

ECCLIESIOLOGY:  
THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH  
Gulf Coast Baptist Church  
Bible Institute

The Biblical Offices of the Church

- I. Authority within the Church
  - A. God and His Word
    1. God: God's Church
      - a) The Church of God
        - (1) Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God - 1 Co. 10:32
        - (2) Paul persecuted the Church of God (Judea, Samaria, Damascus) 1 Co. 15:9
        - (3) Paul laid waste to the Church of God - Gal. 1:13
        - (4) Bishops ought to know how to care for the Church belonging to God -1 Ti. 3:5, 15
          - (a) each passage is in the Genitive case which denotes possession
          - (b) these passages could be translated, "the churches belonging to God"
      - b) Local churches of or "belonging" to God
        - (1) The Thessalonians had become followers of the churches of God in Judea
        - (2) Paul gloried in the churches of God - 2 Thes. 1:4
      - c) The Church belonging to Christ
        - (1) Christ stated that, "I will build my Church." - Mt. 16:18
        - (2) Christ purchased the Church of God with His very own blood - Acts 20:28
        - (3) Christ provides the direction for the Body as the Head - Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18
    2. The Word of God
      - a) The Word of God and the Early Church
        - (1) Understanding the transitional nature of the Early Church is imperative
          - (a) The Apostles laid the doctrinal foundation of the Church - Eph. 2:20
            - i) Christ had entrusted to the 11 in the Upper Room the foundational truths for the Church
            - ii) The Church relied upon the apostles doctrine in the absence of the completed Word of God - Acts 2:42
          - (b) Transitional gifts were provided to the Church during this time period - Eph. 4:10, 11; Ro. 12:6; 1 Co. 12:28
            - i) Apostles and prophets provided new revelation to the Church
            - ii) The transitional nature of the early Church means that there will be some elements of Church practice which will not necessarily continue on today
        - b) The Epistles and the Early Church
          - (1) Many of the letters were focused on correcting error within the churches
            - (a) Rapture - 1 and 2 Thessalonians
            - (b) Demonstrating self-righteousness before men - Galatians
            - (c) Relational issues - Philippians
            - (d) Carnality - 1 and 2 Corinthians
          - (2) Other areas of emphasis
            - (a) Positional truth - Ephesians
            - (b) Leadership - 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus
          - (3) These topics are vastly different than those addressed in modern books on the church (numerical growth, programs, website, relevance, social media)
        - c) The Word of God was still incomplete during these early years - 1 Co. 13:10

3. The Word is God's Revelation - Conclusion
  - a) The Bible is the Living Word - Heb. 4:12
    - (1) Speaks authoritatively to the believer today
    - (2) Provides spiritual sustenance for the believer
  - b) The Bible is Inspired by God - 2 Ti. 3:16
    - (1) God-breathed
    - (2) Every word is important
  - c) The Bible is Communicates Everything We Need to Know - 1 Pe. 1:21
  - d) The Bible is God's Finished Revelation - 1 Co. 13:10
  - e) The Bible is Profitable - 2 Ti 3:16
    - (1) How to live
    - (2) Correction
    - (3) How to make things right
- B. Realms of Authority within the Local Church
  1. Introduction - God holds ultimate authority over the Church. God's desires and program for the Church are revealed in Scripture. Scriptures provide the sole basis of authority for the Church. The Scriptures also reveal how God has designated that authority is to be wielded by human instruments within the local churches. This authority within the local churches has been designated to the congregation, the Pastor, and the Deacons
  2. The Congregation
    - a) Official Positions
      - (1) Pastor
        - (a) The local church has been granted the authority to prayerfully select their own pastor - Acts 14:21-23
        - (b) The local church has been granted the authority and responsibility to act on charges made against an elder/pastor - 1 Ti. 5:19-21
      - (2) Deacons
        - (a) The local church has been authorized to choose and appoint deacons - Acts 6:2-3
        - (b) The deacons are to be approved by the local church - 1 Ti. 3:10
      - (3) Representatives
        - (a) Representatives from Corinth to the church in Jerusalem - 1 Co. 16:3
        - (b) Representatives from Antioch to the church in Jerusalem - Acts 15:22, 25
        - (c) The local church has the authority to choose missionaries - Acts 13:1-4
    - b) Individual Members
      - (1) The responsibility to judge those within the local assembly of believers - 1 Co. 5:12
        - (a) The responsibility to remove a member because of public, unrepentant sin - 1 Co. 5:1-12
        - (b) The responsibility to judge complaints between individual members - 1 Co. 6:1-5
      - (2) The responsibility to choose the time and place of meeting - 1 Co. 11:17-20
  3. Pastor
    - a) An overview:
      - (1) Pastor - *poimen* - shepherd
        - (a) Speaks to the Pastor's gifting and the manner in which he is to serve
      - (2) Bishop - *episkopos* - an overseer
        - (a) Speaks to the pastor's authority to oversee the spiritual well-being of the local assembly
      - (3) Elder - *presbyteros* - an aged one denoting one having spiritual maturity
        - (a) Speaks to the spiritual maturity required of a Pastor

- b) Authority
    - (1) To stretch forth for the Pastoral Office - 1 Ti. 3:1
    - (2) As it relates to spiritual matters within the church
      - (a) Establish spiritual objectives - Heb. 13: 7, 17
        - i) Leading the church as an example to be mimicked or in other words he sets the spiritual temperature of the local church
        - ii) The pastor should not lead behind the mantra of, "because I said so"
        - iii) Providing oversight that the church is following the scriptures
          - (1) The pastor ministers to the spirit and soul of the flock
          - (2) The pastor groans if members of the church fail to be convinced by scripture
      - (b) Oversee the policies and "spiritual" work - 1 Pe. 5:2
      - (c) Setting a living example for the flock - 1 Pe. 5:1-4
    - (3) Authoritatively teaching the scriptures - 2 Ti. 4:2
      - (a) The scripture loses its authority when it fails to be taught in context
    - (4) Shepherding the church belonging to God - Acts 20:28; 1 Pe. 5:2
    - (5) Warning the church about false doctrine and spiritual danger - Acts 20:28-31; 1 Ti. 4:1-6
4. Deacons
  - a) An overview:
    - (1) The office of deacon is a servant-minded position
    - (2) Deacons run the business of the church but do not run the church like a business
    - (3) The spiritual characteristics required of the office of deacon "should" keep them from running the church like a business
  - b) Authority
    - (1) The authority to serve and to carry out the menial tasks and the business of the church - Acts 6:1-4
    - (2) The authority to serve as deacons - 1 Ti. 3:10
    - (3) Does not include the authority to:
      - (a) Run the church
      - (b) Rule over the congregation
      - (c) Rule over the pastor
      - (d) Serve as church disciplinarians