A Well Built House — Delivery Transcript

Ephesians 4:11–16 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, September 25, 2022 · *Family Matters*

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And last book of the Bible, the book of the Revelation, and we're doing a little mini-series. Well, it's not a mini-series; we're doing a separate series on the church, and not just the church in general, but this particular local church, Broadview Baptist Church. And the part of the reason we're doing it is because with COVID-19 during 2020, I think it accelerated a mindset that a lot of people had as it related to their local church, which was take it or leave it: they don't need me, I don't really need them.

I can get better preaching online, get better music through iTunes. And so I'm just going to kind of quiet quit the church. Everybody's heard of quiet quitting or at least I have been hearing a lot about quiet quitting in jobs, in your organization: people who have the job, still sitting in their cubicle doing the bare minimum. I'm not saying everyone's in a cubicle by the way, but you're doing what you're doing, bare minimum. But you've kind of distanced yourself emotionally. And in terms of hopes and dreams, you're just kind of chipping it in.

That mindset seems to have taken root in the church, and not just in the church overall; we've seen this in even our own congregation. And we've seen a lot of people added to our church over the last two years, and a lot of those people who've been added to our church, a lot of them are new Christians, maybe don't quite know all of what God's Word has to say about the church. And so for that reason and the reasons I mentioned earlier, I think it would just be helpful for us to reaffirm and re-establish in our own hearts and minds what does it mean to be part of God's church and what does that require of me and what is that going to look like, practically speaking?

And so that's the reason for the series. And I don't normally say this, but because this series kind of hangs together, if you're a member of our church and you missed one of the messages, I want to encourage you to please catch up online because they do kind of hold together. And in fact a lot of the first part of this message is going to be review from last week, because what we established last week, we're going to kind of build upon this week. And so if you weren't here last week, it was basically an introduction to what the church is, why it matters in the first place, kind of a theology of the church.

And the bottom line is the local church should matter to us because the local church matters to God. A Christian without a church is a Christian in trouble. A Christian without a church is a Christian who's not going to be able to flourish as a Christian because we were designed for community. We were designed to belong to a family of believers. When we were reconciled to God, he just didn't reconcile us to God. He reconciled us to those who are reconciled to God, and that's why he's brought us into a local church.

I tried to show you reasons for this last week, that the church matters to God and should matter to us, first and foremost because Christ died for the church. He died for us. He purchased us by his blood. Not only that, we as the church continue the ministry of Christ on the earth. When Jesus ascended into heaven, he sent his Holy Spirit. He said, when I send my Holy Spirit, you're going to be empowered for ministry, you're going to be empowered for mission. You're going to be my witnesses on the earth.

And so we extend the presence of Christ and the ministry of Christ in Abilene and around the world. That's how Jesus ministers to the world and reaches the world. He does it through his church. The church and Christ are one and the same. In the book of Acts we saw that when Jesus confronted Saul on the road to Damascus, he said not, Why are you persecuting the church? He says, Why are you persecuting me? I'm Jesus, the one you're persecuting, even though who you're really killing are these Christians and getting rid of these churches.

And so it matters because Christ died for the church. He uses the church to extend his ministry in the world and related to that we've been given the authority of Christ as the local church. Christ exercises his authority through this institution called the church. And we'll look a little bit more at that this week as we get into the offices of the local church. If those things are true about the church, which I argued last week they were, then certain things about the membership of a church really matter. First and foremost, those who join a church ought to be Christians.

Can we agree on that? It's fine. You may be here this morning and you're not a Christian and you kind of are struggling with doubts and you're just kind of checking things out, that's totally fine. You can sit and you can belong, we'll be friendly, you're more than welcome here. We want you to grow in your understanding of what Christianity is. But there's a

difference between that and being a member. A member of a church is someone who has said, I'm all in on Christ, I'm all in on his mission, and I'm all in on this local church.

And for those who join the church with that kind of mindset, we want to make sure you're saved. That's why we only bring in people who've been baptized by immersion because baptism is that public symbol that I've been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. It's also important that they be sanctified, which is just a 10-letter word to say becoming more holy, becoming more Christ-like in their attitudes and actions and behaviors. It's okay for you to come to this church as you are. We don't expect perfection.

