others to do outwardly what they have only been tempted to do inwardly – for the unjudged, outward activity is a tacit approval of it.
4. Without church discipline the spiritual life of the body as a whole becomes greatly weakened. Spiritual vitality and life seep out and a progressive spiritual stagnation sets in.
5. Without church discipline confidence and respect for the church leadership is lost.

C. Key verses dealing with discipline in the local church

1. Matthew 18:15-18

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that “by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

- a. Notice that this passage puts the matter of conflict resolution in very general terms, “If your Brother sins against you.”
- b. Notice that Jesus puts responsibility on the offended party to “go and tell him his fault.”
- c. Notice the different levels of confrontation where privacy regarding the offense is attempted but depending upon the response of the offender can lead to further exposure.

2. I Corinthians 5:1-13 – Read the entire passage noting the following phrases:

- “might be taken away from among you” (vs. 2)
- “deliver such a one to Satan” (vs. 5)
- “purge out the old leaven” (vs. 7)
- Do not “keep company with sexually immoral people” in the church (vs. 9)
- “not even to eat with such a person” (vs. 11)
- “judge those who are inside” (vs. 12)
- “put away from yourselves that wicked person” (vs. 13)

3. II Corinthians 2:5-11 – Read the entire passage noting the following phrases:

- “The punishment which was inflicted by the majority” (vs. 6)
- “Reaffirm your love to him” (vs. 8)

4. Romans 16:17-18

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

Note the following phrases:

- “Note those who cause divisions” (vs. 17)
- “Avoid them” (vs. 17)

5. II Thessalonians 3:6-15 – Read the entire passage noting the following phrases:

- “withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly” (vs. 6)
- “If anyone does not obey...note that person” (vs. 14)
- “Do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed” (vs. 14)
- “Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (vs. 15)

6. I Timothy 1:20

*...of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, **whom I delivered to Satan** that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

7. Titus 1:13

*This testimony is true. Therefore **rebuke them sharply**, that they may be sound in the faith...*

8. Titus 3:10-11

Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

If anyone is causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with that person. –NLT

D. The purpose of discipline in the local church.

In relation to the individual

1. To keep people from going astray (Ps. 119:67; Hos. 7:11-12; Jer. 10:23-24; Pro. 10:17; I Cor. 5:5).

I used to wander off until you disciplined me; but now I closely follow your word. Psalm 119:67, NLT

2. To keep people from the calamity of the wicked (Ps. 94:12-13; I Cor. 11:32).

Happy are those whom you discipline, LORD, and those whom you teach from your law. You give them relief from troubled times until a pit is dug for the wicked. Psalm 92:12-13, NLT

3. To bring people closer to God (Is. 26:16).

LORD, in trouble they have visited You, they poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them.

4. To make people wise (Pro. 22:15).

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

5. To bring people to an experience of abundant and eternal life (Heb. 12:9).

Since we respect our earthly fathers who disciplined us, should we not all the more cheerfully submit to the discipline of our heavenly Father and live forever? –NLT

6. To help people deal with sin and grow in righteousness in areas where they have been personally unsuccessful (Heb. 12:9-12).

For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always right and good for us because it means we will share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening--it is painful! But afterward there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. –NLT

7. To teach people the right ways of God (Ps. 119:71).

The suffering you sent was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your principles. –NLT

8. To produce greater fruitfulness in the lives of people (John 15:2).

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

9. To restore the repentant believers (Gal. 6:1; II Cor. 2:7-10).

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Galatians 6:1

In relation to the local church

10. To bring the church to maturity (Eph. 4:12-16; I Cor. 3:1).

...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ... Ephesians 4:14-15

11. To deter others from similar sins (I Tim. 5:20).

Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. I Timothy 5:20

12. To protect the reputation and witness of the church (Rom. 2:24).

For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” as it is written.

13. To protect the church from further contamination (I Cor. 5:6-7).

Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

14. To prove that leaders love and care (II Cor. 7:12).

Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

15. To affirm each members responsibility to be their brother's keeper (Heb. 3:13).

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

16. To cut emotional ties with unrepentant Christians (I Cor. 5:11).

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.

In relation to God

17. To affirm the authority of God and His Word in our lives (II Cor. 2:9; II Tim. 3:16-17).

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

18. To maintain the honor of God (Rom. 2:24).

For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

19. To maintain the purity of the Scripture (Tit. 1:10-11).

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

E. The kinds of sins that are to be disciplined in the local church

(Taken from notes by Bill Gothard)

Notice that the key to all of these issues is the ongoing nature of them.

1. **Irresolvable** disputes between members (Mt. 18:15; I Cor. 5:11).
2. **Persistent** teaching of false doctrine (Tit. 1:9-11; 3:10-11; Rom. 16:17).
3. **Continuing** immorality and disorderliness (II Th. 3:6; I Cor. 5:11).

F. The levels of discipline given by Christ (Matt. 18:15-20).

1. Private

The first step of discipline is private, one on one. If more people would take personal responsibility for the first step very little would have to go beyond that.

2. Semi-Private

The next step is to include others. Who should be included? It should be those who have authority in the lives including parents, church leaders and people of influence in their lives. Remember, you are primarily after the result of repentance and healing not discipline and excommunication.

3. Public

This step is handled by the leadership of the church and should only be done when all else fails. This involves a removing of the person from the covering of the local church and putting them into the hands of the highest authority—God. He will discipline them personally from this point (Heb. 10:31).

G. The attitude of the restorer (person administering discipline)

1. The restorer must be motivated by love (Heb.12:6; Rev. 3:19; Eph. 4:15; II Th. 3:15).
2. The restorer must do it with gentleness (I Th. 2:1-9; Ps. 141:5).
3. The restorer must have a spirit of meekness (Gal. 6:1-2). Recognizing that except for the grace of God we would all be in trouble.
4. The restorer must be ready to extend mercy (II Cor. 2:6-8).
5. The restorer must have the heart of a father (I Th. 2:10-12; I Cor. 4:14-16).
6. The restorer must reprove in wisdom (Pro. 25:12).

*“Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a **wise reprov**er to a listening ear.” –NAS*

H. Conclusions about discipline in the local church

1. Discipline is a demonstration of faithfulness (Ps. 119:75; Pro. 27:5-6).

I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. Psalm 119:75

Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. Proverbs 27:5-6

2. Discipline is for the purpose of restoration and salvation (Jam. 5:19-20; II Th. 3:15).

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. James 5:19-20

3. Discipline is a means of instruction (Ps. 94:12).

Blessed is the man you discipline, O LORD, the man you teach from your law... --NIV

4. Discipline is designed as a means of grace, not of destruction.
5. Discipline is designed as an evidence of love, not of hate or of fear.
6. Discipline is gradual and dependent on the attitude and response.

Lesson 15
The Church as the Family
Local Church Commitment

V. As a true family, the local church should be a place of committed relationship.

A. The Word “Commitment”

The word “commitment” itself does not occur in the King James Version of the Bible, but when we understand the meaning of this word, we find that it is a concept that occurs throughout the Bible and is the basis for entering into and maintaining covenant relationships.

1. To be committed to someone is “to cleave to, to adhere to, to be attached to, to join oneself closely to or to stick to the side of another.”
2. In the Greek language, the concept of commitment implied “a gluing together, a firm fastening and a giving of oneself steadfastly to another.”

B. Areas of Biblical Commitment

1. Commitment to God. God wants us to be committed, firmly attached and closely joined to Himself (Acts 11:23; I Cor. 6:17).

Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

Acts 11:23, KJV

2. Commitment to the Word. God wants everyone to be committed to the Word of God as the foundation for their lives (Ps. 119:31).

I cling to Your testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame!

3. Commitment to One’s Spouse. God wants husbands and wives to be bound together closely in a strong covenant relationship (Gen. 2:24).

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

4. Commitment to Fellow Believers. God wants believers in Christ to be committed to one another as fellow members of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:1-6, 16).

