

FELLOWSHIP NOTES ~ FEBRUARY 27th, 2022



Part 1: "Leadership for Good Works" (Part 1)

Titus 1:5-9

Synopsis of Titus

God wants us to be Christians who...

- gather together in local churches,
- possess a commitment to the gospel as the only means of salvation and eternal life,
- appoint leaders who possess the biblical values of godliness,
- reject false, unbiblical teaching and teachers,
- practice holy and godly living inside our church toward one another,
- engage in being change agents outside our church by living wisely in our community, being devoted to God in holy and godly living and serving the people around us by being zealous for good works for the glory of God.

The Structure of Leadership at Fellowship Church

Historically, three different types of church government have emerged since the first century:

1. _____ - Comes from the Greek word *episkopos* meaning "overseer" also translated "bishop" in the KJV
2. _____ - Comes from the Greek word *presbuteros* meaning "elder" and suggests dignity and maturity of the church leaders
3. _____ - The authority rests with the entire congregation. This form of church government stresses autonomy and democracy.

The following factors should guide our structure of church government:

1. The _____ of the Church

1.) The church is a _____.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." Ephesians 4:3

"So let us concentrate on the things that make for harmony and the growth of our fellowship together."

Romans 14:19

When a person in the church has an attitude that causes disunity, that attitude is sin (Col. 2:2, 3:13-15; 1 Cor. 1:10, 14:33; 2 Tim. 2:14, 2:23; Prov. 17:14; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 1:27, 2:1-3, 4:2; 1 Peter 3:8; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:16-18; Psalm 133).

Implications:

- a. The church should be structured to promote unity and de-emphasize differences.

1 Corinthians 11:17b-18a

b. Congregational-led churches often vote on most items of business. But voting creates division because every time a church votes, somebody loses. While there are examples in the New Testament of the congregation being involved in matters such as sending out and receiving missionaries (Acts 11:22; 14:27; 15:4), as a whole, voting as a regular practice of governance is not found in Scripture.

At Fellowship there are rare times when voting is used in order to gauge the “heartbeat” of the congregation on a matter of great consequence to the church body. These include:

- 1.) Certain major financial decisions such as the purchase of land, etc.
- 2.) The calling of a senior pastor (not the rest of the staff).

- 2.) The church is a _____.

“You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.” 1 Peter 3:8 (See also Gal. 6:10; Heb. 2:10-12; 1 Peter 4:17.)

Implications:

- a. The church should be structured on the basis of relationships not rules.

“Don’t reprimand a senior member of the church, appeal to him as a father. Treat the younger men as brothers, and the older women as mothers. Treat the younger women as sisters...” 1 Timothy 5:1-2 (An elder/pastor) “... must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his family, how can he take care of God’s church?” 1 Timothy 3:4-5

3 Things to Remember:

- 1.) The church MUST be _____.
- 2.) It is to be managed by _____ (elders/pastors).
- 3.) A qualification for spiritual leadership is a strong _____.

- 3.) The church is a _____.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:27

“And He put everything under His feet and appointed Him as head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of the One who fills all things in every way.” Ephesians 1:22-23

Implications:

- a. The church should be structured on the basis of spiritual gifts, not elected offices.

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We each have different gifts according to the grace given us.” Romans 12:4-6

- 4.) The church is a _____.

“My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me.” John 10:27

Implications:

- a. The church is to be cared for and fed by shepherds.

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leaders, the same office:

- 1.) "Poimen" = _____ (shepherd)
- 2.) "Presbuteros" = _____ (spiritual maturity)
- 3.) "Episcopos" = _____ (Overseer)

Acts 20:17-18, 28 "Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived he said to them. . . Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be pastors of the church of God..." See also Titus 1:5-7; I Tim. 5:17.

2. The Pattern of Biblical Church _____

While the epistles have nothing to say about the role of the congregation in church government, they do have a great deal to say about the role of its leadership.

- 1.) The biblical norm for church leadership is a _____ of God-ordained leaders. This plurality of leaders is the only pattern for church leadership given in the New Testament. Nowhere in Scripture do we find a local assembly ruled by majority opinion, or by one pastor. Nearly every church mentioned in the New Testament is specifically said to have had elders. (Acts 20:17)
- 2.) As the apostolic era came to a close, the office of _____ emerged as the highest level of local church leadership.
- 3.) Scripture gives evidence of the first elders being appointed by the _____ of the church. "Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church..." Acts 14:23a

As the church progressed and time passed, the elders of each church themselves ordained other elders (1 Tim. 4:14). By this example it is implied that the existing spiritual leadership of a church be intimately involved in the process of selecting elders, to ensure selection based on spiritual rather than superficial qualifications. Beyond this, there are no specific guidelines given regarding the selection process. It would therefore appear that freedom is given to the individual church to develop a process that will best serve its own special needs and situations.