We're certainly not a perfect church. We're all broken and sinful and making our way forward. But part of belonging to a church carries with it this commitment that I'm going to allow people to speak into my life. I'm going to allow the word of God to shape me and transform me. I'm going to know people. I'm going to be known by people and I'm going to allow those people to keep me accountable to becoming who Christ has called me to be. We want to grow in our sanctification. And then finally, we need to be submitted to Christ.

Part of how we demonstrate our submission to Christ is in mutually submitting to one another in the local church, submitting to Christ's command that we love one another, forgive one another, and submitting to the Great Commission, that he said, I got a mission for you, and I want you to go and accomplish this mission. And part of belonging to a church is you submitting to Christ saying, I'm all in on the mission. To help us do those things, to help us be sure the church is regenerate and becoming holy and submitted, Christ has given the church tools, or offices, or mechanisms for accomplishing those things.

That's what we ended last week on, and that's what we're going to pick up this week. Those four things were the word of God. We can talk about the word as the completed canon of scripture of the Bible, but I really think the emphasis there is on the word of Christ in particular with the gospel. The Bible is the gospel in the sense that it points us to the gospel, but the power of God for salvation is the gospel itself. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit. The ordinances, of course, are baptism and the Lord's Supper, which we looked at last week.

And then finally, what we're going to look at this week is church offices. That sounds terribly boring. I know it sounds boring, but it's actually pretty interesting that Jesus Christ has given the church a template or a blueprint for how it's to be structured, and different people play a different part in that structure, and when every part's working the way it's supposed to work, then the Lord builds his church, makes it healthy and strong. And that's what the book of Ephesians is all about, and in particular Ephesians 4, which is our text today.

So let's pick it up in chapter 4, verse 11. Just to give you a little context, verse 7 talks about Jesus Christ giving the church, the local church, the gift of the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit equips members for ministry. And that the Holy Spirit empowers particular people for

particular functions within the office. And then verse 11 talks about Christ giving the church some of those particular offices, and he lists four of them. "And he himself"—he, Jesus —"gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers." Some think there's five offices.

I really think pastors and teachers is just one office. Those who pastor through teaching, those who lead through the teaching of God's Word. Why does he give them to the church? To equip the membership of a church: "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness." When that happens, "we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit.

But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ. From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part." This is, I think, a beautiful blueprint for how the church is to be structured. Jesus Christ has a plan for every single local church, and he has given every local church what they need to flourish in his plan. And part of that blueprint includes him giving the church pastors and teachers or pastor teacher who will equip the saints for the work of the ministry and those saints being equipped and filled with the Spirit, each one of them doing their proper part, submitting to Jesus Christ who is the head.

When every part's working properly, that church gets healthy and strong and built up in love and effective in doing what Christ has called them to do. So that's what we're going to look at this morning. What is the blueprint? If we want to be a healthy church, healthy churches have a healthy structure. And what's the healthy structure for a local church according to the scripture? And I want to show you that from Ephesians 4, but not all of the healthy structure of a church is in Ephesians 4, and so we're going to draw in some other supplementary texts.

Usually I have a single text and a single point from that text, but this morning is a little bit different for those of you who are here every week. So we're going to bring in some supplemental passages to build out this template. This is what I believe is Christ's design for his church as it relates to a healthy structure. Every church needs to be ruled by Jesus Christ. He is the senior pastor of every local church. I'm not the senior pastor. Jesus is the senior pastor, I'm just entrusted with leadership.

We need to be congregationally affirmed. Jesus Christ exercises his authority through the church, not a single individual. It needs to be pastor-led. And then finally, deacon- or member-served. Deacons come from within the membership, so every member has a ministry, but sometimes certain members are promoted as deacons, who have an official office in the church to serve and help the pastor in shepherding the congregation. So let's

walk through those four things, and then I want to challenge you to take your responsibility, whatever role you play in the church, and to commit yourself to what Christ has called you to do.

First and foremost, Jesus Christ is the head. We can all agree on that. Amen. There's no controversy. Jesus Christ is the senior pastor of the church. He's the one who purchased the church by his blood. I don't believe that's controversial whatsoever. We saw it here in Ephesians 4:15. We've got to speak the truth in love so that we grow in every way into him who is the head. Who's the head? Talk to me. Jesus Christ. There we go. Ephesians chapter 1, verse 22 says the same thing. "And he subjected everything under his feet and appointed him as head over everything for the church."

