

The Importance of a Biblical Church Structure

Acts 6:1-4

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Review: What is Ultimate, (2) Essential, and (3) Important.

*We have said that a church's ultimate priority is to glorify God.

*We then identified two essential marks of a healthy church:

→ Expositional Preaching, and → Sound Gospel Doctrine.

*Important marks of a healthy church:

- A right understanding of conversion & evangelism.
- A biblical understanding of church membership.
- biblical church discipline
- a biblical concern for discipleship and growth;
- biblical church leadership;
- biblical understandings of the practices of prayer & missions;

→ Leadership has fallen on hard times.

We need to look at...

1. The Essential Nature of Leadership.
2. The Biblical Structure of Leadership.
3. The Christlike Spirit of Leadership.

It is profoundly unhealthy to have leaders who are not trustworthy and uncaring but also painfully unhealthy for a congregation to be unable to trust and submit to their leaders.

1. The Essential Nature of Leadership.

Paul reminds us that all authority is established by God: (Rom 13:1-2)

Also in the church, we see God appointing leaders:
Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 5:17

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.
(Hebrews 13:17, ESV)

2. The Biblical Structure of Leadership.

- (a) First, we see the congregational center of church authority.
(Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 6:4; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 5:4-5, 2 Cor. 2:6)
- (b) We witness deacons established as models of service.
(Acts 6:1-4)
- (c) We see the leadership of the elders.
(Acts 20:17-18, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-3)

Two things to notice about elders:

- (1) Their priorities: leading and teaching.
[“we cannot neglect the ministry of the word.”]
- (2) Their plurality: “elders (plural) of the church (singular)”
(Acts 14:23, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18, Titus 1:5, James 5:14)

Benefits of a plurality of elders:

- Additional wisdom.
- Rounds out a pastor's defects and limitations.
- Stability and consistency.

3. The Christlike Spirit of Leadership.

(Titus 1 & 1 Timothy 3)

There Qualifications fall into 3 Categories: (Josh Smith, *The Titus Ten*)

1. Blamelessness
2. Self-control
3. Courage

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

(1 Peter 5:1-3, ESV)