...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:16

5. Commitment to the Local Church. God wants those that are added to the Lord to be added to the local church where these commitments will be worked out (Acts 2:47).

...praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

C. Pictures or Illustrations of Commitment in the Church.

Several of the pictures that God gives us for the church highlight the importance of the individual members being in a committed relationship one to another.

1. The church is a TEMPLE.

As a temple, the church is composed of living stones that are built together or “fitly joined” together (Eph. 2:19-22; I Pet. 2:5). As stones in a building, the individual members are to stand along side of some stones, come under the authority of other stones and provide covering and protection for others. If any stone is out of place, the walls of the temple will be incomplete and vulnerable.

...in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:21-22

We who believe are carefully joined together, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also joined together as part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit. –NLT

2. The church is a BODY.

As a body, the church is composed of individual members that are interlocked and vitally linked to each other (Eph. 4:16; I Cor. 12:20, 27). As members of the body we must be in our place and functioning in harmony and peace with other members of the body if the local church is to fulfill its purpose and function effectively.

Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. Ephesians 4:16, NLT

3. The church is a FAMILY.

As a family, the church is made up of many brothers and sisters (Eph. 3:15; Gal. 6:10). Each member of that family has a responsibility to watch over and care for the other members of the family to see them fulfilled and growing in their relationship to the Heavenly Father.

Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone, especially to our Christian brothers and sisters. Galatians 6:10, NLT

4. The church is an ARMY.

As the Army of God, the church is made up of good soldiers of Christ functioning under the leadership of their captain and chief leader—the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 6:10-13; II Tim. 2:3-4; Heb. 2:10). The church is involved in serious warfare against a common enemy (Eph. 6:12; I Tim. 1:18). It is critical in any war that the soldiers in the army are in harmony and fully committed to the well-being of their fellow soldiers. For soldiers to fight among themselves is to give the advantage to the enemy.

D. Local Church Commitment in Practical Terms

What does local church commitment mean in a practical sense?

1. **Commitment** means that I will work through difficulties when they arise instead of running away from them.
2. **Commitment** means that I will blend my personal giftings and ministry goals with the vision of that local assembly.
3. **Commitment** means that I will give myself faithfully to the members of that church in fellowship and service.
4. **Commitment** means that I will invest my time, talents and financial resources to see the vision of my local church become a reality.
5. **Commitment** means that I will faithfully gather with my brothers and sisters at the corporate assembly times.
6. **Commitment** means that I will take the preached word seriously and make every effort to put it into practice in my life.
7. **Commitment** means that I will only do those things that will edify and build up the saints to whom I am joined.
8. **Commitment** means that I will honor and respond to those who have oversight in my life as they speak into my life.
9. **Commitment** means that I will still support church leadership when policies do not keep to my opinions.
10. **Commitment** means that I will utilize personal resources to minister to the needs in the local church that God puts in front of me.

E. Ways Believers Care for One Another

They do the following:

1. They love one another (I Pet. 1:22).
2. They comfort one another (I Th. 4:18).
3. They exhort one another (Heb. 10:25).
4. They build up one another (Rom. 14:19).
5. They admonish one another (Col. 3:16).
6. They serve one another (I Pet. 4:10).
7. They forgive one another (Eph. 4:32).
8. They submit one to another (Eph. 5:21).
9. They pray for one another, bear one another's burdens, have compassion for one another, and are kind to one to another (Jam. 5:16; Gal. 6:1; I Pet. 3:8).

They do not do the following:

10. They do not condemn or criticize one another (Rom. 14:13).
11. They do not go to law with one another (I Cor. 6:7).
12. They do not speak evil of one another (Jam. 4:11).
13. They do not envy one another (Gal. 5:26).
14. They do not hurt or do anything that would harm another (Gal. 5:15).

God is showing His Body the need for becoming committed to each other for the sake of the higher purpose and call. Every general commitment to Christ and His Church must manifest itself in a specific commitment to a place or a local assembly or it is no commitment at all. To say you are committed to what God is doing in a general way and then not identify with a local church in a specific way is to reject the very vehicle that God has chosen to extend His kingdom and purpose in the world to day.

Lesson 16

The Church as the Body of Christ

I. Introduction

When Jesus ascended on high and was seated at the right hand of the Father, He was placed as the head of the church. He now seated as the head and continues to function on earth through His spiritual body known as the Church (Eph. 1:19-23).

...and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

II. The foundation for understanding our place of ministry is an understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ.

A. When Christ ascended He ascended to become the Head of the Church which is His body (Col. 1:17-18).

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

B. When He ascended He dispensed the fullness that was in Him to the individual members of the Church (John 1:14; 3:33-35).

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. John 3:34

Christ was:

- THE Apostle (Hebrews 3:1)

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus...

- THE Prophet (John 4:19)

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet."

- THE Evangelist (Luke 4:18)

- THE Pastor (John 10:11)

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

- THE Teacher (John 3:2)

Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.

- THE Elder (Romans 8:29)

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

- THE Deacon (Luke 22:27)

For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

- THE Exhorter (Luke 2:25)

*And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the **Consolation** of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.*

- THE Giver (Galatians 2:20)

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- THE Ruler (Luke 1:33)

And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

- THE Shower of Mercy (Hebrews 2:17)

Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

- THE Worker of Miracles (John 11:47)

Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs."

- THE Healer (Luke 6:17-19)

And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all.

- THE Deliverer (Matthew 1:21)

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.

- THE Governor (Isaiah 9:6-7)

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

- THE Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25)

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

- C. Now Christ functions through the Church which is His body. Our ministry is merely an expression of “Christ in us” (Col. 1:27). We are the only hands that Jesus has.
- D. When we rightly relate to the Body of Christ we can experience the fullness that is in Christ.
- E. The Body of Christ is composed of unity in diversity.
 1. There is one body, but many members.
 2. There is one vine, but many branches.
 3. There is one army, but many soldiers.
 4. There is one temple, but many living stones.
 5. There is one family, but many children (sons).
 6. There is one sheepfold, but many sheep.
- F. Each member of the body has a place in that body, a place to function.

III. The Apostle Paul shared his revelation of the Church as the Body of Christ in the book of Ephesians.

Six things that Paul teaches us about the Church which is His Body:

- A. The Body of Christ has Christ as its Head (Eph. 1:21-23; 4:15; 5:23).

“May grow up into Him who is the Head—Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

“for the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the Head of the Church.” Ephesians 5:23

What a head we have!

1. Notice all of the things that the head provides for us (Ephesians 1:3, 5, 7, 11, 13; 2:13).

- He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places (1:3).
- He has made it possible for us to be adopted as sons (1:5).
- He has provided redemption through His blood (1:7).
- He has provided the forgiveness of sins (1:7).
- He has caused us to abound in grace (1:7-8).
- He has made it possible for us to have an inheritance in God (1:11).
- He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise (1:13).
- He has brought us who were afar off near to the Father by His blood (2:13).

Ephesians 1:21, literally translated states *“Over above every government and authority and power and lordship and every name that is constantly being named not only in this age but also in the one about to come.”*

2. Notice that the Father gave Christ to be Head over the Church. Christ is, therefore, God’s gift to the Church.

Every body needs a head. For the body to be effective, successful and alive it must be rightly related or submitted to the head (Eph. 5:24-34).

3. Conclusion: **If we are going to function as the Body of Christ we must be personally and corporately submitted to Christ’s headship over our lives.**

B. The Body of Christ is to make up the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:23; 4:7-11).

“which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Ephesians 1:23

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”
Ephesians 4:7

1. Christ is the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 1:19; 2:9). That means that every ministry finds their pattern in Him.

- a. The word “fullness” means “full contents (contents of a basket), entirety, full sum, full measure, numerically ‘the whole.’”
- b. Translated literally it means, “The fullness of the one who is constantly filling all things with all things.”

2. As members of the Body of Christ, we are not the fullness, but we have individually received “of His fullness” (John 1:16; Rom. 12:3), but the whole Body flowing together is to comprise the fullness.