Get that. So the church, Jesus is the authority in the church, but it's not just that Jesus rules in the church but not in the world. No, Jesus rules over everything. And he rules over everything for the church so that as the church is in submission to Christ, they can take ground, take dominion in the culture, and exercise the authority of Christ in advancing the gospel. Colossians 2 says the same thing. "The entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ," and you, the church, you've "been filled by him," through the Holy Spirit, "who is the head over every ruler and authority."

So what does that mean? Jesus is the head. The word head— I can't say it now. Kephale, kephala, koffale, covfefe. No, it's not covfefe. It just means to be in authority over or have responsibility for. That's what it means to be the head. If you're the head of your home, the buck's got to stop somewhere; the buck stops here. You're the one who is responsible for the spiritual flourishing of your home. That's what it means to be the head. It means to be in authority over or have responsibility for. And Jesus is in authority over and has responsibility for the church.

That's why Jesus says in Ephesians 5, that whole discussion about marriage, man being the head of the home, Paul says that's what Christ is for the church. He nourishes the church. He builds the church up. He washes the church with the water of the word. It is his and he is the head. He says to Peter in Matthew 16, I'll build my church. It's not your job to build my church. You make disciples, I'll build the church. I'm the one that has that responsibility. He's the head. We see this over and over in scripture.

I'm not going to belabor the point. Jesus is the head of the church. But as the head, Jesus Christ exercises his authority through the congregation. And this may sound weird to you. I don't have the authority of Jesus Christ. I didn't say you as an individual have the authority, but when we gather together, and Jesus Christ is among us, remember Jesus says where two or three are gathered, there I am. There's something supernatural that takes place in that gathering of the saints, and Jesus Christ endows that church with authority. We saw this last week in Matthew chapter 16.

Matthew 16 and Matthew 18 are the only times that Jesus talks about the local church in all four gospels. So they're really big, really important passages. But in Matthew 16, you remember Peter makes this confession, Jesus, you're the Christ. Jesus says to Peter, You're right. And on that confession, I'm going to build my church. You're Peter. I'm going to build my church on you, the rock, and that confession you're making. I'm going to give you— that church I'm building, I'm giving them the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.

Keys are a symbol of authority, right? Keys are a symbol of responsibility. And so that headship of Christ is exercised, that authority is exercised through the church, through the congregation, through his body. You say, I don't know, that sounds like a reach. Well if you go two chapters over, you see the same language, same idea. Jesus says if there's a grievance in the church, I've heard of churches where you can be a member and someone will make you mad. Has anyone ever heard of that before? Of course we've all heard of that.

So let's say you're in the church and someone makes you mad, makes you upset, Jesus says, what are you going to do? Well before you even go to church the next Sunday, go be reconciled to your brother. That's the first thing. If you go to your brother and he won't be reconciled, or you go to your sister and there's not reconciliation, then I want you to take one or two other people with you. Implied in that is that they know about what's going on. They can be an eyewitness to say, hey, you're in the wrong here.

You need to repent. You need to be reconciled. But if you take one or two people with you and they still don't listen to you, then look what he says. "If he doesn't pay attention to them, tell" who? Talk to me again. "Tell the church." Not Pastor Wes, not the elders, not the deacons, not your small group leader. Tell the church. "If he doesn't pay attention even to the" who? "The church, let him be like a Gentile and a tax collector to you." That means treat him like a non-believer. Then the language of the keys again: whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.

You have the keys. All right? You have the keys. You all, we all, as the congregation, are entrusted with the authority of Jesus Christ. He is the head, but he exercises his rule and authority through the congregation. So in our constitution and bylaws— in our church, when you become a member, you get a copy of those documents. It's great bathroom reading or nighttime reading if you need to go to sleep at night. But in that constitution and bylaws, it says that we as a church are pastor-led but congregationally ruled. Now that's not totally false; it's a little bit indirect, right?