- 4.) A biblical study of the term " _____ " provides insight on the importance of this leadership position in the local church.

What is the proper understanding of the term elder?

The word elder is of Old Testament Jewish origin (Numbers 11:16; Deuteronomy 27:1). It refers to a category of men who were set apart for leadership (Deuteronomy 1:9-18). Their function was decision making-applying wisdom to the lives of the people in resolving conflicts, giving direction, and generally overseeing the details of an orderly society (Samuel 11:3, 16:4; 30:26). The Hebrew word *sab* is also used for elders. In the book of Ezra *sab* refers to the Jewish leaders in charge of rebuilding the temple after the Exile. The Greek word for elder, *presbuteros*, is used some seventy times in the New Testament. It has reference to mature age, much like the Jewish words for elders (Acts 2:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

How is the term elder used in reference to the church?

The New Testament church was initially Jewish, so it would be natural that the concept of elder rule was adopted for use in the early church. *Presbuteros* is used nearly twenty times in Acts and the Epistles in reference to a unique group of leaders in the church. From the earliest days of the church, it was clear that a group of mature spiritual leaders was identified to have responsibility for the church. The church at Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul to the elders at Jerusalem with a gift to be distributed to the needy brethren in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30). That demonstrates that elders existed in the church at that very early date, and that the believers at Antioch recognized their authority. In Acts 14 we see that one of the key steps in establishing a new church was to identify and appoint elders for church leadership (Acts 14:23). Nearly every church in the New Testament is specifically said to have had elders (Acts 20:17; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

How is the elder related to the bishop and the pastor?

Bishops and pastors are not distinct from elders. The terms are different ways of identifying the same people. The qualifications for bishop, listed in 1 Timothy 3:17, and those for an elder, in Titus 1:6-9, are almost identical. In 1 Peter 5:1-2 all three are mentioned:

“Therefore, I exhort the elders (presbuteros) among you, as your fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd (poimaino=pastor) the flock of God among you, exercising oversight (episkopeo=bishop) not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God,”

The word for bishops, *episkopos*, means "overseer" or "guardian". The New Testament, bishop, or overseer is specifically responsible for teaching (1 Timothy 3:2), feeding, protecting, and generally nurturing the flock (Acts 20:28). Biblically, there is no difference in the role of elder and that of a bishop. *Episkopos* emphasizes the function, and *presbuteros*, emphasizes the character of the same group of leaders. *Poimen* emphasizes the pastoral role of caring and feeding. The focus of the term is on the man's attitude. To be qualified as a pastor, a man must have a shepherd's caring heart. So, the term of elder emphasizes who the man is. Bishop speaks of what he does, Pastor deals with how he feels.

Fellowship Community Church recognizes the biblical pattern for the plurality of godly leadership, under the oversight and watch-care of elders and the supportive assistance of deacons.

Growth Group Study Guide for February 27th – March 6th

Getting Started

Group Discussion: If you grew up in church, what kind of church government did your church have (see page 1 for the three different types)? What advantages/disadvantages did you see in that type?

Digging Deeper

- 1. We saw Sunday morning that the New Testament says virtually nothing about the structure for church government or about the role of the congregation in church government. Why do you think that is?
- 2. Even though the Bible is virtually silent about church government, it still supplies us with instruction on this matter by showing us, 1.) The Nature of the Church, and 2.) The Pattern for Church Leadership. What are the four ways the Bible describes the nature of the church?

1.) _____
 What is a key factor with this one? U _____! Read Romans 14:19. What's one way we can obey this command? _____

If someone's attitude or actions erodes a church's unity, what is that considered to be? Why? (See Colossians 2:2, 3:13-15) _____

2.) _____
 Read 1 Peter 3:8 According to this verse, how should treat one another as people who are part of the same spiritual family? _____

Why do you believe that one of the qualifications for spiritual leadership in the church is a strong family life? (See 1 Timothy 3:4-5) _____

3.) _____
 Read Romans 12:4-6. What do these verses teach us about this description of the church?

4.) _____
 Read Acts 20:17-18,28 on page 3. What are the three different biblical terms used for church leadership in regard to this description:

1.) _____ 2.) _____ 3.) _____

5.) The Pattern for Church Leadership found in the Bible indicates that church leadership should include a plurality of elders. Why do you believe this is so important? _____

Based on the information on pages 3-4, write a short overview about the important of elders in the local church and share it with your group: _____

Wrapping Up

Fellowship Community Church recognizes the biblical pattern for the plurality of godly leadership, under the oversight and watch-care of elders and the supportive assistance of deacons. How do you believe our commitment to this biblical pattern strengthens our church?

Pray for our elders that God would give them spiritual discernment in every matter they handle in leading our church – Pastor Rob, Tony Cipolla, Dan Folkers, Steve Klinefelter, and Mike Taylor.