And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. John 1:16

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. Romans 12:3

3. Conclusion: **If we are going to experience all that is in Christ, we will not find it in isolation, but we must look to the rest of the Body of Christ.**

- C. The Body of Christ consists of both Jew and Gentile reconciled by the cross to Christ (Eph. 2:14-17; 3:6).

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Ephesians 2:14-17

...that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel. Ephesians 3:6

1. The great miracle of reconciliation is the fact that not only does the cross reconcile us to God, but it is able to take two long-standing and antagonistic parties and bring them together into one great body in right relationship to God and each other.

The power of the Gospel can bring a Simon the Zealot and a Matthew the Tax Collector together.

2. The thought of reconciliation here is that of restoration of a condition that had been lost. The Greek word here is prefixed by a word meaning “back”. This restoration is a restoration back to a previous unity.

Now they are again fellow-members, joined together in the same body.

3. Conclusion: **If we are going to be the Body of Christ we must tear down the walls that separate us and unite with others of all backgrounds to accomplish God’s Eternal Purpose.**

- D. The Body of Christ must be unified to fulfill its ministry (Eph. 4:4; 2:21-22; 1:10).

1. The key words in Ephesians that focus on unity include:

- Gather
- Together, One
- Unity
- Joined
- Fitly Framed
- Peace

2. Paul mentions two types of unity including:

- Unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3)
- Unity of the Faith (Eph. 4:13)

3. Paul gives seven things we must recognize to maintain unity (4:4-6).

We must recognize that there is:

- One Body
- One Spirit
- One Hope of your calling
- One Lord
- One Faith
- One Baptism
- One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all!

4. Paul further lists five things we must do to create and maintain unity (4:1-3).

We must:

- Walk in humility not thinking that you have it all.
- Exercise gentleness in our relationships one to another.
- Be patient in the process while the church is coming to perfection.
- Maintain a spirit of love in spite of some differences.
- Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

To endeavor is to “to take care, make haste, do one’s best.” It speaks of a determined effort. It has the idea of exertion to accomplish purpose.

5. Conclusion: **If we are going to be successful as the Body of Christ we must be at peace and at one with the other members of His body.**

E. The Body of Christ is to come to perfection (Eph. 4:12-15), that is, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children,

tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

1. Leadership ministries have been given to the Church to help to perfect the saints.

Perfecting of the saints means equipping them for service. These gifted ministries are to specialize in equipping saints for “works of service”.

2. These leadership ministries will be needed until the job is done (vs. 13).

They are given until we all arrive at or attain to or unto...

- a. The unanimity of the faith (vs. 13).
- b. The knowledge of the Son of God (vs. 13).

This refers to a “full knowledge, precise and correct knowledge.” True and full unity of faith is then found when all thoroughly know Christ, the object of our faith.

- c. A perfect man (vs. 13).

Notice that we “ALL” come to “A” perfect man. This is a corporate man or image. What kind of perfection is this talking about? The Greek word means (1) “whole or without blemish, complete (with nothing being left out), full” and (2) “brought or arrived at the end.” The church is going to arrive at its destination.

- d. The fullness of Christ (vs. 13).

Paul defines exactly what he means, that is, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The fullness of Christ is the sum of the qualities which make up what Christ is.

Other Translations:

...until we reach the ideal man, the full standard of the perfection of Christ. –TCNT

...and reach mature manhood, and that full measure of development found in Christ. –Gdsp

...to mature manhood, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ. –NEB

...that we might arrive at really mature manhood—the complete personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ’s own perfection. –Ampl

The fullness of Christ refers to the sum of the qualities that make Christ what He is.

These are to be imaged in the Church (Eph. 1:23; I Pet. 2:9 “*to show forth the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness*”), and when these are in us we will have reached our maturity and attained the goal set before us.

e. Him (vs. 15).

We are to grow into or “unto” Him. This means more than the fact that we are to grow into resembling Him or that our growth is to be according to His example. It means that as He is the source from which the grace or power comes that makes it possible for us to grow, He is also the object and goal to which our growth in its every stage must look and is to be directed.

3. Conclusion: ***If we are going to represent Christ to the world we must be separated from the world and we must be Christ-like in our attitudes and actions.***

F. The members of the Body of Christ must be dedicated to the principle of mutual edification (Eph. 4:16).

...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

1. The members are to be joined closely together. This word is in the tense in the Greek that suggests that we are to allow ourselves to be continually joined more closely together.

Literally the translation of this verse could be rendered, “From whom as a source, all the body being constantly joined closely together and growing constantly together.”

2. The members of the body are to be knit together. This word means to cling to each other in a unity that cannot be broken.

3. The members of the body are to supply their individual part. Every member has a part to play. If the church is going to be successful, it is dependent on every member being in place and doing their part.

4. Conclusion: ***If we are going to touch the world we need to not only focus on evangelism, but we need to make sure we are personally in a committed relationship to the other members of God’s family.***

This means that we must work for the success and strengthening of our own local church and for the success and strengthening of every other church that preaches Christ.

The Purpose of this Picture

To help us better understand some of God's purpose for the church in bringing them to maturity that Christ might use this present body to minister life and healing to the world the same way in which He ministered in His earthly walk.

Note: For a complete study of "Finding Your Place in the Body of Christ" see the course titled **Life Management I** by the same author.

Lesson 17

Appointed Servants (Deacons)

I. **The Foundation of the Ministry of Appointed Servants (Deacons) (Mt. 23:11-12; 20:25-28; Mark 10:44).**

But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Matthew 23:11-12

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:25-28

A. The Meaning of the Greek Words

1. *Diakoneo* – This word literally means “to be an attendant, to wait upon.”

In the New Testament this word is used of waiting on at a table as a waiter (Luke 22:24-27); it is used in a general way of serving someone in any way (Mt. 4:11; 27:55; Acts 19:22; II Cor. 8:19); it is used in the sense of caring for or taking care of someone (II Cor. 3:3; Acts 6:2); it is used of helping or supporting someone (Mt. 25:23; Lk. 8:3; Rom. 15:25); and it is used as the ministry of a church official.

This word is translated several ways in the King James Version of the Bible. It is usually translated to minister, serve or administer and one time to “use the office of a deacon.”

For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

I Timothy 3:13

2. *Diakonia* – This word literally means “service or attendance as a servant”.

In the New Testament the word *diakonia* is used generally of all manner of service (Heb. 1:14; Eph. 4:12; Acts 6:4); it is used specifically of the service necessary for the preparation of a meal (Lk. 10:40); it is used of the service or function of all New Testament ministries (I Tim. 1:12; Acts 20:24; I Cor. 12:5; Col. 1:29; Rom. 15:31; II Cor. 8:4); and it is used of a specific ministry in the body of Christ (Rom. 12:7). This word is translated several ways. It is translated serving, ministry, ministration, relief, office, service, administrations or ministering.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching... Romans 12:6-7

3. *Diakonos* – This word literally means “a waiter, attendant, servant or minister.”

In the New Testament it refers to the servant of someone (Matt. 20:26; 23:11; Jn. 12:26); it refers to a helper or an encourager (I Th.. 3:2; I Tim. 4:6); and it refers to a person who functions as an official of the church (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8). This word is translated minister, servant or deacon.

Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons... Philippians 1:1

It is interesting that the apostles and other prominent Christians are seen in this capacity (Col. 1:23; Eph. 3:7; II Cor. 3:6).

...if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.
Colossians 1:23

B. The Root Word (*Diako*)

Diako – This word literally means “to run or hasten on errands.”

This word is never found in the New Testament but it is significant in this study because it is generally regarded as the root word on which the other three words are built. This word literally means “to run or to hasten on errands”. This obviously serves as the foundation for all ministry or service.

C. The Usage of Words

1. In an Unofficial Sense (Mt. 20:26; Jn. 12:26; I Th. 3:2; I Tim. 4:6)

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor. John 12:26

If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. I Timothy 4:6

In the general or unofficial sense, these words refer to any kind of servant, service or ministry. At times they refer to service or ministry in the home, the service or ministry of civil rulers, the service or ministry of angels, the service or ministry of various servants, and the service or ministry of all believers regardless of their specific calling in the Body of Christ.