Because Jesus is the ruler. Jesus rules, but it's acknowledging the fact that in the New Testament Jesus rules through his people, through his body. They've been entrusted with the

keys. And that's why, by the way, being a member of this local church is a big deal. One of the ways you know members have been entrusted with the keys, if you go to First Corinthians chapter 5, it talks about church discipline. You had a guy sleeping with his stepmother,[1] big, big no-no. He's like even the pagans don't do that stuff. Definitely no Christians can do that.

If you don't stop sleeping with her, we're going to have to kick you out of the church. He says, I'm not going to stop. And Paul says stop celebrating your tolerance and kick this guy out of your congregation. But who's he telling this to? He's not telling it to the pastor. He's telling it to the church. Exercise church discipline. So you've been entrusted with the keys, and that's why membership matters. That's why when you think about your relationship to Broadview, if you're a member of our church, it's more than just loose affiliation.

It's not like a country club membership. I go to church there. I like that music. I like that preaching. No, it's more than a loose affiliation. It's a responsibility. You've been given the keys. You're part of this big mechanism through which Christ exercises his authority and you're part of this discernment body that says what is God's will for our congregation and how can we move forward into that will? You're responsible for discerning and affirming the will of God for our life together. It's a big deal and membership matters. Membership also matters because you can't exercise church discipline if you don't have membership.

If you never belong, you can't ever be removed. And so this idea that there's no such thing as church membership in the Bible— I just don't see it. I see it everywhere in the New Testament. It's important that you don't just become a Christian, but that you become a Christian who's committed to a body of believers because Jesus Christ is exercising his authority on the earth through those local churches. So Christ ruled, member affirmed, or congregationally affirmed. Third thing, pastor-led: churches are pastor-led. We saw this in Ephesians 4, right? Christ has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

And the idea with pastor teachers is that the role of the pastor teacher is to teach and preach the word of God because through teaching and preaching the word of God the church becomes aware of the will of Christ. This is Christ's will for our church. This is Christ's will for the world. This is Christ's will for your individual lives and our life together. And that's how pastors lead the church. They lead the church through the word. Through the proper preaching exposition of scripture, we learn what Christ wants from us and how we can submit to his demands, and that's what pastors are responsible to do.

If you're taking notes, in your notes from Ephesians 4: I believe pastors and elders are called to shepherd the church through teaching and oversight so that the congregation properly functions according to God's design. This word shepherd is key, right? Pastors are shepherds. That's the Greek word poimen; a pastor is a shepherd, a shepherd is a pastor. But

that word shepherd, I think, because we don't use it very often today, we kind of think of a pastor as just someone who takes care of people, a pastor is someone who has compassion, and he's kind of gentle.

But the word shepherd, another way to translate it is to rule or to lead, to exercise oversight. That's what a shepherd did with his flock. He was in charge. He tended to the flock, he took care of the flock, but he was responsible. And you see this word poimen also used in the book of Revelation when it says Jesus will rule the nations with an iron rod. That's the Greek word poimaino. It means he's going to exercise leadership. He's going to be in charge. The buck's got to stop somewhere and in the local church the buck stops with the office of pastor.

Now what is a— let me show you this in the New Testament. I just don't want to say that. I want to show you this. In Titus chapter 1, verse 5, you see this dynamic take place. Paul tells this little young pastor in Crete, "I left you in Crete for this reason, so that you could set right what was left undone and, as I directed you, appoint elders in every town." Now what you're going to see is the word elder and pastor and bishop, they're all used interchangeably. But the office of pastor is to set right what was left undone.

Someone's got to lead. Someone's got to say this is how it's supposed to be. Now let's walk together and do that. Paul tells Timothy the same thing in First Timothy chapter 3. He says to Timothy, "If I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to act in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth." So Timothy, you're the elder, you're the pastor. I'm giving you this instruction so you can tell people how they're supposed to conduct themselves.

Someone's got to know the blueprint, somebody's got to know the word, and somebody has to lead the people so that they walk in the will of God. And that's your job, Timothy, as the elder. Now I say pastor and elder and overseer, they're all interchangeable. You see this, I think, plain as day in Acts chapter 20. Paul has gathered the elders of the church in Ephesus, Acts 20, verse 17. That's the Greek word presbyteros, where we get our English word Presbyterian. Presbyterian churches, A lot of them have elders, elder rule.

