



Encounters with God – Through the Church

NOTE: The practical definition of the church might be understood as: An organized **autonomous*** [having the right or power of self-government...] assembly of people who have

established a personal relationship with Christ through a belief in the gospel and have received the grace of God through the gift of His indwelling Spirit. [**Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 15:10–11; Ephesians 2:8–10**] Now having been baptized into His body we have become members one of another [**1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 12:3–5**] **corporately** [a unified body of individuals...] committed to the purposes of God in Christ. [**2 Corinthians 5:19–21**] As a corporate body we interpret the events and experiences of this temporal life according to the truth of God's word and the particular faith of the gospel and its power unto salvation [deliverance] [**2 Corinthians 4:16–18; Philippians 1:27–29; Romans 1:16**].

Introduction: The church as the pillar and ground of the truth [**1 Timothy 3:15**] provides the venue by which God has chosen to reveal His glory [**Ephesians 3:21**] as the witness of the gospel and its power of the resurrected Christ. As the venue for witness, there is an understood structure that presents itself through necessity. [1]

This structure reveals two offices of leadership: [**Philippians 1:1**] [Elder (Bishop, Pastor) and Deacon]

NOTE: The autonomy of the local church as previously considered is important in the choosing of its leadership. Each local church has the authority to interpret these qualifications according to the context of their own corporate relationship with one another.

We find the qualification for these offices: [**Elder: 1 Timothy 3:1–7 / Deacon: 8–13**]

Conclusion: There is a necessary structure for leadership within any church as it begins to grow both numerically and influence. The offices of Elder and Deacon are revealed as the structure by which God has chosen to care for the body of Christ. These two offices in the church can be understood not as a hierarchy of leaders i.e., one over another, but a revealed pattern by which the Lord cares for and keeps His church.

[1] **Review:** This need for structure in the church is first revealed in [**Acts 2:41–47; 6:1–7**] as God was adding to the Church and the number of disciples was multiplied.

This structure for leadership is important to the purposes of God and His desire for the church as the pillar and ground of the truth. [**Ephesians 4:11–16**]