2. In an Official Sense (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8-10)

Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure

conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. I Timothy 3:8-10

However, in certain passages where these words are used they are referring to a special class of people who have proven themselves and were thus designated “deacons” or literally “servants” of the church. These would be people who had obviously distinguished themselves in this capacity by their excellence and were utilized by the churches in certain designated or assigned areas of responsibility. This, then, became a specific office for which specific qualifications were given.

D. The Heart or Spirit of the Appointed Servant

1. Selflessness (Lk. 17:7-10).

And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, “Come at once and sit down to eat”? But will he not rather say to him, “Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink”? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, “We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.”

2. Humility (Phil. 2:5-8).

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

3. Love (I Pet. 1:22; Gal. 5:13-14).

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
Galatians 5:13-14

4. Willingness (Ex. 35:4-5, 10, 20-22, 29).

And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and they brought the LORD’s offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments.
Exodus 34:20-21

5. Responsiveness (Mt. 13:12).

For whoever has [a responsive heart], to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have [a responsive heart], even what he has will be taken away from him.

6. Faithfulness (I Cor. 4:1-2).

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

II. The Origin of the Office of Appointed Servants (Acts 6:1-7).

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. 7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Acts 6:1-6 is most commonly cited as the origin of the ministry of deacons or appointed servants. Although this is not clearly stated in the passage, the use of the Greek words, the prominent position of this passage, the spiritual qualities for these seven, and tradition all seem to suggest that this is the case.

A. Appointed servants were a matter of practical consideration.

The apostles did not choose deacons just for the sake of having deacons. They did not choose seven deacons because they like the number seven. They chose deacons to meet a particular need that their growth and expansion prohibited them from fulfilling. In other words, the Early Church developed in response to need.

These deacons or appointed servants were given to the leadership to assist them in managing certain affairs of the church even as the Levites were given to assist Aaron in the priestly office.

B. Appointed servants were initiated and appointed by the leadership.

Those in leadership saw a need and the way to meet that need best. They communicated their desires to the people; they asked the people to participate in the selection of suitable helpers; they prayed over those selected and they set them into their place of service. It is clear, that while the people were given a voice in the matter, the leadership had the final and directing voice in the matter.

C. Appointed servants became a pattern that was followed by others.

Many later churches seem to have realized the importance and value of setting in appointed servants or deacons because there is evidence that this became a general practice in the churches particularly as they began to grow large. We know that the church at Philippi had deacons (Phil. 1:1). The church at Ephesus also seems to have followed this pattern because of the letter written to Timothy while he was in Ephesus (I Tim. 3:8-13). In addition to these Scriptural inferences, early church history tells us that this became a universal principle among the churches.

III. The Qualifications for the Office (I Tim. 3:8-10)

Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.

A. Moral Qualifications

1. **Not double-tongued** (I Tim. 3:8). This would imply that an appointed servant is not a gossip. One who has a double tongue is one who says one thing to one person and gives a different view of it to another. Because of the position that this person will have in the church and the fact that they would know many details regarding the lives of others, it is essential that they not be a person of gossip.
2. **Not given to wine** (I Tim. 3:8). People who are placed in responsible positions in relationship to the church must be above reproach in terms of their personal habits and lifestyle. The servants of the house cannot be those who are dominated or under the control of anything but their relationship to the Lord.
3. **Not greedy for money** (I Tim. 3:8). This qualification, as well as the one above, is put in stronger terms than even in the qualifications that are listed for elders. Perhaps, it is because when the deacons are in a place of assisting and helping others, they may be tempted to accept monetary gifts from those to whom they minister.
4. **Blameless** (I Tim. 3:10). In every area of life appointed servants must be above reproach. This would include all of their business dealings and their life inside and outside of the church. An appointed servant must be an example to others of a godly lifestyle. The character and nature of the appointed servants of the house will reflect directly upon the leaders in that church and the reputation of the church itself.
5. **Proven** (I Tim. 3:10). The word proven in this passage means “to tested, examined, scrutinized to see whether a thing is genuine or not”. The position of an appointed servant is not given to promote maturity. Those given this position should already be living the life of a servant before they are entrusted with the title of the office a servant or deacon.

B. Domestic Qualifications

Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. I Timothy 3:12

6. **Husband of one wife** (I Tim. 3:12). The laws of God are a priority for this individual who has undivided affections. This phrase implies the concept that this person is a “one woman man.”
7. **Ruling his own house well** (I Tim. 3:12). This qualification is probably not to determine rulership ability as it is with the elder (See I Tim. 3:5), but to determine the nature of the deacon’s Christian walk. The deacon must first be a good parent, doing a good job and leading a Christian lifestyle at home.

C. Spiritual Qualifications

8. **Full of the Holy Ghost** (Acts 6:3). Natural ability is important but it plays a second role to the life that is motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It would be better to use someone who was sensitive to God and lacking some natural ability than to use someone who was relying on natural ability alone (Zech. 4:6).
9. **Full of wisdom** (Acts 6:3). Individuals working as representatives of the leadership will need much wisdom because they will find themselves in situations where emotions are high and where they may know facts that they could use in a wrong way. They must know how to behave themselves wisely.
10. **Reverent** (I Tim. 3:8). This term denotes a seriousness of mind and character which should characterize the appointed servant’s whole service to God and His people. These representatives of God are to be such that they inspire the reverence, awe and respect of others.
11. **Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience** (I Tim. 3:9). This person must be spiritually right with God, so that along with material relief, an appointed servant might also bring spiritual encouragement.

It should be noted that while all of these qualities can be seen by some as an unusually high standard for service in the house of the Lord, to those in the Early Church this list was nothing more than the definition of a “good Christian.” Paul is telling us that someone who serves the church in an official way should be an exemplary believer or one who lives the way Christians are supposed to live.

IV. The Work of Appointed Servants

A. General Work

The general function of the appointed servants is the performance of various services of a practical nature in the local church, relieving the elders of

responsibilities which might interfere with their ministry of prayer, the word of God and the spiritual oversight of the church.

B. Specific Work

There are many practical ministries in any local church that could be done by others to relieve the elders of a tremendous amount of responsibility including working with youth, children's ministry, worship and music, administration, maintenance, etc.

C. No Group Function

Appointed servants or, as they are sometimes called, "deacons" have no function as a group as elders do. They have responsibilities in a specific area for which they answer to the elders. They may meet with other appointed servants who function in the same area, but the entire body of these servants do not comprise a decision making body.

V. **The Appointment and Term of Office**

A. The Appointment

People who are placed in public areas of responsibility should be placed in front of the people openly so that the people can be encouraged to receive them as delegates of the eldership to serve in the area to which they are appointed.

B. The Term of Office

The Bible is silent concerning the term of office for a deacon. The silence seems to indicate that there was no specific term. This would imply that a deacon or appointed servant would remain in that position as long as he or she did the work of a deacon and as long as he or she continued to be qualified under the original requirements for that office. It is clear that all those who began as deacons or appointed servants did not always serve in that capacity all their life. Philip went on to be an evangelist (Acts 21:8). It does seem likely that many who would have started out as deacons may have ended up as elders later on.

VI. **The Honor and Reward of Appointed Servants**

Paul tells us that for those who serve well there is honor and reward. There is a lot of meaning wrapped up in the phrase "those who have served well" (I Tim. 3:13). For someone to fall into this category it would require diligence, faithfulness, responsiveness, sensitivity, thoroughness, and sacrifice.

For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. –KJV

For those who perform well as deacons acquire a good standing for themselves and also gain much confidence and freedom and boldness in the faith which is [founded on and centers] in Christ Jesus. –Ampl

A. A Good Reputation

Paul says that those who serve well obtain for themselves a “good standing.” The King James Version says they “purchase for themselves a good degree”. This is not a bachelor’s or a doctor’s degree although these things are good degrees. This is a degree that God gives. It may mean that they gain a good reputation for themselves and are held in high esteem by others, but it may also mean that in serving well this becomes “a good step” into greater levels of ministry.