That's because of this word in the New Testament, presbyteros. But he gathers the elders, and then what does he say? "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as" what? "Overseers"—that's the Greek word episkopos, that's where we get our English word Episcopalian—"to shepherd"—poimaino—"the church of God." So you're an elder and your responsibility is to oversee and shepherd, or to lead. You see all three words used interchangeably. That's why a lot of people say a shepherd is an elder is a pastor.

A pastor is an elder is an overseer. They're all convoluted in the New Testament. And so if you're an elder, you're a pastor. If you're a pastor, you're a bishop. We just use different

words depending on your theological tradition. You see the same thing in 1 Peter chapter 5. Let me show you this one. This is Peter speaking to the elders there at that church, and he tells them, as a fellow elder, I exhort you as elders "to shepherd"—the Greek word poimaino —"God's flock among you, not overseeing"—which is the word episkopeo—"out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you," to lead.

A shepherd is a pastor, is an overseer. A shepherd is someone who oversees. A shepherd is someone who rules. An elder is someone who does those things. He shepherds, he pastors the church. One final example, Titus chapter 1, verse 6. An elder must be blameless. He goes into the qualifications, faithful in marriage, a good manager of his home. And then he shifts to the word overseer. An overseer of God's household must be blameless, not arrogant, not hot-tempered. So an elder is an overseer. An overseer is an elder, an elder is a pastor.

Pastor, elder, bishop, they're all used interchangeably. So in our church we call them pastors. Why do we call them pastors? I think because Baptists are a little bit allergic to the word elders sometimes. But we could call them elders. You could call me an elder; you could call the members of our pastoral team the elders. We call them the pastoral team, pastors. Now what's a pastor supposed to do? Well, if you look in the New Testament, we just saw from Titus and Timothy, they're to oversee, they're to lead, they're to exercise, they're responsible for the health and the spiritual flourishing of the congregation.

I'm going to give you a definition. I believe that God's blueprint for the pastoral office is that the pastoral office be led by a plurality of scripturally qualified men who faithfully lead their particular congregation. They're accountable to God for that flock. That's a dense definition. First, it's a plurality, and I'm not going to dive deep on this. The reason we have a pastoral team instead of just a senior pastor or just a lead pastor is because especially young pastors, they can make a lot of dumb mistakes. All right. And in the New Testament you had the same thing.

Most of the times when the word elder is used, it's used in the plural. Paul gathered the elders in Ephesus. I asked you to appoint elders in every church. It's always plural, and so that's why I don't lead in a vacuum. When something comes to the table, here's what we're recommending. It's never just Pastor Wes's idea; it's gone through a series of other people, because we lead with a team. It's a plurality of pastors. In fact, when you came in you should have got a little sheet that talks about nominating new deacons and new pastors to our church.

Because our pastoral team has seen some transition. So we need to elect new men qualified by Scripture who can help the paid pastors lead well, in obedience to the command of Christ. So that's the first thing, plurality. The second thing: they need to be biblically qualified. What do I mean by that? Well, again, Jesus did not leave us without a blueprint. He gave us very

clear boundaries for what is and what is not a qualified pastor. They're listed, he does the same thing for deacons. They're listed in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1.

This is just the qualifications for pastor, but you can see if you keep reading, the character qualifications for a pastor and a deacon are very similar. They both need to be godly. One woman man, faithful in marriage, good leader of his family, good reputation with outsiders, self-controlled, sensible, gentle. Pastors should not have a hot temper. They should not be bullies. They should be able to correct, but they need to be able to correct with gentleness, not combative, respectable, hospitable. Not an excessive drinker, not prone to much wine, the seventh thing is said of deacons.

Not a bully, not quarrelsome or hot-tempered, not greedy or arrogant. Paul says, Don't make new Christians pastors because they may become conceited, because they're given this authority in the church, and they may not be ready for it. They may not have the character, and they're going to fall to the devil's snare. In all things, pastors must be above reproach. Qualification number one, above reproach. Qualification number two, they need to be able to teach. And this is where there's a divergence between pastors and deacons. Character-wise, deacons should be just as godly as pastors.

