

UNITED: ONE CHURCH UNDER CHRIST

How Jesus Governs and Cares for His Church

Main Idea: Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church. He governs His people by His Word and Spirit, providing elders to shepherd and deacons to serve. He calls His people to recognize qualified officers and receive their biblical leadership as a gift of His loving care.

INTRODUCTION: DOES JESUS CARE?

I. ONE CHURCH UNDER CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

Text: Acts 20:28

- A. **Christ alone is the Head of the Church.**
- B. **Every earthly authority is subordinate to Christ.**
- C. **Christ's authority is a loving authority.**

Discuss: What might it look like for a church to reject Christ's authority?

II. ONE CHURCH UNDER CHRIST'S CARE

Text: Acts 14:23

- A. **Christ establishes the offices of His Church.**
- B. **Elders: Christ cares for our souls.**

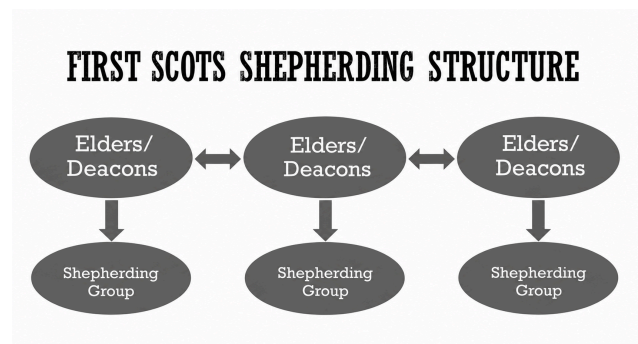
Text: 1 Peter 5:1–4

Definition: Men called and qualified to exercise spiritual oversight through the Word, prayer, shepherding, and governance.

Two kinds of elders in Presbyterian government:

- **Teaching elders:** Pastors, especially devoted to preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry.
- **Ruling elders:** Share responsibility for spiritual oversight and governance.

Work of elders: Know/ Feed/ Lead/ Protect



Qualifications: 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9.

Discuss: Why does Christ emphasize character rather than giftedness?

C. Deacons: Christ cares for our needs.

Text: Acts 6:1–7; 1 Timothy 3:8–13.

Definition: Men called and qualified to lead the Church in practical service and works of mercy.

Work of deacons: Identify and address practical needs.

Qualifications: 1 Timothy 3:8–13.

Important distinction: Deacons are not junior elders. Elders principally shepherd and govern; deacons principally lead in service and mercy.

D. Why has God appointed men to church office?

God has ordained men to church office not because they are superior, but because this is His design. The whole congregation serves together under Christ.

III. ONE CHURCH UNDER CHRIST'S LEADERSHIP

Read: Hebrews 13:17

A. Elect biblically qualified men.

Discuss: What qualifications do churches sometimes overlook in favor of worldly measures of success?

B. Submit to their leadership insofar as they submit to Christ.

Biblical submission is neither rebellion nor blind obedience. It is humble submission to Christ's appointed leadership under His Word.

C. Participate in caring for one another.

Text: Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:15–16.

Who might need encouragement, prayer, a meal, financial help, or a visit this week?

CONCLUSION: THE CHURCH BELONGS TO JESUS

Does Jesus care for the struggling family? Yes—and one way He shows His care is through His Church.

Final Question: How should Christ's loving authority change the way we pray for, elect, encourage, and follow our elders and deacons?