B. A Good Step

The Greek word here for “standing” or “degree” literally means “step” and it could imply that the office, or at least the role of deacon, is preparatory for eldership. Many ministries in the New Testament seem to have begun in the role of a servant. Timothy served Paul (Acts 19:22) and John Mark served Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:5). The best example, however, is that of Philip who began as a deacon waiting on tables and ended up as a great evangelist, traveling and preaching the Gospel with great success (Acts 8:5-6; 21:8). The Old Testament seems to suggest a similar pattern in the Moses/Joshua (Ex. 24:13; Josh. 1:1) and Elijah/Elisha relationships (I Kgs. 19:19-21).

C. Boldness in the Faith

A second thing that Paul says is that those who serve well obtain great boldness in the faith. Stephen is a beautiful example of this. As a deacon or appointed servant he had an opportunity to see many needs. As he was ministering natural things he was faithful also to minister to the spiritual needs of individuals. He had many opportunities to share his faith and his testimony with those in need. He had many chances to pray with people. As he was faithful God began to move in these situations and prayers were answered. Soon Stephen appeared as bold as a lion, doing great signs and wonders among the people (Acts 6:8). This was not part of his job description, but it sprang from a life of service and devotion to the will of God. Stephen had so much boldness of faith that he was able to preach the boldest message in the Book of Acts. He went from faith to faith as he was a faithful servant in the natural areas of responsibility.

Lesson 18

Elders

I. The Definition of Terms

A. Elder (Greek = Presbyteros).

The term “elder” is used in three different ways in the Bible.

1. The term is used of a person who was advanced in years.
 - a. An elder may simply be someone older than his peers (Luke 15:25; John 8:9).

Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. Luke 15:25

- b. An elder may be someone who is simply old as opposed to being young (Acts 2:17).

Your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

2. The term is used in reference to our forefathers who have lived before us (Mt. 15:2; Mark 7:3-5; Heb. 11:2).

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. Hebrews 11:1-2

3. The term is used as a specific designation of office and rank.

- a. Leaders in the Jewish nation were called “elders” (Josh. 20:4; Mt. 16:21).

And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. Joshua 20:4

- b. Leaders in the early Christian church were called “elders” (I Pet. 5:1).

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed...

Vine’s Expository Dictionary defines elders as “leaders raised up and qualified by the Holy Spirit and appointed to have spiritual care of, and to exercise oversight over, the churches.”

B. Bishop or Overseer (Greek = Episkopos).

1. This word comes from the Greek words to look or watch (skopeo) over (epi). It clearly implies government and authority referring to those who watch over something in an official sense.
2. This word is used of the kind of care we are to exercise over our own heart in “looking carefully” after our own inward condition (Heb. 12:15).

...looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled...

3. This word is used of the position or office of an overseer (I Tim. 3:1).

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

4. The elders of a local church function as its “bishops” or overseers.

C. Shepherd or Feeder (Greek = **Pomaino**).

1. This word literally means to attend as a shepherd or to feed.
2. This word refers to the responsibility of leadership in both the Old and New Testaments (Jer. 23:4; Acts 20:28).

“I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,” says the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:4

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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. Acts 20:28

D. The relationship of the terms.

The following four passages help us to understand the relationship of these terms.

1. Acts 20:17, 28

*From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the **elders** of the church...Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers [bishops]**, to **shepherd [pastor]** the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

This passage indicates that Paul is speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus. These elders are set in as overseers (bishops) and their function is to shepherd or feed the people of God.

2. Titus 1:5-7

*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint **elders** in every city as I commanded you-- if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a **bishop** [overseer] must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money...*

Paul used the term elder and bishop interchangeably.

3. I Peter 5:1-4

*The **elders** who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow **elder** and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 **Shepherd** [pastor] the flock of God which is among you, serving as **overseers** [bishops], not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief **Shepherd** appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

Peter, who identifies himself as a fellow-elder, encourages the elders to serve as overseers or bishops and shepherd, feed or pastor the people of God.

4. I Peter 2:25

*For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the **Shepherd** [pastor] and **Overseer** [bishop] of your souls.*

Peter refers to Jesus as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

Conclusion: An elder is a mature leader who is placed in the office of a bishop or overseer to pastor or feed the people of God. In other words...

- Elder describes the person.
- Bishop or overseer describes the office in which an elder functions.
- Pastor or feeder describes the work that an elder in the office of a bishop performs.

II. Elders in the Old Testament

A. First, elders were set in under Moses (Ex. 18:13f; Num. 11:17).

Read Exodus 18:13-23

1. Notice that elders were established as a matter of practical consideration.
2. Notice that elders were also plural in number.
3. Notice that elders always had a specific function and charge.

B. Later, they functioned as authority figures in Hebrew society.

1. They were leaders in war (Josh. 8:10).
2. They were judges in disputes (Josh. 20:4).
3. They were men of advice and counsel.
4. They represented and maintained the community.
5. They were authorities in various cities (Ruth 4:2).

IDB “As parents wield authority in a family, so the elders wield authority in the life of the clan, tribe and local community.”

- C. Finally, they became the leaders of synagogues scattered throughout the Roman Empire.

III. Elders in the New Testament

The elders’ main responsibility in the New Testament is the general oversight and care of the local church. This responsibility involves three main areas:

A. Ruling

The elders are the rulers of the assembly (Rom. 12:8; I Th. 5:12-14; I Tim. 3:5; 5:17; Heb. 13:17, 24).

...for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of [same word for rule] the church of God? I Timothy 3:5

1. The word rule means “to be over, to superintend, to preside over”. It also means “to care for” or “to give attention to”.
2. The elders are to the church what parents are to a family (I Tim. 3:5).
3. This ruling is to be done with a proper spirit and attitude (I Pet. 5:2-3).
4. This ruling, at times, calls for the exercise of discipline (I Th. 5:12-13; I Tim. 3:5).

But we beseech you, brethren, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. I Thessalonians 5:12-13

5. The elders will have to give account to God for the use of the authority (Heb. 13:17).

Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.

B. Shepherding

The elders regardless of their individual ministries, have corporate charge to shepherd, pastor or feed the flock (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2).

1. They are to feed the flock (Acts 20:28).
2. They are to watch out for wolves (Acts 20:29-31).
3. They are to help the weak (Acts 20:35).
4. They are to minister to the sick (Jam. 5:14-15).
5. They are to be an example (I Pet. 5:3).

C. Instructing

1. All elders, regardless of their specific calling, are responsible to teach or instruct in the local church (I Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:9).

A bishop then must be...able to teach... I Timothy 3:2

...holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. Titus 1:9

2. They should be thoroughly trained in the Word of God (Tit. 1:9; I Tim. 4:12-16; II Tim. 2:15).
3. They should be able to communicate the Word of God in a clear way (Heb. 13:7; I Tim. 3:2).

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Hebrews 13:7

4. They should be able to convince those who oppose the truth (Tit. 1:9).

IV. The Qualification of Elders

- A. The New Testament gives clear guidelines for those that will serve as overseers in the local church (I Tim. 3:1-7 and Tit. 1:5-9).
- B. The qualifications listed have to do with an individual's fitness to serve the congregation in that capacity (See qualifications for deacons).
 1. Potential elders must be people of proven character.
 2. Potential elders must be people of spiritual vision.
 3. Potential elders must be people with their families in order.
 4. Potential elders must be people with the spiritual gifting for leadership.

C. Those in the place of selecting elders must wait for these qualities to be manifest in the life of the one selected.

1. Never set anyone into an office prematurely (I Tim. 5:22).

Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

Never be in a hurry about appointing an elder. –NLT

Don't appoint people to church leadership positions too hastily. If a person is involved in some serious sins, you don't want to become an unwitting accomplice. –Msg

2. Never give an office to someone to mature them, give offices to the mature (I Tim. 3:6). They are not to be a novice.

a. A novice could be a new convert.

b. A novice could be someone who is newly planted.

c. A novice could also be someone who is inexperienced.