But competency-wise, there's something pastors must be able to do that deacons don't have to do. In fact, it's unique to the pastoral office, and that is the ability to teach. Pastors need to know how to take the Word of God and teach it. Why? Because that's how they lead. They lead the church. They communicate the will of Christ through the exposition of Scripture. And then they protect the church from false doctrine and false teaching by correcting people who are in error. And the only way you can do that is if you know how to communicate scriptural truths.

And not everybody's a teacher. It's a particular gift for a particular office. In some ways being a pastor is not somehow more important or you're somehow more spiritual than anybody else. It just means you've been given a teaching gift and you've been given a calling to lead a particular flock. It's just one gift among many, but that's the role that pastors play. They got to be able to teach. And then thirdly, above reproach, able to teach, and then thirdly, they need to be able to lead. Now, why do I say lead?

Because that's their role, their oversight. Hebrews chapter 13 says they're going to give an account to God for the people who were under their headship. This is, I think, why the New Testament, when it talks about who should be a pastor, it never says that women should serve in the office of pastor. I said last week this was controversial, but in the Baptist Faith and Message it says scripturally qualified men for a reason. Ephesians 5 talks about God's blueprint for marriage. The head of every home is the husband. And God has a design for the home.

He's put a man as the head of the home, not because a man's more spiritual or more godly. I know many marriages in which he's not. But it was just part of the created order. God made Adam first, then Eve, and he put man in a position of authority and responsibility for the spiritual flourishing of his family. The same is true in the church. In fact, you see a lot of parallels. A pastor who can't lead in his home shouldn't lead in the church because the church is just a big house.

It's just a big family. This is why in 1 Timothy 2, verse 12, Paul says, I don't want those who are women to have a teaching authority in the church. "I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; instead, she is to remain quiet." And then he grounds it, not in problems in that local church, but he grounds it in the creation order. You had Adam formed first, and then Eve. Now, does this mean women can't have leadership roles in the church? Absolutely not. You can look at Romans 16, Phoebe.

From my perspective, Phoebe's a deacon. She has spiritual authority of some sort, some kind of spiritual recognition of leadership in the church. Some say no, it's just the word servant. It's the Greek word diakonos. You can debate if it was an official title or not, but she was a figure. You also see Aquila and Priscilla teaching Apollos. Now, was that all coming from Aquila? Or was Priscilla taking the word of God and expounding it to Apollos? There's at least some implication that there was some sharing of God's truths from a woman to a man.

You see in the New Testament men and women prophesying in the church. Now some say the office of prophet has ceased, but you at least had some kind of activity going on. So the reason that God reserves the office for men has nothing to do with the leadership ability of a woman or the importance or spiritual value of a woman. It's just part of his design for the home and for the church that men be put in a position of headship. They're responsible for the spiritual flourishing of the congregation. And not just any man, but spiritually qualified men who are called to that particular congregation.

So it's a plurality of spiritually qualified men accountable to God for that particular flock. That's the last thing in your notes. They're accountable to God for every soul placed under their care. Hebrews chapter 13 says, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you." So three things. They need to be men of character— or two things. They need to be men of character and men of competency.

They need character in that they are godly above reproach. They need competency in that they're able to teach and they're able to lead. If a pastor is able to do that, then, and a pastor is called to a particular congregation, then the church has been given a great gift. Because the church has been given someone who will be responsible to God to lead the church well so that together they can affirm and carry out the will of the head who is Christ. Finally, they're deacon-served. Christ rules, congregation affirms, pastors lead.

Deacons serve. And I really want to say deacons slash member, because deacons are really members who've been promoted to the office of deacon. But there's nothing necessarily that distinguishes deacons from any other normal church member except churches recognize we want them to be in the office. Every member has a ministry. The only people who serve in the church are not just deacons. Every member the church is called to serve. But there are occasions where God will raise up particular people to serve in an office so that those deacons can come alongside the pastor, helping him shepherd and helping him lead and helping him take care of members in the local church.

You see this in Acts chapter 6 where there's these widows who are not being taken care of. And so the apostles gather everybody together. They say it's not right for us to give up preaching the word. Why? Because their primary responsibility is preaching. So we can't give up preaching to wait on tables. In other words, to take care of all this member care. Because we're getting too big, that's getting too heavy. We've got to elect people who can help us lead. So what do they do? They say, brothers and sisters, that's talking to the congregation.

