

III. The Specifics Of The Local Church

A. Local churches are saved, baptized people who assemble together

“Not forsaking the **assembling of ourselves together**, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:25)

Notice the words “come together” in the following verses:

“If therefore the whole church be **come together** into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?” (1 Corinthians 14:23)

“How is it then, brethren? when ye **come together**, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” (1 Corinthians 14:26)

“For first of all, when ye **come together** in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.” (1 Corinthians 11:18)

“When ye **come together** therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper.” (1 Corinthians 11:20)

“Wherefore, my brethren, when ye **come together** to eat, tarry one for another.” (1 Corinthians 11:33)

Sometimes these churches were in large houses. Often they were in homes: “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” (1 Corinthians 16:19). See also Romans 16:5; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2.

B. These churches are to be away from our homes

(Unless, of course, the church is started in our house) “And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands **at home**: for it is a shame for women to speak **in the church**.” (1 Corinthians 14:35)

C. The meetings are to be conducted decently and in order

“Let all things be done decently and in order.” (1 Corinthians 14:40)

In Apostolic days this meant:

- A Psalm
- A Doctrine
- A Tongue
- A Revelation
- An Interpretation

“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” (1 Corinthians 14:26). Also examine verses 27-33. Things were to be done orderly.

D. Collections are to be made on Sundays

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have **given order to the churches** of Galatia, even so do ye. **Upon the first day of the week** let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:1,2)

However, the church should assemble often times during the week: “And they, continuing

daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church **daily** such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:46,47). See also Hebrews 10:25; Acts 5:42.

E. God calls a Bishop (Pastor) to rule the local church

By rule we mean “oversee, organize, administrate, lead by example, govern.” It does not mean “dominate” (see 2 Corinthians 1:24).

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.” (1 Timothy 3:1-5). See also Hebrews 13:7,17,24 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13.

Bishops and elders are sometimes a reference to the same person: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and **ordain elders** in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For **a bishop** must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;” (Titus 1:5-7)

Jesus referred to the Bishop of a church as the angel. Example: “Unto the **angel** of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;” (Revelation 2:1). The word angel means “messenger.”

Some Biblical examples of Pastors:

1. Timothy

Timothy was the first Bishop of the church of Ephesus. “The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. <The second epistle unto Timotheus, **ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians**, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.>” (Subscription at the end of 2 Timothy)

2. Titus

Titus was the first Bishop of the church of Crete. “All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. <It was written to Titus, **ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians**, from Nicopolis of Macedonia.>” (Subscription at the end of Titus). Bishops are ordained men.

F. God sends other men to help in leadership

These have different titles:

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;” (Ephesians 4:11)

“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:” (Philippians 1:1)

Moses did the same thing when he led Israel. Compare Exodus 18:19-27 and Numbers 11:16-17. Seventy men were under him, helping him to oversee the 2-3 million Jews.

The early church did this also. See Acts 6:1-7.

G. The Bishop must be qualified

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A

bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

“If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” (Titus 1:6-9)

This is an “office.” He is an officer of the church.

H. The Deacons must be qualified

“Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 3:8-13). This is also an “office”.

Deacons are not leaders of the spiritual vision of the church, but are servants to the carnal needs of the congregation.

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:1-7).

The Deacons and caring people in the congregation keep the Pastors (Bishops, Elders) free to focus on the spiritual – especially prayer and the ministry of the Word.

There are others given to the church to assist pastors in meeting the spiritual needs of the church:

- Apostles: Literally “one sent.” Missionaries.
- Prophets: Preachers. Men who preach, but are not necessarily ordained.
- Evangelists: Those who focus on evangelizing, edifying and helping.
- Teachers: Both men and women who focus on teaching all ages, including children.

All these positions are explained in Ephesians 4:11-16. These are all to work together to edify the saints for the work of the ministry. Women teaching women is implied in the pastoral epistle of Titus, chapter 2, verse 3-4.