3. All the qualifications are given for a reason. Failure to regard any one of them will lead to problems in the future.

V. The Honor of Elders

A. The people are to know those who are over them (I Th. 5:12). This verse carries with it the idea of appreciating their true value.

And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you...

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. –NIV

B. The people are to esteem them very highly (I Th. 5:13). This word translated “very highly” literally means “beyond the prescribed bounds.” This is not done because they necessarily deserve this kind of respect, it is respecting the work that they do and places us in a position to make it easier for them to do their job.

...and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

C. The people are to submit themselves to them (Heb. 13:17).

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

D. The people are to financially support them (I Tim. 5:17; Gal. 6:6; I Cor. 9:11-14).

Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

Galatians 6:6

E. The people are to be cautious in bringing accusations against them (I Tim. 5:19-20).

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." 19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. 20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

F. The people are to pray for them (Heb. 13:18; I Th. 5:25).

Brethren, pray for us. I Thessalonians 5:25

Lesson 19

The Five-Fold Ministry

I. Introduction to the five-fold ministry (Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-13).

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men."

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

A. What the five-fold ministry is.

1. They are word ministries.

The word of God is the principle tool for all of these ministries. They all need training in the Word as a part of their ministry preparation.

- a. Apostles (Acts 2:42; 6:4; 19:9-10). Apostles are to lay a doctrinal foundation so they must give themselves to the Word.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:42

- b. Prophets (Acts 15:32; Is. 8:19-20). Prophets are to prophesy according to the Word and their prophecies will be judged by the measuring rod of the Word.

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah 8:20

- c. Evangelists (Acts 8:4, 12, 14, 30-35). Evangelists are to preach the Gospel and spread the Word of God.

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Acts 8:35

- d. Pastors (Jer. 23:4; Acts 20:28). Pastors are to feed the Word to their people.

"I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:4

- e. Teachers (Acts 11:26; 13:1). Teachers teach the Word.

So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Acts 11:26

2. They are equipping ministries (Eph. 4:12).

All of these ministries are given to the local church to equip the saints to become what God has called them to become.

3. They are building ministries (Eph. 4:12).

All of these ministries work together to build the local church and to make it strong.

4. They are teaching ministries (Eph 4:13).

All of these ministries are to assist believers in coming to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. Training leaders will be a major part of their work. As eldership level ministries they must be able to teach and to exhort and convince with sound doctrine (I Tim. 3: 2; Tit. 1:9).

5. They are maturing ministries (Eph. 4:14-15).

...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ...

All of these ministries work together to build character, to bring believers to Christian adulthood, and to bring the church to full maturity.

B. What the five-fold ministry is not.

1. They are not a temporary ministry (Eph. 4:13).

They are not ministries that were active only in the Early Church. They are given until the church comes to full maturity (Eph. 4:13).

2. They are not ministries unconnected to the local church.

They do not have their separate program to the local church. Every ministry needs to be vitally connected to what God is building and under the covering of a local church leadership team.

3. They are not a separate group that functions higher than an eldership.

While these ministries should be respected, they must not be elevated to a position higher than that given to the in the Bible. It is important to note that:
a. The New Testament never uses the term "five-fold" ministry.

- b. There is no ministry ordained to government except that of an elder.
- c. There is no authority higher in a local church than its eldership.
- d. The only group to maintain distinction in the New Testament was the twelve apostles of the lamb (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23).

All elders should be one of the five ministries (at least in the developmental stage) but not all who have one of these five ministries will necessarily serve as elders.

C. Other common denominators in all of the ministries.

- 1. They are all patterned by Christ.
 - a. Apostle (Hebrews 3:1).
 - b. Prophet (John 4:19)
 - c. Evangelist (Luke 4:18-19)
 - d. Pastor (John 10:11)
 - e. Teacher (John 3:2)
- 2. They are all a measure of the gift of Christ, not the fullness (Eph. 4:7).

No one can be compared to Christ and no one ministry has all that we need to grow to maturity. We need all five ministries functioning together to be truly disciples of the Lord.

II. These ministries can serve as a basis for the departmental structure of the local church (See Chart).

A. The Apostolic Department

This department would include such things as leadership training, pastor's conferences, church planting and world missions.

B. The Prophetic Department

This department would include such things as prayer and intercessory ministries, worship and prophetic assemblies.

C. The Evangelistic Department

This department would include such things as equipping seminars, assimilation, crusades, evangelistic events and discipleship.

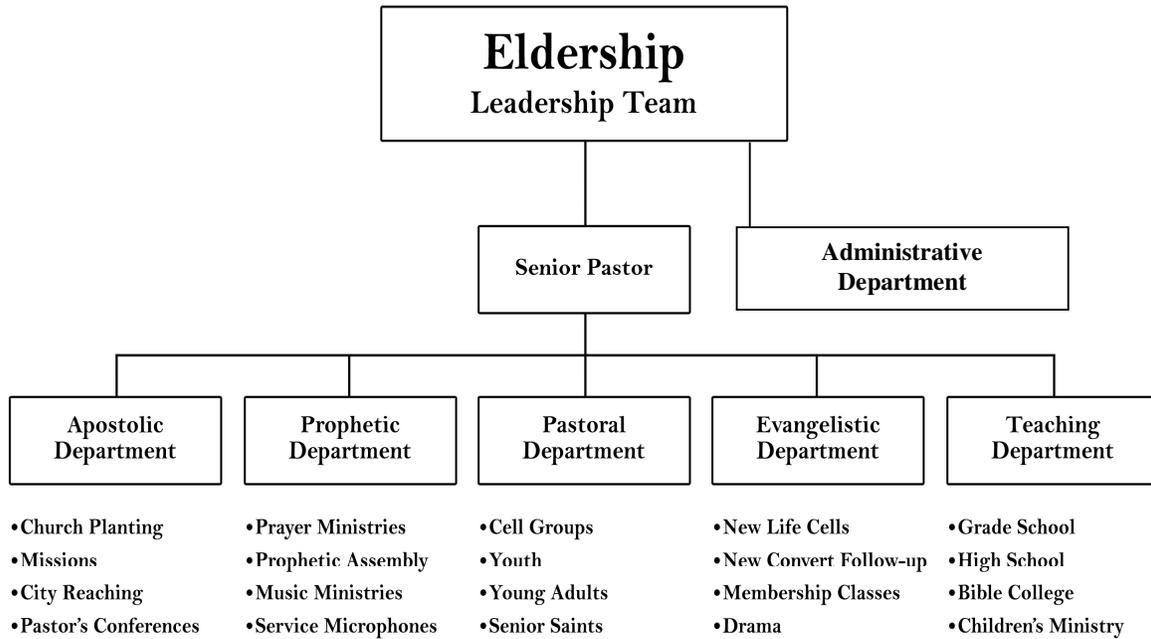
D. The Pastoral Department

This department would include such things as cell groups, official services of the church, youth ministry and counseling.

E. The Teaching Department

This department would include all aspects of teaching from children's ministry to Bible College.

Possible Local Church Structure



Lesson 20

Apostles

I. The Definition of Apostle

A. The problem of transliteration.

The word “apostle” is not translated but is a Greek word brought into English by simply changing the Greek letters to English letters.

B. The problem of translation.

When the word is translated it does not help us understand the ministry. The word means “a sent one”. All ministries should be sent.

C. The problem of culture gap.

We don’t have a comparable ministry in our culture. In Greek and Roman culture, an apostle was an emissary sent out as an official representative of the government with a specific purpose for which he was accountable.

When the Romans colonized the Greek world they send out an admiral with a fleet of ships loaded with citizens of Rome to establish a model city or colony that would reflect Roman law and culture to that region. At times the admiral, the fleet of ships and the colony itself were called some form of the word “apostle.”

