

## **We Believe**

### **Article VI. The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

[Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.](#)

There is a lot in these statements on the church. To make sure that we give enough treatment to the subject we will be doing this in two parts. In this section we are going to look at 4 Essential Concepts or Beliefs in the Congregational church. These four concepts are present in Article VI of the Baptist Faith and Message. In Part Two we will take a close look at the roles and responsibilities of pastors, deacons, the roles for men and women in the church, membership, and what it means for a church to be healthy. But in our first session let's see what is essential for a congregational church.

#### **Recap of Part 1 (4 Essential Concepts/ Beliefs)**

**There are Four Essential concepts or beliefs in the Congregational Church.**

1. **Regenerate Believers**
2. **Autonomy**
3. **Covenant Association**
4. **Democracy**

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**The Church Part 2: Roles and Responsibilities of Pastors & Deacons, Men, Women, and Membership**

**Roles and Responsibilities of \_\_\_\_\_ and Deacons**

**The Bible gives two categories of leaders for the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church:**

1. Leaders who serve by prayer, preaching, & equipping members with the Word.
2. Leaders who serve by meeting the physical and practical needs of the church.

\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) are the leaders of the church who \_\_\_\_\_ by praying, preaching, and equipping members for the work of ministry.

\_\_\_\_\_ are the servants of the church who \_\_\_\_\_ by caring for the physical and practical needs of the church.

**3 Questions that help us better understand the role of a deacon:**

**1. Who are deacons?**

According to Scripture Deacons are faithful and mature followers of Christ and they are godly examples for the church to imitate.

**2. What do deacons do?**

Quick look at what they don't do in Scripture:

- They are not a board of \_\_\_\_\_ makers
- They are not just a ministry focused on the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the church

**Deacons:**

- Deacons lead the church by serving and caring for the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ needs of the church.
- Deacons \_\_\_\_\_ the unity of the church.
- Deacons \_\_\_\_\_ the ministry of the Word.

**3. Why do deacons do what they do?**

Deacons serve so that the word of God may \_\_\_\_\_

Deacons serve so that the church can \_\_\_\_\_

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**Pastors (Elders) are the leaders of the church who serve by praying, preaching, and equipping members for the work of ministry.**

**In the New Testament there are three Greek words used to refer to the same leadership position in the church.**

Presbyteros (πρεσβύτερος), Episkopos (ἐπίσκοπος), & Poimen (Ποιμήν).

Translating & Defining the Terms:

1. Presbyteros is commonly translated as “elder.” An Elder is a leader over an assembly of believers.
2. Episkopos is commonly translated as “overseer” or “bishop.” An Overseer is a leader who watches over, directs, cares, and is accountable for an assembly of believers.
3. Poimen is commonly translated as “shepherd” or “pastor.” A church leader who protects members from danger, feeds their souls, and keeps them within the safekeeping of Christ’s dominion and reign.

**Who are Pastors/Elders?**

**1. The elders of the church are a \_\_\_\_\_ of leaders**

**2. The elders of the church are \_\_\_\_\_.**

(1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6; 1 Timothy 2:12)

**3. The elders of the church are men who live humbly before the Lord in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

(1 Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:5-9)

**4. The elders of the church are men who are able to carry out the \_\_\_\_\_ outlined in Scripture**

(1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-2, Ephesians 4:11)

**5. The Elders are \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ who tend to God’s flock.**

(Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2)

**Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church**

**What do Elders do?**

**1. Elders lead the church primarily through \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.** (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy

3:2; Titus 1:9; Ephesians 4:12; John 21)

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**2. Elders shepherd the church by actively knowing, feeding, leading, retrieving, and protecting the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church.**

(Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2; John 21:15-17)

**3. Elders \_\_\_\_\_ the church by keeping a close watch on themselves and the lives of the members.**

(1 Timothy 3:4; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:5; Titus 1:6)

**4. Elders serve as a model of Christian \_\_\_\_\_ to the members of the church.  
(1 Peter 5:3)**

**5. Elders make disciples and raise up more \_\_\_\_\_.**

2 Timothy 2:2 (CSB)

**6. Elders \_\_\_\_\_ for the members of the church**

(James 5:14; Acts 6:4)

**Why do elders do what they do?**

**1. They \_\_\_\_\_ to fulfill their God given calling (1 Timothy 3:1)**

**2. They want to see the church fulfill its \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 4:11-13)**

**3. They \_\_\_\_\_ to see God glorified above everything else and everyone**

Jesus Christ has ordained the role of elders as "one of the greatest means for the growth and maturity of his people" (Bruce Ware, *Shepherding God's Flock*: Chapter 10 p. 290)

### **Meaningful Membership**

#### **Two Truths About Church Membership**

**1. Church membership is \_\_\_\_\_**

**2. Church membership is \_\_\_\_\_**

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“The church is not a place. It’s not a building, It’s not a preaching point. It’s not a spiritual service provider. It’s a people- the new covenant, blood bought people of God. That’s why Paul said, Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” - Mark Dever

**Membership is not about having your name on a \_\_\_\_\_. It’s about more than having a \_\_\_\_\_ or a say.**

**Church membership is \_\_\_\_\_ on faith in Christ.**

“By calling someone a member of your church, you are saying that that individual has your church’s endorsement as a Christian.” - Mark Dever

**Church membership should be the reflection of a living \_\_\_\_\_, or it is \_\_\_\_\_.**