Why? Because y'all have the authority. "Select from among yourselves seven men"—qualifications—"of good reputation, full of the Spirit"—lots more in 1 Timothy—"whom we can appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." So deacons come alongside the pastor and serve. So in our church we're about to elect new deacons. And so it's your responsibility as the congregation, as a member of our church, to select men from among yourselves. I say men. There are arguments whether a woman can serve as a deacon, and again you have Phoebe in Romans 16 who's referred to as a deacon.

He says in Romans 16:1 and 2, "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant"—CSB, but it's the word diakonos—"of the church in Cenchreae." In 1 Timothy, you have the qualifications for a deacon. He uses the word wives. Everyone interprets this to be the wife of a deacon, who needs to be worthy of respect, not slanderous, self-controlled, faithful in everything. But it's the Greek word gynaikas. It's where we get our English word gynecologist, as you might imagine. Women. It just means woman. It doesn't always mean wife. Context determines.

So can women serve as deacons? I think there's biblical support for that. Or do they serve as deacons at Broadview? Not currently. It would definitely buck tradition. And I'm not saying we should. I'm just saying it's biblically debatable. And so you'll have an opportunity to promote people to this office because you have been given the keys of Christ to help us lead, to help us walk in the will of God for our life together. So Christ rules, the congregation affirms, pastors lead, deacons serve. Even if you're not a deacon, you talk about women being deacons.

There are many women in this church who even if they do not have the title of deacon, they have the ministry of a deacon because they help the senior pastor shepherd and take care of

the needs of the church. You may be a man who's sensing the call of God to take a step higher; you're sensing a calling. And you may be called upon by our congregation in the next couple of weeks to step into this office and to serve in this way. And I want to ask you to prayerfully consider whether or not that's something the Lord wants you to do.

You'll also, as a congregation, have an opportunity to appoint pastors to our pastoral team. You need to do so very discerningly. Familiarize yourself with the qualifications of this office because you have a responsibility as a member to help us discern and affirm the will of God for our life together. If you're a member of our church this morning, I want to challenge you, do not think of your membership as loose affiliation, but begin to think of your membership as a serious participation in the advancing of the kingdom of God. You hold the keys.

Not you individually, but us corporately. We hold the keys. And if we're going to do it well, we need every member functioning properly so that we can build ourselves up in love and carry out the command of Christ. I'm going to ask the team to come back up and we're going to have a time to respond. You may this morning want to join our church and you say, you know, I've been loosely affiliated. I want to commit myself to membership. And you can do that this morning. Maybe the Lord is identifying an area of compromise in your life where you're not submitted to the Lordship of Christ.

Maybe you need to be reconciled to a brother. You have been worshiping, raising your hands, but you know there's enmity between you and another believer. And Jesus Christ has called you to make it right. And you've made excuses. You said they won't listen. You have a faith family. You have a church family who is committed to coming alongside of you to help you be obedient to the commands of Christ? Use this family. Some of you are not connected into a small group. You're Sunday-only. Sit in the seat. And maybe not even every week.

Maybe it's Christmas and Easter and on occasion. You have been given a great gift in the body of Christ. We're not perfect; certainly we're sinful, but we need every part committed, engaged, and working properly for us to really grow into who Christ wants us to be. And so would you evaluate your relationship to this local church? And here's the thing, if you can't fully commit to this local church, then go find a church in which you can. Because that's your calling as a Christian, to be fully invested and fully engaged so that Christ can accomplish his purposes in our life together.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for this time. And as we enter into a time of response, I just pray that you would give us wisdom and discernment and gratitude for the fact that you've not left us alone, but that you are right now the senior pastor of this church and you love this church more than any of us could even begin to imagine. And so we don't have to fret or worry about the future. We don't have to wonder is it all going to hit the fan if this doesn't happen or that doesn't happen.

We can rest secure because you're in charge and you're leading. And so would you help us to submit to your leadership and to accept our responsibility and to press in all in 100% on what you're calling us to do? And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "his mother in law"; 1 Corinthians 5:1 says "a man is sleeping with his father's wife" (his stepmother). Source: 1 Corinthians 5:1 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