1. An emissary or ambassador
2. An admiral
3. A fleet of ships
4. A colony

D. The problem of different classifications.

1. The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

This is a unique group with unique qualifications (Acts 1). They have a special place for eternity being those who were personally selected by Christ in His earthly ministry, will sit on twelve thrones and have their names written in the twelve foundation stones of the eternal city. This is a closed group.

2. Post-ascension Apostles.

These are apostles who are chosen by Christ after His ascension into heaven listed with the other ascension-gift ministries (Eph. 4:11). Paul is the best model of this type of ministry.

3. Other Apostolic-type ministries.

There are those mentioned in the New Testament who performed apostolic type functions who were not specifically called apostles.

E. An apostle is one who is sent forth with authority who faithfully represents the purposes of the sender.

1. Jesus was sent by the Father to represent His interests (John 3:16; 20:21; 4:34; 5:19; 5:30; 6:38; 8:28-29, 42; 12:44-45).

*“But I have a greater witness than John’s: for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has **sent Me**”* John 5:36

*“I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who **sent Me** bears witness of Me”* John 8:18

*“I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He **sent Me**”* John 8:42

*“As you have **sent Me** into the world, I also have **sent** them into the world”*
John 17:18

*“Peace be to you! As the Father has **sent Me**, I also **send** you”* John 20:21

2. Paul was sent out by the church at Antioch and faithfully reported back to them with a sense of accountability (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-28).

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 13:2-3

From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Acts 14:26-28

II. The Ministry of the Apostle (as it relates to the church)

A. The apostle is foundational ministry (Eph. 2:19-20).

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone...

1. Providing a doctrinal foundation (Acts 2:42).

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

2. Providing a foundation for believers (Col. 2:6-8; Acts 19:1-6).
3. Providing a foundation for local churches (Acts 14:23; I Cor. 3:10-11).

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 3:10-11

B. The apostle is a fathering ministry (I Cor. 4:15).

For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1. Fathering believers (Philemon 10)

I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains...

2. Fathering ministries (Phil. 2:22; Tit. 1:4; II Tim. 1:2; 2:1-2; I Tim. 1:2).

But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. Philippians 2:22

3. Fathering local churches (I Cor. 9:1-2)

Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? I Corinthians 9:1

C. The apostle is trouble-shooting or “problem-solving” ministry.

1. Working in an ongoing way with the churches they have established (Acts 15:36).

Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.”

2. Working with churches that were begun by others (II Cor. 11:28; Col. 1:1-2; Rom. 1:1). The apostle has a deep concern for all churches.

...besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. I Corinthians 11:28

III. The Heart of the Apostle

A. It is the heart of a servant that is characterized by four things (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1).

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God... Romans 1:1

1. Humility (I Cor. 4:9-13; II Cor. 10:18; I Th. 2:6).

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! 11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. 12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

2. Patience (II Cor. 12:12).

Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

3. Faithfulness (I Tim. 1:12; I Cor. 4:2).

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry... I Timothy 1:12

4. Sacrifice (II Cor. 11:23-28).

Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness--28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

B. It is the heart of a father (I Th. 2:6-12).

Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. 8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. 9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to

any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1. As a father he will cherish the church over his own ministry (I Th. 2:7).
2. As a father he will nurture God's people (Eph. 6:4).

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

3. As a father he will admonish (Eph. 6:4).
4. As a father he will be as a nurse (I Th. 2:6).
5. As a father he will be gentle with God's people (II Sam. 22:36; I Th. 2:7).
6. As a father he will at times get involved in discipline (I Cor. 4:21).

What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

IV. The recognition of an apostle (I Corinthians 9:1-3).

Who should recognize an apostle?

- A. God should (Acts 9:15-16; 26:16-18).
- B. The apostle should (Gal. 1:1).

Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)...

- C. The sending or home church should (Acts 13:1-3).
- D. Those that are the fruit of that ministry should (I Cor. 9:1-2).

Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Lesson 21

Prophets

I. Definition of a Prophet

- A. The prophet is one who speaks for God (Ex. 4:15-16). A prophet is God's mouthpiece much like Aaron was for Moses.

Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.

- B. The prophet is one who declares a message from God that is not known by natural means but by divine revelation (II Pet. 1:20-21).

II. The two aspects of prophecy

- A. Forth-telling (Heb. 1:1-2a). Speaking forth a declarative message from God that does not involve prediction.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...

- B. Foretelling (Amos 3:7-8). Speaking a predictive word from God dealing with the future.

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

III. The Levels of Prophecy

- A. The Spirit of Prophecy (I Sam. 10:10; 19:20-21). This is an atmosphere of prophecy created by the presence of the Lord where anyone could prophesy.

When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he [Saul] prophesied among them.

I Samuel 10:10

Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when Saul was told, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. Then Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. I Samuel 19:20-21

- B. The Gift of Prophecy (I Cor. 12:10). This is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in which any believer can function at the impetus of the Spirit from time to time.

- C. The Ministry of Prophecy (Rom. 12:6). This refers to a ministry given to some in the congregation who are used in various levels of prophecy for the purpose of edification, exhortation and comfort.

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith... Romans 12:4-6

- D. The Ministry of the Prophet (Eph. 4:11). This refers to a seasoned ministry numbered among the other ascension-gift ministries.
- E. The Prophecy of Scripture (I Pet. 1:20-21). This refers to the level of prophecy that was used to produce the Scripture. This level serves as the test of all other prophetic expressions.

IV. The ministry of the prophet

- A. The prophet's ministry involves revelation (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11; I Cor. 14:25).

And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Acts 11:27-28

And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

Acts 21:10-11

- B. The prophet's ministry will involve exhortation (I Cor. 14:3; Acts 15:32).

But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

I Corinthians 14:3

- C. The prophet's ministry involves warning (Acts 11:27-30; 21:8-11).

- D. The prophet's ministry will involve the impartation of vision (Hab. 2:2).

- E. The prophet's ministry will involve the establishment and confirmation of believers and local churches (Acts 11:27; 15:32).

Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. Acts 15:32

- F. The prophet's ministry will involve confirmation of direction in people's lives (Acts 13:2; Acts 21:8-11).

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Acts 13:2

V. Caution concerning the prophetic ministry.

- A. Prophets should be acknowledged as such (Mt. 10:41a).

He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.

If you welcome a prophet as one who speaks for God, you will receive the same reward a prophet gets. –NLT

- B. Prophets should work in multiples with other ministries (I Cor. 14:29; Acts 11:27-30; 13:1; 15:32).

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. I Corinthians 14: 29

- C. Prophets should allow their ministry to be judged (I Cor. 14:29).

- D. Prophets should exercise self-control (I Cor. 14:32).

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

Remember that people who prophesy are in control of their spirit and can wait their turn. –NLT

If you choose to speak, you're also responsible for how and when you speak.

–MSG

Prophets of the New Testament should not be patterned after prophets of the Old Testament. A new order of prophets was established when Christ ascended on high. Now that the believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling within, the prophet's role is to confirm guidance under the leadership of the local church in conjunction with other ministries.

Lesson 22 Evangelists

I. Definition of an Evangelist

There are several problems in defining this ministry and how it functions in the local church today.

A. The problem of transliteration

This word “evangelist” is not translated but transliterated. When the word is translated it means “a preacher of good news.”

B. The problem of stereotypes

Evangelists have often been depicted as independent, aggressive, obnoxious, flashy personalities, with a love for money and fame. This is not the biblical model for the ministry of the evangelist.

C. The problems arising from II Timothy 4:5

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

This verse has been used to prove that Timothy was an evangelist and, therefore, should serve as a model for this ministry. In fact, Timothy was an emerging apostle who was pastoring the church at Ephesus and was encouraged in his teaching and his pastoring not to neglect the lost but continue to grow the church through aggressive evangelism.

D. Luke’s definition (Luke 4:18-19)

Luke’s gospel is the Gospel of the Evangelist. Luke used the term ten times while the rest of the Gospels used it only once. These verses in Luke aptly described the ministry of the Evangelist.

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.

II. What an evangelist is not:

A. The evangelist is not a ministry to revive the saints. This is the job of the pastoral team. A well pastored church should not be in need of continual reviving.

B. The evangelist is not ministry unconnected to the local church. The evangelist does not have his own orbit, but is part of a local leadership team as are all of the five-fold ministers.

1. The evangelist is to be connected spiritually. The evangelist should receive his or her covering, sending and prayer support from the local church.
 2. The evangelist is to be connected financially. To avoid abuses, the evangelist should receive financial support from the covering or sponsoring church or churches.
 3. The evangelist is to be connected relationally. The evangelist should be part of a team of ministers. The evangelist should go in and out all the while submitted structurally to a local church leadership team (eldership).
- C. The evangelist is not a ministry uninvolved with other members of the five-fold ministry (Acts 8:14). In fact, the evangelist works in tandem with all of the other ministries to ensure that the evangelized are planted in a local church and grow up to full maturity.

III. What an Evangelist is (Acts 8:1-40)

Phillip is the only one in the New Testament who is actually called an evangelist (Acts 21:8).

On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

Therefore, we use his life and ministry as a model. On the basis of his life, we see that the evangelist is:

Read: Acts 8:1-8, 14-17, 26-40

- A. A traveling ministry.
- B. A ground-breaking ministry.
- C. A Holy Spirit led ministry.
- D. A ministry having the ability to preach and communicate the Gospel.
- E. A ministry that can expect signs and wonders (healing and deliverance).
- F. An expert soul-winner (private).
- G. A harvesting ministry (public).
- H. An example of the practice and methodology of evangelism.
- I. An equipper of the local church. All of the five ministries share this function. The evangelist does not evangelize the saints, but the evangelist equips the saints to evangelize.

Lesson 23

Pastors and Teachers

I. The Ministry of the Pastor

We must not confuse our present use of the word “pastor” with the biblical concept. We tend to use this word in a general way to refer to a senior pastor or anyone who leads a local church. Some senior pastors may be apostles, prophets, evangelist or teachers. Their primary gift may also be that of a pastor.

A. God’s people are likened to sheep. Sheep are especially needy because they have:

1. No ability to find food (Num. 27:16-17).

Sheep do not have the ability to feed themselves or find new pasture, they must be led to food.

Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.

2. No instinct to return home (Is. 53:6).

Sheep of all animals are prone to wander and to go astray.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

3. No natural defense system (Ezek. 34:8).

Most animals have sharp claws, powerful jaws, great speed or strength. Sheep have none of these. Their only natural protective feature is their ability to flock. As they flock together they can be protected from a wolf. The object of the wolf is to separate one of the sheep from the rest of the flock. At this point the sheep becomes vulnerable to attack.

“As I live,” says the Lord GOD, “surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock”--therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD!

Even from the earliest records sheep had to be cared for above all other animals (Gen. 4:2).

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

B. God's People Without and With True Shepherds

THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS	
Without True Shepherds	With True Shepherds
Sheep are scattered (Zech. 13:7)	Sheep receive provision (Ps. 23:1-2)
Sheep wander (Ezek. 34:6)	Sheep receive direction (Num. 27:17)
Sheep are lacking (Jer. 23:4)	Sheep are fruitful (Jer. 23:3)
Sheep are devoured (Ezek. 34:5)	Sheep are kept (Jer. 31:10)
Sheep are weak (Mt. 9:36)	Sheep are strengthened (Ezek. 34:4, 16)
Sheep have want (Ps. 23:1)	Sheep are fed (Jer. 23:4; I Pet. 5:2)
Sheep are diseased (Ezek. 34:4)	Sheep receive healing (Ezek. 34:4, 16)
Sheep are broken (Ezek. 34:4)	Sheep receive binding up (Ezek. 34:4, 16)
Sheep are lost (Ezek. 34:4)	Sheep are found (Ezek. 34:15; John 10:16)
Sheep are prey for enemy (Ezek. 34:8)	Sheep are safe (Ezek. 34:25)
Sheep are fearful (Jer. 23:4; Ps. 23:4)	Sheep receive rest (Ps. 23:2; Ezek. 34:15)
Sheep are despondent (Jer. 23:3)	Sheep are comforted (Ps. 23:4)
Sheep are destroyed (John 10:10)	Sheep are restored (Ps. 23:3)
Sheep are divided (Acts 20:30)	Sheep are visited (Jer. 23:2)
Sheep are robbed (John 10:1-2)	Sheep receive increase (Jer. 23:3)

C. The Work of the Pastor or Shepherd

1. Feeding the Flock (Ezek. 34:2, 13-15; II Tim. 2:14-15)

Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: 'Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?'"

Ezekiel 34:2

2. Leading by Example (I Peter 5:2-3)

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock...

3. Watching over the Flock (Acts 20:28)

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.

4. Reaching out and Delivering the Needy (Jer. 23:3-4)

"But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD.

5. Maturing the Flock (Tit. 2:15)

You must teach these things and encourage your people to do them, correcting them when necessary. You have the authority to do this, so don't let anyone ignore you or disregard what you say. –NLT

6. Training and Raising Leaders (Tit. 1:5-6; II. Tim. 2:2)

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. II Timothy 2:2

7. Protecting the Sheep (Ezek. 33:6; Acts 20:29-30)

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Acts 20:29-30

8. Keeping Himself Pure (Acts 20:28; I Tim. 5:22)

Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure. I Timothy 5:22

9. Accounting to the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:17)

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

II. The Ministry of the Teacher

- A. The teaching ministry needs little definition because it is obvious in meaning and by cultural reference.
- B. It is Jesus' gift of teaching given to the local church for the purpose of establishing the saints (John 3:2; Mt. 7:28).
- C. Teachers have a significant part in fulfilling the Commission of Christ (Mt. 28:19-20).

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen

For further teaching on all of these ministries refer to the book entitled ***The Local Church Today***, by Bill Scheidler.

Lesson 24

Other Body Ministries

I. Introduction

A. Romans 12:1-8

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

1. Every believer has a ministry that is given to them by God.
2. Every believer is required as a steward to find that place and operate within it.

B. I Corinthians 12:12-27

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

1. Every believer is an integral part of Christ's spiritual body on earth.
 2. Each member has an appointment from God that is different than another.
- C. There are many ministries in the Body of Christ that go beyond the five-fold ministry. Some of these include:
1. The Ministry of Miracles (I Cor. 12:29).
 2. The Ministry of Healing (I Cor. 12:28).
 3. The Ministry of Helps (I Cor. 12:28).
 4. The Ministry of Administration (I Cor. 12:28).
 5. The Ministry of Hospitality
 6. The Ministry of Prayer and Intercession
 7. The Ministry of Ushering and Door Greeting (Porters)
 8. The Ministry of Writing (Scribes)
 9. The Ministry of Visitation
 10. The Ministry of Counseling
 11. The Ministry of Exhortation
 12. The Ministry of Mercy
 13. The Ministry of Giving
 14. The Ministry of Singing

II. Any talent, skill or ability can be translated into a ministry.

- A. Dorcas turned sewing into a genuine ministry (Acts 9:36-40).

At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. 37 But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. 38 And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.

- B. Stephanus used hospitality to extend the kingdom (I Cor. 16:15).

I urge you, brethren--you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints...

III. All ministries operate on the basis of the same underlying principles.

- A. God gives us an abundance in an area so that we can turn and minister to others the same way that God has ministered to us (II Cor. 1:3-4).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

- B. God blesses us not to be a container of His blessing, but so that we can be a dispenser of His blessing to others (Gen. 12:2-3).

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

- C. We supply to others what we have in abundance while we look to others to supply what we lack (II Cor. 8:14-15).

...but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack--that there may be equality. As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack."

For a complete discussion of "Finding My Place in the Body of Christ" refer to the course titled "Life Management I" by the same author.